

# SOLAS

St. Aidan's Community College, Dublin Hill, Cork,  
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## ST. AIDAN'S SOLAS AWARDS CELEBRATE SUCCESS



### A WORD FROM THE PRINCIPAL

As another school year draws to a close we are taking the opportunity through our Solas magazine to reflect on what has been an excellent year for St. Aidan's. It is a time for nostalgia as we say goodbye to our Leaving Certificate students who have been with us for the past six years and I would like to wish them well in their examinations and future careers.

For our incoming first years this year will mark the start of their second level education. Over one hundred and seventy students will enter first year in September and I would also like to wish them well.

In recent years much emphasis has been placed on the concept of partnership in education and St. Aidan's believes that its success is based on the relationship between parents, students, staff, and the wider community. It is also based on the need to set high standards in what we expect from our students and it is equally important that parents have high expectations for their children based on their ability. The relevance of our mission statement, which describes St. Aidan's as "a safe caring

*Continued on page 2*

Mr. John O'Flynn, General Manager of the Sheraton Hotel, Fota Island, Cork was guest of Honour at the St. Aidan's Annual Solas Awards Ceremony which took place on Tuesday 20th May. The event celebrated the achievements of pupils who have excelled in a variety of fields over the past twelve months. Over one hundred students were nominated for awards in various categories including humanities, sports, science and technology.

The programme of events included various musical offerings from the students and a multimedia video display of highlights from the past year in the college. The above photo truly captures the spirit of the occasion, an occasion which is the high point of the College year. The College gym was packed to capacity - an indication of the importance of the occasion for all involved.

Mr. O'Flynn, himself a past pupil and award winner of the college fondly recalled his time as a student at St. Aidan's. By sharing with the students lessons learned from his own experience he offered advice on how to successfully pursue one's goals and career aspirations. He emphasized the importance

of long-term planning to achieve these dreams. He also encouraged students to maintain friendships with classmates throughout their lives by highlighting the importance of his own friendships from his time at St. Aidan's and showing how these have helped him in his career since.

The Dr. Steele Community Award was awarded to Mrs. Madeline Forde, Dr. Steele, in presenting the award, praised and thanked Mrs. Forde for her involvement in and commitment to St. Aidan's as a parent, as a member of the Board of Management and for her association with the Book Loan Scheme. Mrs. Forde currently works with the Ballyvolane/Dublin Hill School Completion Programme. Her dedication and commitment to the College and wider community was described by Dr. Steele as being outstanding, exceptional and exemplary. In commending and saluting Mrs Forde he also commended and saluted a whole range of parents who, over the years, have rendered sterling service to St. Aidan's.

Well done to all award nominees.

*Bíodh bhur solas ag taitheamh.*



### Farewell Fr James

Fr James McSweeney has been at the heart of the Blackpool/The Glen/Dublin Hill community since he arrived in September 2001. His great energy, enthusiasm and creativity regularly left people amazed and inspired. His involvement in St. Aidan's enhanced the school/parish links. He was a great support to the school in general and to the R.E. department in particular. His participation on three school tours as a group leader was a fantastic experience for all of those who were with him and hopefully for himself too! The above two photos typify Fr James. One taken in the wax museum while on the Paris tour shows his keen photography skills in the hall of mirrors and the second of him celebrating Mass with students and teachers at the three trees campsite on the Galtee Mountains having camped out there the night before with the students and staff. All at St. Aidan's would like to thank Fr James for sharing his time and talent with us. We wish him well in his studies and every success in his new appointment.

### Career Guidance

Can it have ended so soon. 1002 days, 9018 classes. Such is the time spent in school for the outgoing Leaving Cert. cohort. Some thought it would never end. It has. Now they fondly anticipate a life of carefree abandon, a life without deadlines, assignments and stress. Poor innocents! Others look forward rather apprehensively to a life without the safety net of regular hours, demands and friendships made and maintained in the daily school setting. All change is stressful of course. Lets hope the vast majority of those who entered as first years six years ago are now up for the challenge of life outside the school gate. For some third level studies beckon. Others will seek an apprenticeship. PLC courses or jobs in town will be the object of attention for others. And of course the Leaving Cert. results in August, followed by Round One offers to UCC and CIT on August 18<sup>th</sup> will be red letter days to be carefully noted.

*Mr D. Kingston*

### Home School Community Liaison Co-ordinator

This was a very busy year for me as Home School Community Co-ordinator here in St. Aidan's Community College. As usual, much of my time is focussed on home visits. I find this to be one of the most enjoyable parts of my job. Home visitation is a great opportunity for me as a co-ordinator to get to know our parents, to build trust and to let parents know that the school genuinely cares about them. We ran two adult morning courses this year; Cookery and Foundation Computers, both of which proved to be very popular. Courses and classes are very important in making the school a place where parents feel comfortable and welcome. I am very grateful to Mr. Buckley and Ms Kingston for their co-operation and patience in allowing the use of their rooms. The parents who were involved with our Maths for Fun programme put in Trojan work every Wednesday morning and I know that the students enjoyed themselves very much. Many thanks to Ms. Heneghan and Ms. Forde for their great help and support with our Maths for Fun. St. Aidan's Local Committee continued the good work of last year and helped raise a City Council grant for a neighbourhood clean up. Since then the Local Committee has focussed on working on a school policy for parents and community and this process will continue into September. A number of other activities took place during the year in which I was involved with including; shared reading, coffee mornings for parents, participation in LCA and JCSP Awards, parent-teacher meetings, networking with other agencies and working with our transfer programme.

If you are interested in participating in any of our activities, you are very welcome to contact me at 021- 4307 486.

*Joe Cotter Home School Community Liaison Co-ordinator.*

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*Christian community where each child is valued and nurtured to be the best that they can be", never diminishes, and whilst it is important and right to judge on academic success, it is also important to look after the growth of the whole person. As a school we strive to keep this balance and it would appear that one hundred and seventy pupils*

### Team-Teaching

If you look it up on the Internet, you'll probably find that most sites dealing with team-teaching are the top universities in the United States. However, in St. Aidan's this year, members of staff were involved in team-teaching as part of a pilot project being run by County Cork V.E.C.

Team-teaching has been practised in the school for several years now. What is it? Team-teaching is a method of classroom instruction in which two or more teachers teach co-operatively a single group of students. It is regarded as a very beneficial approach to teaching students with different abilities in a wide range of subjects. Every student in the school has a legal entitlement to an equal and inclusive education. In the past students have often been withdrawn from classes to help them in areas where they might be a little behind. In St. Aidan's, team-teaching was used to deliver additional teaching hours to students that permitted them to receive as inclusive an education as possible.

The approach is very flexible and most teachers feel this is one of team-teaching's great strengths. Two teachers can split a class in two, rotate the groups or teach them in co-operation with each other in the same classroom.

The teachers involved would certainly agree that there was a lot of work involved in balancing full timetables with the demands of meeting and planning work with a partner for a particular class. However, feedback from teachers and students has been overwhelmingly positive. Newly qualified teachers appreciated the opportunity to work with more experienced teachers to develop their skills and methodologies, learning methods and approaches. All teachers said they had a better rapport with their class.

All students appear to benefit from the approach, which not only nurtures the weaker student but also challenges the more able students. Overall there were more opportunities to learn, greater variety in the lessons and improved attention and motivation among students. Other benefits of the approach included fewer discipline problems, reduced absenteeism and better performance in exams.

Students pointed out that they thought they had learned more and learned more quickly. They said they appreciated having teachers with different personalities in the same room and that things moved on in class because there were no opportunities for them to "mess". When asked what they didn't like about team-teaching, they said the same thing: there were no opportunities for them to "mess"! Some students complained that they thought the approach could be "confusing" from time to time, but then some educational experts believe that hearing two different opinions on a particular debate and having to decide for yourself is an important part of the learning process.

The work done by staff and students on the project will be of assistance to other schools throughout the county and nationwide as the V.E.C. intends to extend team-teaching to other schools next year.

(Photo: Mrs E. Forde & Mr. P. Keenan with Mr. F. O'Murchu of the Department of Education and Science & UCC with Students of Class Neasa)

*Mr C. Manley & Mrs A. O'Donovan*



entering first year is vindication that we are getting the balance right. It is only left for me to thank staff, students and parents for their co-operation and support throughout the year, to wish our state examination candidates the best of luck and to wish all students a safe and happy summer.

*Liam Ahern, Principal*

## Design and Communication Graphics: The New Technical Drawing at Leaving Certificate

The Department Of Education and Science have developed a new syllabus to replace the old Technical Drawing course. The new technical subject is to be examined for the first time in June 2009. Over the past 2 years a technical support group, t4, have been introducing the new course and providing in-service to the technical teaching profession. Most of the topics on the Technical Drawing syllabus are still to be examined but there are two note worthy additions - 1) Freehand Sketching and 2) A Module on Computer Graphics.

St. Aidan's Community College has, over the last year, made huge strides to improve facilities in the Graphics Department to provide a top range of computers and to embrace the changes in the syllabus. The Technical Drawing/ Graphics room has been revamped and each new computer is loaded with the " Solidworks " drawing package which is to be used by every school in the country.

This Drawing Package will enable the student to complete key assignments to the highest standard and submit their work to the Department of Education and Science using the ancillary hardware also purchased by the college. This includes a top of the range plotter suitable for Leaving Certificate Drawing Assignments. Other equipment purchased include a multi- media projector and large wall screen, an A4 Printer and photo-copier with digital photo printing facilities.

St. Aidan's is well equipped to deal with the challenges of these changes and to provide our students with a firm technological grounding which will be of tremendous benefit to them in the future. *Mr. Savage*



### Geography Field Trip

A Sixth Year group of Geography students from St Aidan's travelled to Garretstown beach on Monday last. 30 students with their teacher, Mr Brendan Cremin, completed a beach survey as part of their Leaving Cert Geographical Investigation. Students examined the amount of the coastline, completed a sketch map of the area and measured levels of erosion along the shore. Students write up a report on their investigation and submit it as part of their Leaving Cert Exam.

*Photo: Mr Brendan Cremin with leaving Cert Geography students from St. Aidan's Community College at Garretstown Beach.*

### Physics Trip to UCC.

In February, 25 students visited UCC to attend the annual Physics Tyndall Lecture. These lectures are designed to stimulate the interest of secondary school students in the sciences in general and in Physics in particular. This year's lecture, entitled 'Living with a Star', include a study of solar storms, the nuclear reactions of the sun and their effect on our terrestrial environment.



## World Maths Day

On Wednesday, 5th March, World Maths Day was celebrated by higher level 3rd and 6th year classes. We assembled in Kent Station at 8.45am and boarded the train at 9.00am. We arrived in Heuston Station at 12.30pm after answering a maths paper 1 on the journey up. We eagerly anticipated the maths paper 2 we would be completing on the return journey! We were accompanied by the Queen and King of maths Ms. Hough and Mr. Rea.

To recuperate, we were allowed some free time in St. Stephens Green Shopping Centre and Grafton Street. We got a bite to eat and shopped till we dropped. In Trinity College we went for a tour of the Book of Kells and the library. We also went on a tour of the grounds of the college, where *Educating Rita* was filmed.

At 5.00 pm we left Trinity College and headed back to the station where we had an hour to spare. We attempted paper 2 before we met some fellow maths fanatics in the adjoining carriage who had also been on a tour of Dublin that day. We arrived home in Kent Station at 10.00pm, exhausted from our eventful day.

We would like to thank Ms Hough and Mr Rea for a sociable and educational maths day in Dublin.

*By: Eimear O Leary, Alison Dowling and Katriona Purcell*



## Humourfit

Pupils and staff enjoyed the annual visit of Humourfit Drama Company on Tuesday 15th January, 2008. Artistic Director, Michael O'Sullivan, is the writer and chief performer in the productions which both entertain and seriously challenge his audiences. The Junior students were highly entertained with the ever-popular drama entitled "The Mighty Bully Brady", a school-based bullying saga, that totally engaged the pupils from beginning to end and left them with much to think about. "A Global Warming" was the second show presented to the Seniors. The year is 2137 - planet Earth is in the grip of global warming and climate change and the central character, Jacob Singer, has embarked on a mission - to make the present generation aware of the possible future should we decide to ignore the warning signs of global warming. Humourfit has been a major highlight on St Aidan's school calendar for nearly 20 years now and has never failed to delight students and teachers alike.

*(Photo from L to R: Michelle Healy, Joe O'Regan, Rebecca O'Callaghan, Michael O'Sullivan (Humourfit) Paul Forrest, Donna O'Donovan & Jason Molina (all students of Class Cairiona)*



## New Initiatives in the Irish Department

Here at St Aidan's we are encouraged to use new and innovative modes of teaching to assist our students in learning to the best of their varied abilities.

This year we have started a new initiative in the Irish Dept. based on the Team Teaching and Paired Reading programmes. We have split one fourth year class, one first year class and re-combined them with a younger student paired with a transition year student.

The emphasis in the class is purely on the oral aspect of acquiring Irish. We find that by concentrating more on the spoken elements in as authentic a context as possible, that our students quickly begin to improve their standard of Irish. The Peered Tutoring model assists our students greatly because there are fifteen teachers in the class rather than one.

We began this project as an incentive to improve the spoken Irish of our students and to avail of a Forás na Gaeilge grant of €3,000 to increase the participation rate in the school from one to hopefully two or more focus groups. We have made great progress with this scheme so far and are awaiting adjudication for grant aid.

An tUasal **Tonai S. Rosboire**



## Junior Certificate Science in St. Aidans.

Science in St Aidan's takes a 'hands-on' approach which definitely gives the students a break from the more literary subjects such as History or French! It is a core subject with all students, boys and girls, strong and weak, studying it as far as 3<sup>rd</sup> Year. Practical investigations form an important part of the course and are worth 35% of their Junior Certificate mark.

In the course of their Junior Cert, each student completes 30 experiments and writes a brief scientific report on each one. These experiments not only increase their understanding of the topics on the course but also increase their ability to use equipment in an accurate and safe manner. In addition to this, in 3<sup>rd</sup> year, the students are given topics on which they must design and carry out their own experimental investigation with minimum input from their teacher. This year they included an investigation on how household substances such as salt or sugar influence how long cut flowers can survive in a vase and also on the difference wet and dry fabrics have on keeping an object warm. As can be seen from the photographs, the students really enjoy this aspect of the Junior Cert as it gives them an opportunity to work for themselves in an independent way. This increases their sense of achievement as the whole experiment, as well as the results produced, are theirs and not their teachers.

*Mr. J. Doyle*



## History - Fota House

Fota House was and is one of the finest examples of Regency period architecture in the country, with magnificent neoclassical interiors. The house itself is an enduring symbol of the Anglo-Irish culture and of aristocratic affluence, a way of life that came to an end in the early twentieth century Ireland with the onset of political and social unrest within the country. The grandeur of Fota House was once much connected with local roots and political role of the Anglo-Irish aristocracy. Such architectural ensembles had, therefore, both a private and public function. For landownership and political power in Ireland were inextricably entwined: the Irish country estate being a power house, a structure emblematic of its owner's social and political standing. The seat of the Smith Barry family since 1746, Fota House was, and continues to be, in its interior and architectural layout, a microcosm of Edwardian class structure.

How is this relevant to the official History Curriculum? A revision of traditional pedagogical strategies and their application to the teaching of History resulted in an excursion to Fota House on the 5<sup>th</sup> of May. Why? Through the application of such approaches as the utilisation of ICT and CGI, a philosophical, meditative subject like history can be brought to life and made accessible to students – thus dispelling traditional clichés that have dogged History for far too long. Students were impressed by the overall magnificence and scale of this architectural ensemble and its surrounding landscaped environs which they explored at will. In the classroom such impressions can be harnessed so as students can gain an overall understanding of historical processes and events. This is History in the 21<sup>st</sup> century – no longer textbook centred it is now very much interactive – a subject students can actively engage in.

*Mr S O'Brien*



## Art Trip to Kerry

In March a group of fourth and fifth year students from St. Aidan's Community College toured some of the historic sites that Kerry has to offer. The students recorded the sights by making sketches and using photography. Some of the places observed included the Blasket Islands, Gallarus Oratory, Cuas a' Bhodaigh and of course the famous Bee-Hive Huts.

I cannot emphasise enough the importance of cultural trips such as these. In the pace of a very quick moving modern world I believe it is essential for our students to be grounded in the knowledge of our past, specifically in our unique Gaelic cultural heritage. To be able to fully avail of the many privileges in our society and to construct a clear path through the pitfalls of adolescence, it is paramount to be connected to what has come before if only to navigate a clear route to the future.

The Sleah Head area of Kerry has a wealth of archaeological remnants related to the many eras that work our own history from the Celtic Huts to the Early Christian Period, from the Anglo-Normans to the later English settlements. It is the obvious choice for us at St.Aidan's to blend both the Art and Gaelic departments to provide a starting point for our students to dive into the clear blue of a future based on a knowledge of a unique past.

An tUasal **Tonai S. Rosboire** and Ms **Yvonne Lee**- Irish and Art teachers.



## Metalwork Room

Over the last year the Metalwork/ Engineering room has been renovated and in total over €90,000 has been spent. Much of the old equipment was over 22 years old; some of the new equipment includes 2 Colchester Lathes, 2 Arboga Pillar drills, a new horizontal and vertical band saw as well as all new hand tools for the students. A new Emco CNC lathe was also purchased which will give students an insight into how computers can be used in industry to manufacture components. All the new equipment has greater safety devices and allow greater accuracy. With all this new equipment it will give the students a new insight into the accuracy which is required for Engineering and overall a better quality of project for their state exams.

*Mr E. Breen*



## PAL Law Course

PAL is an innovative and interactive one day law course in which Transition Year students of St. Aidan's Community College recently participated. This course was given by barristers Nollaig Lane and Peter O'Sullivan. The course began in the morning with an informal Questions and Answers session. Nollaig and Peter patiently answered each student's question, providing detailed information about topics such as the difference between a barrister and a solicitor and the steps toward studying law at university.

Both instructors then gave a brief summary of the Irish legal system and how it may differ from other countries. To help us understand how a court actually operates students were shown a clip of the court scene from the award-winning film *To Kill A Mocking Bird*. This was a quick and easy way of explaining many legal terms.

Both instructors felt that in order for students to get a true feel for what a court case is really like they should experience it first hand by staging their own court scene! The controversial case regarded a man who was refused entrance to a first class airline toilet because he was flying economy class! After students were given their roles in the case the room was reorganised into what mirrored the inside of the court house. The case itself lasted about 80 minutes and after much debate the student jury delivered a verdict of not guilty!

In conclusion, on behalf of the 4<sup>th</sup> year students, we found the law course to be very interesting, informative and well worth participating in.

*Aishling Crowe (Class Ciara 4<sup>th</sup> Year)*



Photo: Members of Classes Caitriona and Cliona with Barristers Nollaig Lane and Peter O'Sullivan.

## A Taste of Raising Money

Yum, yum! 300 euro was raised by students and staff of St Aidans for Down Syndrome Ireland on Ice-Cream Day. Many different flavours of H.B. ice cream were savoured by all. This annual event is greatly enjoyed and comes at a time of year when everyone is looking forward to cooling down for the summer.

*Ms. A. Bernard*



Photo above: Some of the many articles from St. Aidan's which were published in the Evening Echo during this past year.

Photo left: Congratulations to our Transition Year students on the publication of the excellent *Transition Times* magazine. Well done to all involved.





### St. Aidan's Successful at Banking Finals.

St. Aidan's Community College recently won the competition for "Best Customer Loyalty Programme" for their School Bank as part of the AIB Build A Bank Challenge. This was a great achievement for the Bank Staff who have been working hard to promote their School Bank since last September and have been in competition against over twenty schools in their region. Build a Bank Challenge is an exciting project for Transition Year students to be involved in. Students have the opportunity to come together as a team and run their own school Bank. AIB supports them through the challenge of setting up, organising and daily managing a bank in their own school. Students are required to build a customer base, and to use clever marketing strategies to encourage students to save regularly. The Bank Team have to provide customer service for their customers, take lodgements and keep accurate financial records.

The St. Aidan's Bank Team have worked under the supervision of their AIB Student Representative, Sinead, and their teacher, Ms. McDonnell. The Bank Team were rewarded for their success at the finals held recently in the Silversprings Hotel. The student's motto "Make Banking Fun" proved to be worthwhile in ensuring customer satisfaction. The School Bank Team held regular promotions and event days for their customers and even set up a hotmail account as an innovative way of dealing with customer queries. Each member of the Bank Team was presented with an MP3 player. A digital camera and a specially commissioned piece of crystal were also presented to the school.

*Ms Natalie McDonnell*

*Photo: Kirsten Radford, Shane O'Connor, Richard Horgan, Ms Natalie McDonnell, Alana Cotter, Kevin O'Brien & Monique Foley.*



### Tricia Deasy

Well Done to Tricia Deasy, 6th Year for her award winning entry in the Cork Mental Health Poster competition. Tricia's design will feature on future promotional advertising for the foundation.

*Ms. Yvonne Lee*

### Irish Junior Science Olympiad

On October 13<sup>th</sup>, I was to sit the Irish Junior Science Olympiad exam in DCU with 110 other finalists. There were 3 gold, silver and bronze medals to be won, to form the Irish team in the IJSO in Taiwan in December.

The exam started at 11.40 and lasted two and a half hours. The questions were varied: short and long, simple and complex. It took an hour to go through the exam once, and another to go over it again.

I spent my lunch break doing a post mortem of the exam. Stupid mistakes were recalled and complicated problems suddenly became obvious. Hindsight is a great thing. I was confident that I'd done well and that I couldn't have done better with preparation, but a medal seemed unlikely.

The closing ceremony ran from 3.45 to 5.00. The awarding of the medals began and as I listened to the first name being called; it took me a moment to recognise it as my own. Being selected for the Olympiad in the first instance had left me reeling for quite a few days but, I must admit, that coming away with one of the highly sought-after medals, was deeply satisfying.

*Ciaran Deasy, Class Ciara 4th Year.*

### Schools Business Partnership Programme

The Schools Business Programme aims to positively impact on educational inclusion in Ireland by building links between the worlds of education and business. This is achieved by matching a school with a large local business and giving students the opportunity to experience

the world of work from a real life perspective. Several modules are included in the programme including a company visit, interview skills and cv preparation. St. Aidans has been associated with the programme over the past two years and plans are in place to further develop the programme in Transition Year in the coming year.

### Triz

The Definition of Triz is "Theory of Inventive Problem-Solving". Triz is a method of inventing by following certain rules. Transition Year Students of Class Ciara began their Triz programme in September 2007. This involved many discussions on ideas for new inventions.

The students were very creative and very innovative and were assisted by John McSweeney from U.C.C. who co-ordinated this programme. After much debate the students decided on their Eco Adaptor. This idea was the brainchild of Shane O'Connor and was designed by Kevin Barry and Ciaran Deasy with help from their fellow students.

The cost of wasted electricity in the U.K. alone last year was 740,000 pounds sterling. The average household has up to twelve gadgets on stand-by at any given time. Since this is evidently a global problem, the Transition Year students designed the Eco-Adaptor which would reduce CO2 emissions. Nine schools gathered in the Brookfield Building to present their ideas on their new inventions. There was great anticipation as Monique Foley got ready to present the product. Each school delivered their presentation and everybody waited eagerly as the Judge deliberated. Only two schools from Cork qualified to go through to the National Finals in Dublin in 2008. When St. Aidan's Community College's product, the Eco Adaptor, was announced as the overall winner, the students' excitement reached a crescendo. There is a great sense of pride among all the students of class Ciara. Well done to all involved.

*Mrs Emily Fitzgeardl*



## 2007-2008 First Years



### French Breakfast morning

A French breakfast morning was held for First and second year JCSP classes on Wednesday, April 30th. A wide selection of French foods were on offer, including croissants, brioche, pain au chocolat, éclairs, jus d'orange and chocolat chaud. The morning was a great success with students using their French linguistic skills to order the food that they wanted.



### St. Aidan's High Flyers

A Second Year group of students from St. Aidan's Community College, Dublin Hill recently took part in the Make a Book Exhibition held in the Millenium Hall, in Cork's City Hall. Students spent months working on creating their very own book entitled "Planes in Plain English" and as a part of their research they even had a helicopter land on the school soccer pitch, courtesy of local businessman Mr. John Coleman. While carrying out their research students learned about the history of flight, different types of aeroplanes and the workings of their local airport. A cross-curricular approach was taken to complete the book and prepare an exhibition stand. Most of the work was carried out in the students English class with the help of their teachers Ms. Mc Donnell, Mr. Warren and Sabrina Henchion. The Make a Book Exhibition is now in its tenth year and is a part of the Junior Certificate Schools Programme. In excess of 80 schools from around the country participated in this years event. The aim of this annual event is to celebrate the creative expression of the young people in our schools. Students draw on their own experiences to create their books. Students get the opportunity to visit the exhibition to view their own book on display and those of the other schools that participated in the exhibition. Students are presented with a certificate of participation when they visit the exhibition. "Planes in Plain English" is now available for students in other year groups at St. Aidan's to read as a part of their Library Class.



### Attendance

A St. Aidan's student hasn't missed a day at school in nine years! Amy Sheehy, a second year student hasn't missed a day at school since she started in primary school nine and a half years ago. Amy's remarkable achievement was marked by the presentation of a trophy from the Lord Mayor of Cork at the school recently. Other students to be given Attendance awards include Donnacha McCormack, (also a second year pupil), who has not missed a day in six years, Michael O'Gorman, third year, with a three year unbroken record and seven students, Francis Condon (6th yr), David O'Leary (5th yr), Kevin Canning, Darren Dineen and Aishling Noonan (all 3rd yrs), along with Christopher Kelleher and Aileen Nolan (1st yrs). Well done to all and keep up the fantastic effort!!

Photo: Front: Mrs Mary Fitzgibbon O'Connor presenting Amy Sheehy with trophy. Back Row: Michael O'Gorman, Aileen Nolan, David O'Leary, Kevin Canning, Francis Condon, Aishling Noonan, Darren Dineen, Donnacha McCormack and Christopher Kelleher.



### Civics Day

The Cork North Central TDs visited St. Aidan's Community College recently for our annual Civic Day. The topic for discussion was *learner drivers*. The TDs present were Kathleen Lynch, Noel O'Flynn and Billy Kelleher. Deputy Bernard Allen was absent due to illness. Each TD was allowed 5 minutes to address the general student body on the topic. Following this they went into closed session with the Student Council. The council put a number of questions to our politicians. Students were especially concerned about the implications for themselves when the new rules will be enforced.

*Sinead Gallen, Class Aoife, Student Council President.*



### SHARE 2008

Well done to our two SHARE representatives, Fifth Year students Catherine Dennehy and Ellen Bevan, for their tremendous work with the organisation during this past year. Here, Catherine tells the story...

SHARE started back in October and I'll always remember the very first day of the weekly meetings which were to continue throughout the year. The room was full of strangers and we kept to ourselves that day. As the weeks passed though these strangers became known to us and now we are the best of friends. It is hard to believe we met them only a few months ago as it seems its been a lifetime. Each week we visited an elderly lady called Dolly and we couldn't have had a nicer person to visit. She's a lovely person and we will continue to visit her after our time with SHARE ends. The collection at Christmas was tough going but the days were filled with laughter and joy and this overcame the feelings of cold and numbness. However, it was worth every minute when on Christmas Eve we heard the total amount we had raised. After Christmas the weekly meetings continued and various events took place, including a fashion show and a barbecue. I would recommend any student to partake in the wonderful experience that is SHARE, it is truly one we will never forget.



### Jack and Jill Foundation

Jack and Jill Foundation representative Eileen Ni Mhurchú pictured with Mr. Kelly and students of Fourth Year who organised a collection of disused mobile phones. The Foundation provides early intervention home respite to families of young children with severe developmental decay who require extended care. Well done to all involved.



*Photo: Micheál Sheridan being presented with Books by Mr. Donall Warren who organised fundraising. Also included are Mr. John O'Brien, Deputy Principal, and Students Shaun Carroll, Rácey Mulryan, Amanda O'Shea and Oleg Syranok.*

### Mercy University Hospital

Mr. Micheál Sheridan, Executive Director of the Mercy University Hospital Foundation visited St Aidan's in January and was presented with a collection of books for the Leukaemia Unit and Children's Ward of the Hospital. The books were purchased as a result of recent fundraising by pupils of the college and the donation of free books received through the purchase of books by teachers from *The Book People*. This has been an annual event at St. Aidan's for the past number of years and was initiated when one of our pupils was a patient at the Leukaemia unit of the Mercy. This pupil always spoke very highly of the nurses, doctors and staff of the hospital. As a result of this, together with our wish to mark our appreciation to Hospital, Paramedic and Ambulance Staff for their kindness and help when students have had to be taken to Hospital in emergency situations, the staff, led by College Secretary Mrs. Maeve Flavin Murphy, came up with the idea of the gift of reading through books. A special word of appreciation to Ms Rose Desmond, (English Department), who chooses and organises the purchase of the books each year.



**Musical Interlude:** 1st and 2nd Year students demonstrate their vocal and musical talents at the Awards Night Ceremony



## Graduation 2008: Farewell to our 6th Years



*The Following is the full text of the speech delivered by Leaving Certificate students Ciara Hayes and Keith O'Sullivan on Thursday 15th May at the Leaving Certificate Graduation Ceremony.*

We would like to welcome you all here tonight to our graduation ceremony. By gathering here, we are mirroring an event that's happening in schools across Ireland this week. Tonight is a metaphor of school life. A lot of joy tinged with a dollop of sadness, or as one staff member put it "We are like Japanese kamikaze dive bombers. One wave of us is going out and another is coming in". I didn't know whether he was serious or not. We can sum school up as, School: if you can't learn to do it well then learn to enjoy doing it badly. As

unbelievable as it is our six years here have come to an end. Initially we came here to pursue our academic careers but in the long term we've gained so much more. We were brought together by forces beyond our control and even though this journey is coming to a close, a new one is just beginning.

It feels like only yesterday we were walking through these doors as 1st years yet here we are today as 6th years. Back then 6th year seemed like a lifetime away and now as we gather here tonight to celebrate this momentous occasion in our lives it somehow feels surreal. Our year group has changed a lot since 1st year beginning with classes Breandán, Déaglán and Cainneach and finishing with classes Siobhan, Seamus, Sorchá and Seosamh. Over the years I believe we've



Photos: Top-Class Seamas. Bottom-Class Seosamh.



forged friendships that will last a lifetime and we are very fortunate to have achieved this, as we will leave with more than just memories. That is an achievement in itself.

We began our journey as young, naïve children but we are finishing as mature young adults. I think I speak for all of us here when we look back on our first day of secondary school and think about the anxiety we felt on opening a new chapter and the changes we were about to encounter such as the new faces, new subjects and new timetable. It was very overwhelming but once we settled in we began to get into the flow of things and this paved the way for the next six years that we would spend here. 1st year was an eventful year with trips to Trabolgan and a trip to Kilfinane Outdoor Pursuits Center for the girl's basketball team. These trips helped us interact and to develop close bonds with the teachers and to see them as people and just not as people who wanted to

make life hard for us. It's easier to be nice to the people on your way up cause you'll meet them on the way down!

Second year brought another change; a new principal. Mr. Ahern welcomed us our first day back. It was the start of something new for our school. We were lucky enough to go to London on our school tour that year, a big step up from Trabolgan. Everyone who was involved with the tour put their heart and soul into it to make it a great experience. We have some outstanding memories, as the people who went on the tour will tell you. From going to the tower of London, the London Eye, Madame Taussauds and going through the scary experience of "The Chamber of Horrors" to the more enjoyable experience of seeing the musical "Fame".

In third year we were enjoying our last days in our original classes of Breandán, Déaglán and Cainneach as our classes



Photos: Top-Class Sorcha. Bottom-Class Siobhan.

were going to be split up. That was stressful enough without having to worry about our Junior Cert. This is when we found out about the new arrivals from Farranferris that would be joining our year in 4th year. At first we were anxious about their arrival, but we soon realized in 4th year that there was no need to be worried as we became such good friends with them.

I think I can speak on behalf of everyone here when I say that 4th year was one of the best years we've spent here in St Aidans. I don't know whether it was our trip to Kinsale, our skiing trip to Germany or even the day we helped in the tidying of the area picking up rubbish with Mr. Cremin. We could talk forever about the events of 4th year but the biggest event for many of us was our skiing trip to Germany. We have a lot of funny memories of the tour but the one that seems to stand out is being woken by the boys singing and dancing to Y.M.C.A.

When we arrived back in September of 5th year we wanted to make it another memorable year. Something that stood out was the day our whole year went paintballing. Despite the bruises and the aches and pains we still managed to come out smiling and laughing. One of the best things about our year is the ability we have to make each other laugh and no matter what we always made the most of every experience we had.



Having listened to students talk throughout the week, it is fair to say that the mood seems to be tremendous relief. Mixed with that is a sense of fear. The fear stems from our journey into the unknown. We have to get a good leaving cert, get the points we need, and fulfill our dreams. Also we have to become independent and forge our own way in the world. This is what frightens us the most.

The one thing we can all be sure of here tonight is hope. We can all go on this odyssey of life with a lot of hope. The hope springs from the upbringing and set of values instilled to us by our parents. The hope also comes from the excellent education given to us by our teachers. More importantly perhaps the hope comes from the life long friendship built up among the students because we know we are not going on this voyage alone. We are doing it together.

Now here we are about to finish one of the most important years in our lives both academically and emotionally. As we embark upon our futures, we leave behind the place that holds many of our greatest memories, proving that life isn't about the amount of breaths we take, but the moments that take our breath away. Everyone knows that looking back on the tears will make you laugh, but I never knew looking back on the laughs would make me cry. Who knows where we will end up? Some people here may tackle world poverty while others may combat global warming.

Someone once said the true test of a person is not how one treats triumph, but how one deals with despair. As I stand here before you representing the 6th year students, knowing them as I do, I can almost guarantee one thing- that we will triumph. That is our mission and our hope.

Thanks for the honour of representing the 6th year students tonight; it's been a pleasure and a privilege. Every story has an end but in life every end has a new beginning.

Photos: Top - Gifts presented at Graduation Mass  
Left - Artwork by Tricia Deasy

### A Word from the Year Tutor

It has been a great pleasure for me to be Sixth Year Tutor and to have had the opportunity to work with this amazing group of students who were always very friendly, cooperative and willing to help. This same group of students have now blossomed into mature, responsible and confident young adults.

There have been many changes over the years through which you have grown and matured as a group. During this time you hopefully will have created a life-long bond with St. Aidan's. I also wish to say that I find it commendable how the students from Farranferris were welcomed to the group, and also what they brought to our school when joining us in fourth year.

As you come to the end of your time here in St. Aidan's a new future awaits. The skills, knowledge and experiences you have gained in this school will hopefully help and guide you for all what may lie ahead. On behalf of the staff I would like to wish you every success in your Leaving Cert exams and wish you all very happy, healthy and successful lives. *Ms. M. Kingston*



### Chocolicious Mini Company

In January Class Padraig set up the Chocolicious Mini Company, following a number of meetings. The mini company forms the Enterprise Task which is worth 5% of the Leaving Certificate marks. It was decided among company members to sell chocolate sweet bags to the school population. Firstly the company had to fundraise. Each student made an investment into the company, acquired loans and held an Easter egg raffle. The goods were then sourced and purchased from Musgrave Cash and Carry. Production Day followed and then Sales Day. The company was an outstanding success as sales exceeded expectations and within one day the all produce was sold out! The students made a substantial profit which will be used for a class day out in September as a reward for all of the hard work by students involved.



### LCA Work Experience

Work experience is a key module of the LCA programme. Over the two years each student completes a total of eight weeks of work experience in four different placements. The student is required to prepare and plan for the work placement, to complete a journal while on the placement and, on completion, to critically reflect on the experience. In the module the student is encouraged to explore different career paths and to investigate future training opportunities. Many thanks to all the local employers who have facilitated the work placements; these include Atlantic Homecare, Brackens Bakery, T and A, Cognex, Dublin Hill Hair and Beauty Salon, Crowley Engineering, Glenmill Engineering, The Metropole Hotel, The Ambassador Hotel, The Imperial Hotel, The Glen Resource Centre, Murphy's Rock, Mayfield Leisure Centre, Blackpool Shopping Centre, The Planet Entertainment Centre, Dublin Hill School Completion Programme, Dulux Paints, Crazy Cuts, Hairport and Marina Crash Repairs.



### Class Seosamh LCA

The Highlights of the LCA...According to some of our first LCA Pioneers, now Graduates, Class Seosamh!

I started the LCA in September 2006, and, at first, I felt apprehensive about it because I didn't know what to expect. After the first few weeks, I began to adapt as I grew to understand about Key Assignments and Tasks. – Michael Cremin.

I was told the LCA would suit me very well and then I had an interview with Ms Downey, Mr Forde and Mr Ahern. I was accepted into the course in 2006. My favourite subject was English and Communication because of the many different assignments and activities that I did. – Francis Condon.

When I started the LCA, I was unsure about what I would actually be doing except that there would be eight weeks of work experience over the two years and I was looking forward to this. I feel that I was not as shy in this class as I used to be in my Junior Cert year and I worked well with other people. – Alan Murphy.

I chose to do the LCA after I did my Junior Cert because I had planned to leave school after my Junior Cert and get a full-time job in Hairdressing. At the start of the course, I had one career in mind and that was to go to college and become an air hostess. That has all changed now as I would prefer not to travel too far away from home. – Donna Kelleher.

When I was first invited to do the LCA, I wasn't sure about it because I had never heard about it before. After a while, I found out more about it and I thought it would suit me because I am a very practical person and most of the work in the LCA is practical. – Louise Byrne.

The LCA was fun but it was also a lot of very hard work. I thought the LCA was going to be like any other year, but I was wrong. It was very different because to pass the LCA, you need a lot of credits as well as excellent attendance. I learned an amount during the two years of the LCA. – Stephanie McCarthy

When I started the LCA, I felt very nervous because there were a lot of people in my class that I didn't know and I was very curious to find out what the LCA course was going to be like. – Dayne Condon

The highlights of the LCA for me were the trips we went on as part of the courses we were doing. We went to see the Ogham Stones in UCC. Other trips included visiting the tourist spots around Killarney and we also visited Cope Foundation as part of Our Hotel and Tourism Course, to see how their kitchen was run. All our trips were a great laugh too. – Martina O'Donovan

It's my last year in school and I'm happy I made it this far. What I will miss most is my classmates and teachers. I would like to thank them so much for all the help they gave me over the two years of the LCA. – Philomena McCarthy.

We are nearly set for the final exams in June. Hopefully, I will do very well. I'm very happy that I got this far in life and now I am ready for the working world, even though, deep down, I'm going to miss a lot of people in school. – Noreen McCarthy

On the 3rd December, we visited the Evening Echo offices in City Quarter. We met and interviewed the editor, Mr Maurice Gubbins and learned about how the Echo is produced. I found this trip very interesting. – Barry O'Leary

We had been planning with Mr Rea, since the start of LCA2, to camp over night on the Galtee Mountains and we finally got there and camped overnight by the side of a lake. We lit camp fires, cooked our food, had mass with Fr James and played manhunt, all in the one day. – Timmy O'Sullivan

I will always remember doing this course because I have become more confident in myself and am better able to communicate with new people. It has helped me to decide what I want to be when I leave school. The LCA opened up a lot of opportunities for me. – Emma Power.

## Tour to Spain

Imagine the scene! Thursday, 5a.m., Cork Airport, 77 youngsters and 11 supervisors ready to board a flight to Spain. A parent drowning her son in holy water. A thought occurred, were we all inspired or simply mad to take on this responsibility??!!

Written large on the nose of the Aer Lingus plane was St. Aideen. Some students believed it had got a spray job for the occasion. Others, especially those afraid of flying, were calmed and felt it was a sign from above.

Breakfast saw us landing in Malaga and, by afternoon, we looked across to sun-drenched Africa from the Rock of Gibraltar. Even more unforgettable was the sight of a teacher - identity withheld - who narrowly escaped an attack by a giant ape, part of a colony who live on the higher ground. Unfortunately no camera yet designed could capture the fleetness of foot of the startled two-legged or four-legged participant!

Our hotel, back towards Torremolinos, was comfortable, with friendly staff and good food and sleep was an inviting prospect for most young - and not so young travellers - after an 18 hour day. A tour of Seville, a Flamenco show, a shopping trip and two visits to theme parks, where you had multiple choices of being drenched boating or frightened to death on roller coasters, quickly followed. The 4 days passed quickly, the students got on well with each other and, while the golden oldies found the supervising hard work - minding other people's children is after all a heavy responsibility - it was hard work that was fun.

Fr. Shem's celebration of Mass, prior to takeoff, in the intimate surrounds of a dimly-lit hotel lounge, overlooking the swimming pool as the sun came up, somehow seemed to be a fitting farewell. And what about the educational content of the trip? Those with eyes and ears learned that the South of Spain is factor 25 hot in spring, Gibraltar is British and sterling is its currency and the apes are here to stay, some Spaniards speak better English than us and olives grow everywhere in the region. The biggest lesson, however, was in how we all pulled together to create a fun-filled atmosphere which just shows how life is so much better when we put ourselves out for one another.

*Mr David Kingston (Guidance Counsellor)*



## 4th Year Skiing

On the 25th February, 2008, twenty-five Fourth Year students of St. Aidan's Community College departed at the early hours for a week's skiing in Folgaria, Italy. As check-in approached, the excitement was palpable. It did take some time to check in as some pupils had packed a bit too much!!!! Soon we were all ready to go and eagerly awaited our flight.

Upon arrival in Forli, our nerve-wrecking climb to our snow-capped mountain resort began. The scenery was breath-taking. Ski boots and skis were fitted straight away which heightened expectations of the days to follow.

Each day began with an early morning start. Many tumbles were taken over the first few days on the nursery and blue slopes. The instructors were inspirational and many of our young skiers moved swiftly onto the red slopes. Many dare devils braved the black slopes. Excitement levels were high at the end of each day with the progress made and with many believing that they would qualify for the downhill Slalom at the next winter Olympics.

Evening activities included tobogganing, swimming, ice-skating, indoor soccer and basketball, pool and card competitions and a very enjoyable disco.

An amazing time was had by all. Everyone would agree that this week of skiing in Folgaria proved to be an experience not to be forgotten.





### Kilfinane 2008

Before Easter, over 2 trips, 65 1st Years took part in an activity trip to Kilfinane Outdoor Education Centre, in Co. Limerick. Students took part in orienteering, hill walking, rock climbing and canoeing. The bad weather didn't dampen any spirits and students showed great enthusiasm in getting stuck in. In fact, some got very stuck when it came to a muddy orienteering course! However they managed to complete the course in good time with a smile!

Canoeing was a big favourite... although the water temperature in Lough Gur was a few degrees considerably colder than we were expecting! Just ask those who took an unexpected swim!

Over the 2 day trip students enjoyed the fresh air and beautiful scenery around the Kifinane area. Most enjoyed the freedom away from the classroom and all 65 students and their teachers look forward to escaping to the hills again at the next available opportunity.

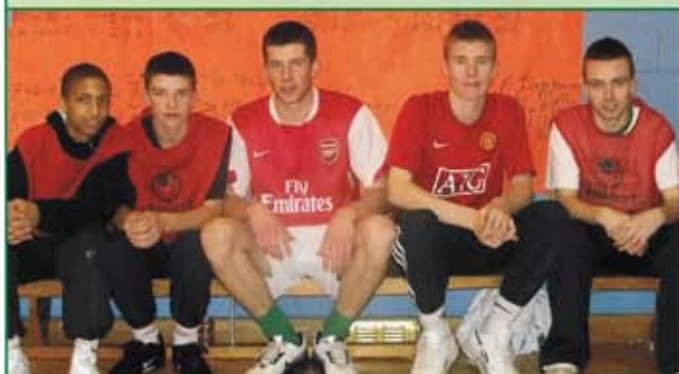
*Ms Maragret Quane*



### Galtee Survival Overnight.

Overnight survival trips were organised for all Transition Year students, plus another for both LCA groups. We left the college by bus and were dropped off in Galtee Castle wood, beyond Mitchelstown. Once there, we hitched on the rucksacks and headed off into the wild blue yonder. A hike of about 6 km, (uphill!) brought us to the beautiful secluded Owenahrainagh riverbank. There we set up camp, though some hardy souls slept in the open. We lit an open campfire and all students cooked their evening meal on it. Lots of burnt sausages never tasted better. Students then learned about survival skills such as navigation (without any instrument, just using the star constellations of Orion, Cassiopea and the Plough) and food testing for edibility. A tired bunch arrived back to school the following afternoon. The feedback for this was very enthusiastic. All participants thoroughly enjoyed the trips and look forward to more of the same next year.

*Mr. J. Rea*



### Soccer Marathon

St. Aidan's Annual Soccer Marathon in aid of St Vincent de Paul was again a roaring success! It took place in St. Aidan's sports hall on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> December and ran from 8 in the morning until 9 that night. A special thank you goes out to all the pupils who raised money and also participated in the marathon. They are the life-blood of our vibrant school community and a special mention must go out to Nicola Conlon, Karen Hosford, Kim Kendellen, Daniel O'Flynn, Amanda O'Donovan, Damien O'Sullivan, Bernard Kent, Liam Mc Elhinney, Edel O'Connell, Shaun Carroll Oleg Syrotyuk, Kenny



O'Leary, Cian Kearney, Eoin Connolly, Ian McConville, Ryan Cronin, Sinead Gallen, Paul Geaney and Patrick McAuliffe!

The money raised will be used by St. Vincent de Paul in the Dublin Hill and Ballyvolane district and surrounding areas. Mr Anthony Crowley, President of the Holy Family conference of St. Vincent De Paul was one of a number of SVP representatives who visited the school on the day. He thanked the students and teachers for their efforts and highlighted the work being done by the society in the run up to Christmas. He also encouraged students to get involved with the work of the society.

*Mr Donal Warren.*

## 1st and 2nd Years Girls Basketball

Forty Girls from 1st and 2nd year committed themselves to the St Aidan's basketball panel this year. These students were dedicated to training and playing and always with enthusiasm. The second year girls, after developing their skills and tactics from last year, played well to reach the quarter final, winning some and losing some on the way. Also, the panel saw some new players this year, which is always appreciated at St. Aidan's. The 1st year girls were however the more successful team of the two. There was a panel of twenty-four students, all extremely eager with some very talented players. They played and won every match they had until they narrowly lost in the semi-final of the league. They went on to play in the VEC competition where they beat all four other schools to become finalists. They played in the final against Bantry at the Parochial Hall on Monday 19th of May. It was a fantastic match but unfortunately they missed out on the gold points by one point. Silver medals this year, maybe the gold next year. Thanks to all the girls for their commitment.

*Mrs N Keniry*

## Senior and Cadette Girls Basketball

Senior and Cadette girls basketball teams enjoyed another successful season with both teams qualifying for semi-finals in their respective competitions. Our Senior team were narrowly defeated by Mitchelstown in their semi but fought valiantly to the bitter end. Good performances on the day were produced by Ann- Marie Twohig and Sarah O'Brien, both leaving cert pupils whose skills and commitment were outstanding during their time playing basketball for St. Aidan's. Valuable contributions in our many games over the past six years were made by Karen Hosford, Amy Bowen, Emma Crean, Ciara Hayes and Amanda O'Donovan. I would like to wish all of them the best as they leave St. Aidan's this year.

Our Cadette team had a superb season qualifying as runners up in their pool following two superb victories and a heavy defeat to our close rivals Scoil Mhuire. Following a hard fought victory in our semi we faced Scoil Mhuire again in the county final and produced a scintillating performance led by the inspirational Sinead Gallen and superb defensive play of Natalie Walsh and Patrice Coleman. But Scoil Mhuire's star player was unstoppable on the day and led her team to the narrowest of victories. Congratulations to Sarah O'Brien and Sinead Gallen recipients of sports awards at our recently held awards ceremony.



## U-14 Hurling.

This was a very talented team which beat the Mon in the semifinal. We were ten points down at half time, yet fought back magnificently to win by two!

The final saw us up against Rochestown, who had many strong players from Passage CLCG.

A rainy day with horrendous conditions saw us well beaten by a great side.

Hard luck lads, there is always next year!

*Mr. J. Rea*

## Camogie.

We had a very successful year, with Sinead Gallen as captain. Sponsorship from Decky's meant we had a brand new strip with colours being chosen by the girls themselves. We played five games in total, and qualified for the county quarter final. Well done girls!

**Well done to all students who participated in any way in any of our college teams during this past year.**

*Bíodh bhur solas ag taithneamh.*



St. Aidans Basketball Ireland 2nd Year South League Finalists

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