

# December Newsletter

December  
2023

St Aidan's Comprehensive School,  
Lisnasaran, Cootehill, Co Cavan.  
office@staidans.ie 049 5552161



# Message from the Principal

Welcome to our school newsletter

It brings me great joy to extend my warmest greetings to each member of our school community and their families.

At the start of the school year, I was incredibly honoured and thrilled to return to my 'old' school and also my former place of work with my former colleagues as I stepped into the role of Principal here at St Aidan's. A lot has happened since August and I certainly feel that I am well and truly embedded once more into school life in St Aidan's! I thank each and every one of you for your warm welcome.

There is certainly no doubt in my mind but that we have a very busy, vibrant and happy school environment where everyone gives of their very best and where students are nurtured to be the very best that they can be. Whether this is in leadership roles such as on the Student Council, as a prefect, as Wellbeing Ambassadors or Cairde or maybe on the football pitch, basketball court or running track. Perhaps it is on committees organising school events such as our wonderful colour run or the many fundraising activities carried out since August. It might be your attendance at workshops, guest speaker talks, careers fairs or subject based trips where our students time and time again give of their very best, put their heart and soul into the task at hand and represent our school in a very positive light. Perhaps it is in the classroom where teaching and learning is taking place. Where our students listen attentively, participate in lessons, engage in topics, study hard for exams and work positively with their teachers to achieve the very best grade possible for their ability. All the above form part of the day to day life of our school. I thank our students for their efforts, our staff for their unwavering commitment and our parents and guardians for their on-going support.

Our school is not just a place of learning; it's a vibrant community where students, parents, teachers, and staff come together to create an environment that nurtures growth, curiosity, and excellence. Both Mr McGee and I are committed to fostering a collaborative spirit that values your insights, aspirations, and contributions. This newsletter is a testament to our commitment to fostering communication, sharing achievements, and celebrating the diverse talents within our school community. It is a platform where we can showcase the remarkable accomplishments of our students and staff.

Our foremost priority is the well-being and success of our students. Together, we'll strive to create an enriching educational experience that empowers our young learners to explore their potential, embrace diversity, and embrace the joy of learning.

I hope you enjoy reading our newsletter and that you get a picture of our students celebrating achievements, overcoming challenges, and creating memorable experiences together. Let us embrace the spirit of collaboration and support that defines our school. Our collective efforts, dedication, and enthusiasm will undoubtedly pave the way for a successful and fulfilling academic year.

I wish you & your families a very peaceful and happy Christmas and may we remember those who have lost loved ones this year and wish you peace at this time.

Le gach dea -ghuí

Angela



## 1<sup>st</sup> Year

As we look forward to the approaching Christmas holidays I would like to take this opportunity to say well done to all the 1<sup>st</sup> year students on their very successful transition from primary to secondary school.

I wish the first years of 2023/24 every success and happiness as students in St. Aidan's. I hope that they grasp all of the opportunities available to them in terms of achieving the very best they can academically, on stage, on the sports field and in all aspects of school life.

Well done to the students who took part in the Halloween fancy dress and our very successful school musical. Thank you to those who donated to the Christmas shoe box appeal and to our non-uniform charity fundraisers. It was lovely to see such kindness in the year group.

Well done to the very talented 1<sup>st</sup> year sports people on their many fantastic performances and successes this term.

A big thank you to the 1<sup>st</sup> year tutors Ms Ni Bhaoil, Ms Connolly, Ms Mc Philips and Mr Mc Caul for their continuous support and kindness.

Finally, I wish you all a very happy Christmas and New Year!

**Breege Doherty (Year Head)**





## Wellbeing Workshops

### 1<sup>st</sup> Year Wellbeing Workshop

Eva Farrell, Rang Oonagh

On the 13<sup>th</sup> of September, all first years were asked to participate in the Wellbeing workshop by throwfire.ie. As we came into the hall, we were asked to write our names on a piece of paper and put it at the bottom of the hall. Then the first years took a wellbeing minute to relax.

After that we were told a strong story about including everyone. We played a game like Secret Santa. Everybody went to the bottom of the hall, selected a name and wrote a nice message on it.

We all got hot chocolate and a chocolate bar. We danced and participated in some games. We also watched a video about two men who had a lion but had to give it away. However, after a very long time the lion still recognised the two men.

At the end of the workshop, we were taught how to make friendship bracelets and our day finished with dancing.

### 5<sup>th</sup> Year Wellbeing Workshop

Gerry Morris

On the 12<sup>th</sup> of October 2023 we 5<sup>th</sup> years had our first Wellbeing Workshop of the year. Once registration was finished, we all headed to the hall where we were greeted by Fr Joe and his assistant Rose. Fr Joe started off by having a seating plan where the boys and girls would be sitting beside each other, which was a good idea as it got us all talking to people that we would rarely speak to. He started off by doing a few minutes of meditation. He did this quite a lot throughout the workshop as it helped to clear our minds. After meditating Fr Joe got us all to make a card and to write positive comments into it. None of us knew who we were writing the card for. He then gave us all pieces of thread and he got us to make a bracelet to put into the card. When that was done it was breaktime and for break Rose made us all a cup of hot chocolate.

Between the breaks Fr Joe took us all outside to do activities where we all got to learn something new about each other. When we had done that, he took us back into the hall before lunch where we got to do Just Dance.

After lunch Fr Joe gave us all a mask where on one side of the mask we had to put words around the face of the mask that other people would associate us with, and then on the other side he got us to create a mask with colours and designs on it. Once we completed the masks, he took us outside to play a game and when we had finished the game, he ended the day with Just Dance again in the hall. It was an enjoyable day as I got to learn not just more about myself but about other people too.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Year Wellbeing Workshop

### Dearbhail Shanley

On the 10<sup>th</sup> of October all second years were welcomed into the hall to take part in a wellbeing workshop. Full of laughter and excitement to spend the whole day with friends, we entered the hall. We sat in our seats and did a couple exercises to warm up. This included jumping jacks and jogging on the spot. Then we sat back down and took a moment of silence where we all closed our eyes to reflect on ourselves. This is the quietest my year group has ever been.

After we had all settled down, we heard the story of a girl who was being bullied for a year and a half. The story was extremely emotional, it felt as if I was watching it happen in front of my own eyes. We were then instructed to write our names on a sticky note and place them on a mat at the back of the hall. Once all the names were placed at the back of the hall, we made our way to the big blue mats in small groups and picked up a random sticky note. We wrote cards to the person we were next to and decorated them with drawings and colours. Then we received three pieces of string to make that person a friendship bracelet. We came together to help each other make a bracelet, and the atmosphere was amazing. Everyone was laughing and having fun with friends. What seemed like a pointless activity at the time is a memory that we will cherish for a lifetime.

By the time we had received our cards and bracelets, it was already break time and we were served hot chocolate and chocolate bars. When we returned to the hall, we were given another piece of paper and were told to write numbers from one to twenty on it. We were then told to write down words at each number. Some of these words included curly, farmer, brothers and goldfish. This game was great fun as we had to find people who were related to the word and get them to sign our page. For example, for the word "curly" we had to locate someone with curly hair.

Full of excitement, we all dashed outside. We all crowded in a big circle to get a pen and then rushed around to find the people relating to the words. After a while of fun and running around the place, we all gathered on the grass. We were separated into girls and boys and played a few games such as lining up from tallest to shortest and lining up in order of the month you were born in. My year group is extremely competitive, so we took these games very seriously.

We went back inside and moved our chairs around the hall, so each chair was touching the wall. We all wondered what we would be doing before lunch, so we were all ecstatic to find out we were playing Just Dance. We all darted into the middle of the hall to have fun with all of our friends.

Unfortunately, the bell rang too early, and we were all dismissed for lunch. When the bell rang for a second time, we all rushed back into the hall to find an arts and crafts activity set up. We were instructed to pick up a paper plate and cut out the center. Then we got a piece of sticky clear plastic and stuck it onto our plate. We ripped up small pieces of mâché paper and stuck them onto the plastic to create a stained-glass window effect. After sticking another piece of plastic on top of our artwork, we punched a hole at the top of the plate and tied a piece of string to it so we could hang it up on any window in our house.

After cleaning up all the excess paper and scissors, we made our way to the center of the hall to sit down and watch a few videos on mental health. To finish off the day we had another session of Just Dance, which was fantastic.

Overall, I really enjoyed the day. The fun we had and the memories we made that day are the things I will think about in years to come.



### 3<sup>rd</sup> Year Wellbeing Workshop - Ann Brady

On Friday, 15<sup>th</sup> of September, two speakers from a group called Throwfire came to our school, St. Aidan's and completed a wellbeing workshop with us third years. They spoke with us about the following topics: anti-bullying, communication, resilience, suicide, social media, and mental health. From the beginning of the workshop, I could tell that my fellow classmates were completely engaged.

We did many different interactive activities. One of those was picking a random name, writing that person a letter, and making them a friendship bracelet from three pieces of string. From my point of view, we all really enjoyed it. At breaktime, we were given a delightful hot chocolate and a choice of KitKats or crisps.

After break, Fr Joe called out a list of twenty words that we had to write down on a sheet of paper. Then we had to walk around the hall and find someone who related to that word. For example, we wrote the word "brown," so we had to find someone with brown eyes and get them to sign our paper and whoever got ten boys and ten girls to sign their paper won. Later, we did Just Dance. At the beginning, some people were shy and did not join in, but by the second dance, everyone got up and took part. We danced the "Waka Waka," "Timber," and "What makes you beautiful." Judging by the look on everyone's faces, we all had an amazing time and were very entertained. Then we made a DIY heart out of wool and cardboard to remind us that we should all be kind and considerate towards each other. We ended the day with one more dance before we all helped to tidy up the P.E hall.

In conclusion, Throwfire gave us a powerful lesson which was much needed in today's world. They took an interactive approach and taught us that we should treat each other with great respect and kindness.

Approximately one in five adolescents (aged 12 to 18) suffer from at least one mental health disorder and one in 10,000 15-19 year olds in Ireland will die by suicide. From Friday's lesson, I learned that you should check up on your friends and family members to make sure they are okay because you never know what someone else is going through. I also learned that I should keep a close eye out and stand up for others at my school in case they are experiencing bullying. From my perspective Throwfire had an extremely influential and positive impact on me and my peers in 3<sup>rd</sup> year and we all enjoyed the workshop. Remember that blowing out someone else's candle doesn't make yours shine any brighter.

### TY Wellbeing Workshop - Abi Crowe

Everyone from TY present on Wednesday the 11th of October attended a wellbeing workshop presented by Fr. Joe McGrath in the school P.E hall.

First, he introduced himself to all of us, telling us all about his life, jobs and about the association [throwfire.ie](http://throwfire.ie). Everyone enjoyed his humour and were interested in some of his life stories.

He soon began to complete different calming exercises and he made everyone do these whenever he moved on to a new topic throughout the day.

There were many different activities to do including arts and crafts, "Just Dance" videos and many more. All the different activities allowed everyone in the year to interact with each other in diverse ways. We also spent time outside talking and playing a "Get to know me" game which also allowed people to interact with people they would not think to on an average day.

Fr. Joe McGrath and his assistant also had snack stations holding hot chocolate and small chocolate bars that were dispersed to everyone that wanted some.

Everyone there that day really enjoyed the day as I had heard many complimentary reviews and responses from my peers. I know my friends and I certainly had fun getting to know the presenters and more about the people we usually would not have thought to talk to or interact with.

At the end, we all had many different bits and pieces to remember the day by including handmade bracelets, handmade and written cards from peers, booklets on ourselves and our values and small art crafts.

Overall, it was a very enjoyable day and I know both myself and all the Transition year students would not mind meeting the throwfire.ie association and presenters again.



On Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> September it was the 6<sup>th</sup> years' turn to participate in an interactive wellbeing retreat run by the organisation *Throwfire.ie*. The speakers for the day were Fr. Joe and his sister Mary. They were extremely bubbly, open people who tailored the course towards us and listened to any suggestions we had.

Topics such as drug use, mindfulness, resilience, communication, and of course plans after the Leaving Cert were all brought to the table. We listened to true real-life stories, ranging from light-hearted and captivating to inspirational and moving. With a welcomed more interactive and unique approach to these topics, the facilitators effectively put into perspective how stories like those could become a reality for any one of us. Great emphasis was placed on resilience, the importance of a positive mind frame and not being afraid to ask for help.

We completed thoughtful and relaxing activities too such as; writing a letter containing a few words of kindness to someone in the year (names were picked at random), making friendship bracelets and making a candle holder out of clay. The highlight of the programme had to be the random times throughout the day when Just Dance appeared on the projector and us Leaving Certs danced without a care in the world to songs like, Timber, Rasputin and Waka Waka (football version). An enjoyable break from the normal routine of a school day in 6<sup>th</sup> year!

Many thanks, to the school and Ms. Scanlon for organising the retreat. This retreat will really help us going forward, not only for the remainder of our school days but beyond. From, speaking to others in the year and from personal experience it was both a beneficial and enjoyable day. We would gladly welcome back *Throwfire.ie* anytime.

---

## Guidance News

### Foroige 365.

A huge thank you to the Foroige team who have provided training in swimming, rookie lifeguard and boxercise for our LCA students. Foroige are a very available asset to our school supporting a providing activity to support our students both in and out of school.

### College Speakers

So far this year the 6th year has had presentations from ATU Sligo, University of Ulster, ATU Letterkenny, Ballyhaise, DKIT and NUI Maynooth.

### 5th year in the Slieve Russell

All 5<sup>th</sup> year students are to attend a CMETB Career fair. Students will meet all CAO Universities and colleges as well as Colleges of further education and apprenticeship opportunities to help them guide their way to their chosen career path.





## Guidance News

Ms. Drury

### Guidance news

#### **1<sup>st</sup> year Parents and Student Event: Supporting your student in school and in the Community.**

In September our incoming 1<sup>st</sup> year and parents attended an information fair on Supports available in School and the Community to help your student. Many local supporters including Foroige, Teach Oscan, MACYS, You Thrive, Cavan Sports partnership, ISPCC, SoSAd, La Cheile, Parenting plus, Cootehill Youth Group, Tullyvin Musical society, Tony MC Mahon Chess, Cootehill Soccer and Cootehill library were in attendance. Planet Youth provide a talk to parents based on surveys of teenagers about the needs and wants they need to be supported. A very insightful presentation. Planet Youth also provided fantastic experience for students in different activities like Bushcraft, Soccer Skills, Fishing, while our own CAIRDRE 1<sup>st</sup> year mentors ran Arts and Crafts, Volleyball and Rounders bracelet making. Planet youth have kindly offered activities for students to participate in after school free of charge (subject to demand) and currently run soccer skills on a Monday evening. These activities are for both boys and girls. We are hugely grateful for the opportunities they can help us provide for our students.



#### **Higher Options and world Skills Event**

6th year students travelled to Dublin to attend Higher Options and world Skills event. Each student came home armed with information, options, and enthusiasm for what their future could hold for them.



## Second Year

Well done to all students on the recent November assessments. Hopefully your hard work and commitment to study will have paid off in your results. I encourage you to continue to strive to reach your full potential in all subject areas in the new year.

We would like to give a warm welcome to Mykhailo Psymenko who has joined the Second Year group and we hope he has settled in well.

Second Years have had lots of sporting success this term and we congratulate them for their dedication and commitment to training and team work. I encourage all Second Years to get involved in some kind of extracurricular activities. You may find a hidden talent or develop an interest you never knew existed. Well done to all students for their participation in the Colour Fun run recently and huge thanks to you all for your very generous sponsorship cards. Once again Second Years have shown their generosity in the many fundraisers that occur throughout the school term

A big thank you must go to the tutors who offer huge support to students on a daily basis. Ms Noone, Ms Brady, Ms Lynch and Ms Donoghue. The dedication and commitment has been incredible. Second Years also want to extend a heartfelt wishes to Ms Brady for her upcoming wedding. Congratulations to the prefects Rang Fiadh: Amelia Kelly, Donal Kelly, Fiachra: Lauran Mc Mullen, James Daly. Rang Fiona: Grainne Hughes, Leigh Pritchard. and Rang Fergal: Aoibhinn Smith, Thomas Gibson. This is an excellent achievement that reflects your qualities and the confidence your peers have in you. Best wishes as you carry out your Prefect roles.

Wishing you a very happy Christmas filled with laughter and cherished moments with your loved ones.  
Happy Holidays  
S.Maguire (2<sup>nd</sup> Year Head)



### 3<sup>rd</sup> Year

A warm welcome back to our Third Year students and well done to all of you on the completion of your recent November assessments. We welcome those who are new to our school, in particular in Third Year we welcome Jose Canadilas, Maelee Bomme and Jaime Rodriguez who are our new international exchange students in 3<sup>rd</sup> year.

A huge congratulations to the following prefects and deputy prefects appointed in third year and best wishes to you as you carry out your duties this year:

Mr Sharpe: Rang Erin: Caoimhe Kelly and Jack Vogan  
Mr Mayne: Rang Eimear: Brian Ellis and Eadaoin Morris  
Ms Kieran: Rang Enda: Annie-Beth Foster and Cormac McQuillan  
Ms Kiernan: Rang Emmet: Chloe Conaty and Martyna Kalonaite

A big thank you to your tutors Mr Mayne, Mr. Sharpe, Ms Kieran and Ms Kiernan for their tremendous help and continuous support throughout this term. Please remember that there are support services in school, which are available to help you all whenever you need a little support and guidance. Third Year is a very important year for you all as you will be soon completing your Junior Cycle mock exams, followed by your Junior Cycle state exams in June. Please continue to try your best, do plenty of revision, ask for help if you need it and never put off until tomorrow what can be done today. It is also very important to get plenty of rest, eat well and please try to minimise screen time especially at night when your brain needs rest for the day ahead.

Finally I wish you and your families a happy, fun and safe Christmas break.

Best wishes and looking forward to seeing you all in January 2024.

J Sweeney



### 3<sup>rd</sup> Year Trip to see 'Annie' The Musical.

The third-year students embarked on a memorable opening to their school year with a trip to Bord Gais Energy Theatre, organised by their English teachers, to experience the classic musical, "Annie", starring Craig Revel-Horwood, from *Strictly Come Dancing*, as Miss Hannigan.

The vibrant sets, lively choreography, and the infectious energy of the cast brought the beloved characters to life, allowing the students to experience first-hand what they had been studying in relation to stagecraft in their English classes. This performance was for many, a first-time exposure to the magic of live theatre.

The school's commitment to providing students with diverse cultural experiences is evident in events like these. Trips such as this, not only enhance the academic curriculum but also contribute to the holistic development of students, fostering a love for the arts and a lifelong appreciation for cultural expression.

The school year had begun with a burst of artistic brilliance, setting the stage for a year filled with learning, creativity and good memories.





# Art Department

## TY Junk Kouture workshop with Fashion Designer Ellen Greenan

Our Junk Kouture class had a workshop with Ellen Greenan which really helped with developing our concepts and ideas for our design. She had a wealth of experience and knowledge with so many materials and techniques which allowed the us all to figure out different ways of working. She was able to show us different skills and ways to experiment to achieve different textures. Junk Kouture is a very challenging project and Ellen has really helped us in getting through some challenges. We can't wait for her to come back again!



# Christmas Card Competition 2023

Well done to all that entered; there were over 30 entries this year. Congratulations to this year's winners. Their cards were on sale at Cootehill Christmas Markets along some past winners from the last few years.

**1<sup>st</sup> Year:** Ayla Smith, Eabha Ridley McKeown, Evan Floody & Sienna Dempsey.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Year:** Gabriele Valentucious & Martyna Piprek

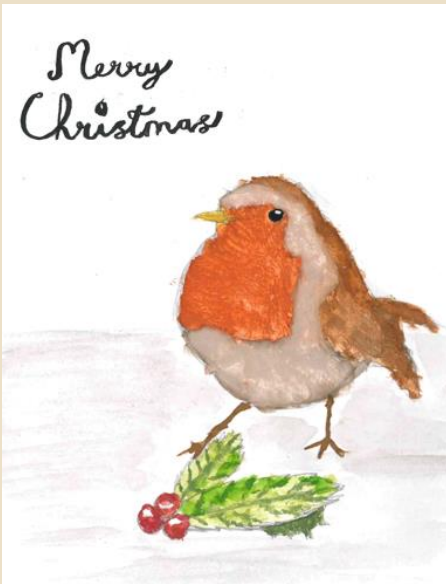
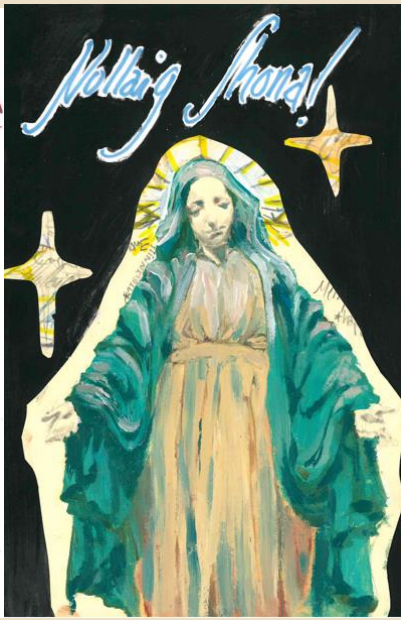
**3<sup>rd</sup> Year:** Annie Foster, Danielle Morris, Jack Vogan, Maelee Bomme & Mattia Leardini.

**TY:** Katelynn O'Sullivan & SarahJane Moore

**5<sup>th</sup> Year:** Lily Foster









# Cootehill Christmas Weekend 2023

Over 30 of our TY students volunteered over Cootehill's Christmas weekend on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> November. From dressing up as reindeers and elves to face-painting and running a school stall, our TYs added hugely to the festive spirit with their enthusiasm and willingness to get involved. Students were selling our beautifully-designed Christmas cards and some clay decorations at the stall. TY Dragons' Den entrepreneurs were also selling Christmas trees and fire kindling. Well done to all involved in every aspect of the weekend.

*"We would like to say a massive thank you to all the Students from St Aidan's Comprehensive especially the TY students that volunteered & helped us out over the weekend. Between dressing up & entertaining the kids, face painting & helping with set up and take down Saturday at Santa and Sunday at the Christmas markets, you are wee superstars and it is so great to see the youth of today volunteering and helping out so that people & families make special memories forever. So a massive thank you from Cootehill Chamber for all your hard work over the weekend it is very much appreciated." - Cootehill Chamber.*







## Comhairle Na nÓg- AGM Conference

### Grace Brady TY Student

On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of November a group of TY and Second Year students went to the AGM Conference for Comhairle na nÓg in the Cavan Crystal Hotel.

When we arrived, we got spilt into groups along with the other schools and each group had a member of Comhairle na nÓg as their coordinator. Speeches were given by the Chairperson of Cavan County Council, Phillip Brady and by the Chairperson of Cavan Comhairle na nÓg, about the work that had been done within the Council over the last year.

To decide on the topic for Cavan Comhairle na nÓg for 2024, everyone got to write two issues they were concerned about in Cavan and then they voted for the two they overall thought were the most important. After that there was a world café where everyone discussed the top three issues brought up; Mental Health, Substance Misuse such as vapes and alcohol, and Body Image. Once everyone got a chance to discuss the issues, there was the final vote on what 2024's topic will be, which ended up being Substance Misuse.

Throughout the day we also did fun activities such as ice breakers to learn more about the students from other schools, a quiz and we got lunch. At the end of the conference, we were given interest forms we could fill in if we were interested in joining Cavan Comhairle na nÓg for this year.

Overall, it was a very informative day, getting to know more students from other schools and learning more about the issues that are challenging young people in the county.

## TY (Transition Year) Christmas newsletter 2023

On August 30th we welcomed 80 students back to school and into Transition Year (TY) after the summer break. Also stepping back into a role they know and fulfil so well are the 4 TY tutors Ms. Brady, Mr. McKenna, Ms. Murray and Ms. Treanor. The tutors are ably assisted by the TY Prefects and Deputy Prefects who were elected by their classmates in each group, and we wish them well in carrying out their duties this year. They are: TY1 Nora Connell & Sarah Jane Moore, TY2 Grace Brady & Daniel Linden, TY3 Joseph Coughlan & Eve Poutch and TY4 Quin Coleman & Abi Corkery.

It has been a super busy start to the year. The first few days were all about settling back into school life and there were induction sessions which hopefully assisted students in getting to know new classmates and bonding in their new groups. We welcomed new students into Transition Year - Beatriz Flores, Daniela Carrillo Herrera, Tabea Klaus, Sofia Ramos Garcia, Elisabeth Runst, Ylan Bomme, Carla Cabrera, Amalia Recio, Laurin Giesecke, Ilya Mysenko and Eva Juraityte are the new additions to the gang! Sofia and Daniela are leaving us at Christmas to return home and we wish them good luck for the future.

By the nature of TY there are experiences and events that do not happen in other years - some of which are mentioned here. Throughout September and October all students had a workshop called "Don't be mean behind your screen" and learned more about online behaviour from Jackie Fox. She really connected powerfully with students on the topic of bullying, online harassment and her journey following her daughter's suicide to the implementation of what is known as "Coco's Law".

There was a huge fundraising effort for the LA519 Big Breakfast, and TY students are to be highly commended for their work on this. There was a TY retreat and a well-being workshop for all groups also. We all headed off to Emerald Park in mid-September and had a super day out (despite the pouring rain!).

Community Guard Vincent Connell spoke with all students in general terms about crime, driving behaviour and other topics. 4 students were successful in their application to the Gardai and were selected for a week of work experience based out of Bailieborough Garda Station. We ended the half term with some messy but fun pumpkin carving - led by our own Mr. Mayne. This was on the Fancy Dress Day where many of the TYs were creatively dressed and made up.

Indeed, TY students often lend a hand in the day-to-day running of the school - from assisting in the canteen at breaks, to completing a day of "desk duty" in the lobby assisting the office staff, to tea-making and serving at parent-teacher meetings, to Open Night tour guides - the list goes on... There has been so much positive feedback from staff about the assistance given in these areas - a big thanks to the students who really demonstrate positive attitude, willingness to help and ability to do a job well. There are over 30 CAIRDE students in the current TY cohort and they have been a massive asset in many areas such as those mentioned above.

Alongside all this activity, TY students had a full day away in Causey Farm in early November! It was great fun - breadmaking, bonding with the farm animals, squeezing through tiny tunnels and finally bog jumping! Many of the students braved the cold and slimy bog (including Mr. McKenna) - the photos are priceless!



On the 15th of November, each of the Transition Year tutor groups took part in a Forensic Fun workshop where the subject of the workshop was the assassination of John F Kennedy. This was an interesting session focused on forensics. TY students were eager and delighted to assist in helping Cootehill Chamber run the Xmas markets in November.

On the 24th of November we were delighted to have the weather working with us for once as Transition Year rolled out our TY-led event which was a colour run/Wellfest. This was a huge undertaking for the whole transition year team. There was a six kilometre colour run/ walk where all the Active Schools and Future Leaders students were deployed to man and manage the run route and of course most importantly, throw the neon paint all over the participants!

In the meantime, back at base, the rest of the TYs were setting up and hosting a whole Wellfest. This included carnival games, face-painting and staffing a photo booth. The entire day ran smoothly, and there was a terrific buzz around the school, and the event was a tremendous success and a credit to all the Transition Years involved. They got a chance to be creative and to be young leaders, and they showed their peers exactly how it should be done!

On the teaching and learning front, we are delighted to be able to offer 20 sampling modules (5 each block, changing over 4 times in the year). These are all of the "regular" Leaving Cert subjects and we have added - Photography, Driver Education, LIFT programme and Sustainability. This means that over the course of the year, all students sample 20 subjects or modules which should assist them hugely in making informed and wise subject choices for Senior Cycle. These subjects are assessed on completion of each Block alongside the core and year-long subjects.

Blocks 1 and 2 are now complete, assessments were carried out and reports completed and sent to parents. Block 3 is underway and will run until the end of January.

Next up is an "Abba Flashmob" workshop in mid-December which promises to get the students dancing up a sweat! Work experience is from 18-22 December, and this will bring them to the Christmas break. Then January 2024 brings lots more for TY students to experience!

It has been very positive year to date, and I really hope TY students are enjoying the programme so far, and that they continue to enjoy the remainder of their TY experience. I wish all of the Transition Year students and their families as well as the TY tutors a lovely Christmas break and a happy and healthy New Year in 2024.

Deirdre Marren  
TY Coordinator/Year Head









## Head Girl / Head Boy

Our names are Rebecca Vogan and Caolán Reilly. We are 6<sup>th</sup> Year students in St. Aidan's. We are Senior Prefects and this year we have been appointed Head Girl and Head Boy. It is an honour to represent the student body of our school. We look forward to working with management, staff and students in the coming year to make school a positive place for all. We are excited to work as part of a team with Ms. Scanlon and all our fellow Senior Prefects to develop new ideas and deal with any problems that may arise in our school community.

*Rebecca Vogan (Head Girl)*  
*Caolán Reilly (Head Boy)*





## 5th Year

One hundred and twenty-five students were welcomed and enrolled into Fifth Year at the end of August. There are five tutor groups for this year group. Mr. Lennon is tutor to B1, Ms Vogan for B2, Ms. Marren for B3, Ms. Scanlon for B4 and Mr. Fitzsimons for B5. A special word of welcome to our new international students who have just joined us to complete Fifth Year of the senior cycle.

Class Prefects and Deputies have been elected and they have an important role to play in assisting the tutor amongst other duties. These students are Lily Foster and Callum McCann (B1), Ruby Moran and Joey Lynch (B2), Brandon Dempsey and Eleanor Feerick (B3), Lauren Moynagh and Lee Pepper (B4) and Darragh Hall and Andrew Murray (B5).

The sports arena is well represented by Fifth Year students-particularly on the soccer and Gaelic fields, running tracks, and on the basketball court. A special acknowledgement must go to Edward Rowlands who won first place in the school's cross country, a phenomenal achievement. Well done, Edward! Also, a special word of thanks to our musical Fifth-Year students who were involved in the opening school Mass/service and the schools 'open evening'. What a talented bunch you all are!!!!

On the 14th of November, one hundred and six fifth year students attended the CMETB Careers fair in the Slieve Russell Hotel to learn more about their future options. Organisations from the Credit Union, the Garda Síochána to the Irish Army had stalls at the event as well as the national universities in Ireland and Northern Ireland. The students had the opportunity to discuss career opportunities with the representatives of each stall. A fantastic day was had by all. A special word of thanks to Ms. Drury for facilitating such an informative and interesting day!

On Friday 24th November, the school was a dash of colour and vibrance as St. Aidan's took part in a fundraising Colour Run in aid of our new gym facility. An enjoyable day was had by all, and the TY students were lined up at various points on the course, ready to douse the students in coloured powder. I would like to acknowledge the Fifth-Year students that took part and engaged in all activities. Congratulations to Gerry Morris who took silver and Damian Keating and Cian Harmen who were joint third in the 6km run. Students received a goodie bag on completion of the course.

On behalf of myself and your tutors we take this opportunity to wish all the Fifth Years the very best as they focus on their studies. We encourage each one of you to engage in study and revision throughout this year. Best wishes to all the Fifth Years who are taking part in extra-curricular activities.

Both your tutors and I look forward to working with you all over the course of the next two years. We wish each and every one of you a peaceful and relaxing Christmas and New Year.

Best wishes

*Ms. Hanna (Year Head)*

## MARY'S MEAL TALK FOR LCVP

On Thursday the 19<sup>th</sup> of October 2023, all fifth year LCVP students attended a talk by Ms Patricia Friel, the Director of Mary's Meals in Ireland. This charitable organisation vision is that "every child receives one daily meal in their place of education and that all those who have more than they need, share with those who lack even the most basic things". In summary for just €22, a child can be fed for a full year. At the end of the talk, a donation was made to this worth-while charity on behalf of the fifth-year students.

## Senior Prefects 2023-2024



## Student Council 2023-2024





## Sixth Years

I would like to extend a special bon voyage to the international students, Sofia Sonato, Valentina Pertile, Johana Cihakova, Jakub Studnicka and Cornelius Dietrich and we wish them well in the studies. We also welcome Agata Kwapisz who has joined the year group this year. Congratulations to the following students who have been elected as class and deputy prefects for this academic school year: Colleen Mc Quillan, John Mc Dermott for A1, Niall Curran and Liam Mc Cauley for A2 and Ali Patterson and Lila Mc Caul for A3.

As this term draws to an end, I would like to complement all of you for your continuous hard work and co-operation during this term. I encourage each one of you to continue to work at every subject, follow the guidance of your subject teachers, focus on on-going revision and engage positively in study. You all have done yourselves and the school very proud so far so keep up the good work.

Huge thanks to your tutors Ms. Mc Donald, Ms. Coss and Ms English for their tremendous help and continuous support throughout this term. Remember the support services in school are available to help you all get the best from your years in St. Aidan's.

Finally, as Christmas draws near I want to take this opportunity to wish you all and your families a very happy and safe Christmas and good health and happiness in 2024 and look forward to seeing you all in the New Year.

Stay Safe  
G Meehan.  
Year Head.



6<sup>th</sup> year Geography Trip



## LCA NEWS

As we draw closer to 2024, LCA students are busy preparing for task deadlines, interviews, work experience and sporting events. The students of B5 have a number of tasks to complete this year. The students will each complete a portfolio and will be interviewed early next year by a visiting examiner. I would like to take this opportunity to wish all the LCA students the very best as they focus on their studies and prepare for these tasks. I encourage each one of you to try your very best and success will be yours!

A coffee morning was held on the 18<sup>th</sup> September for the LCA parents. It was an informative session, and the parents were given an outline of the course and events for the year ahead. It afforded the parents the opportunity to ask questions in a relaxed and informal setting while enjoying a wee brew and treats. The LCA class have been selected to participate in a swimming programme in the new pop-up pool in Cootehill. This project is funded by Swim Ireland and Foróige. St. Aidan's are immensely grateful for this unique opportunity. Each student has been gifted a swim pack which contains a swim bag, swim hat and other goodies. The students participate in a 1-hour lesson every week and have transport to and from the pool. On the 12<sup>th</sup> October, LCA students had a teambuilding trip to The Zone in Navan. It was an incredible fun packed day with the highlight been the 'Grand Prix' final, that saw Jason Fannin taking top spot on the podium (Gold), while Kyle Jones secured Silver and Adam Fannin taking Bronze. A great day had by all!!!



Every Wednesday, the LCA students are also participating in a bootcamp boxing programme called 'What's Your Excuse' with professional boxer and certified personal trainer, Dominic Donegan. The programme aims to teach the students about building healthy habits in their everyday lifestyle. This project is funded by Foróige - Cavan 365 Project.

Work experience as an integral part of the LCA curriculum. The students participated in work experience on the 20<sup>th</sup> November for a two-week block. This was a great opportunity for students to explore an area of work which interests them and perhaps gain experience for their future careers. We would sincerely like to thank all local employers who continue to support our school and students.



Finally, on behalf of your tutor Mr. Fitzsimons (aka King Kong), I wish you all a very relaxing and peaceful Christmas.

**Ms. Hanna (LCA Coordinator)**

Congratulations to Philip Elliott who was awarded the Miko metals Engineering Student of the Year by Mr. Tomas Sweeney.



Careers Day





## Soccer in St. Aidan's

The U19 boys lost their first game 2-1, but two victories against Ballyjamesduff and Breifne meant they topped their group. They won their league semi-final against OLSS Blaney and as a result they have qualified for the Cavan/Monaghan league final and the Ulster QF after Christmas.

The U17 Boys had two wins and a draw in the group stages and they have qualified for the Cavan/Monaghan league semi and either round 3 or 4 of Ulster. The under 17 girls also had two wins and a draw and have qualified for the Ulster QF against Scoil Mhuire Buncrana after Christmas.

The senior girls, u15 girls and u15 boys are still in the group stages, whilst the first-year boys had two draws and need to win their final game. The first-year girls' competition is yet to start.

Thanks to all students for their efforts so far.

Mr. Watters and Mr. Sharpe.





## St Aidan's vs Colaiste Dun an Ri

St. Aidan's Cootehill 1-16

Colaiste Dun an Ri 1-14

It was a wet and windy day on November 23<sup>rd</sup> as St Aidan's Senior Boys team took on Colaiste Dun an Ri in Hugh O'Reilly Park in the first match of the senior football competition.

As Brian Crowe threw in the ball, Kingscourt were quick to start with the full forward using the wind to his advantage as he kicked over the first point of the game. St Aidan's weren't far behind with Jake Whyte levelling the game for the first of many times as he tipped a free over the bar.

Facing the wind in the first half, St Aidan's moved the ball quickly and accurately through the hands using strong runners like Mochara Lynch, James Tully and Matthew McDermott. Liam McCauley had an early chance at goal but unfortunately the wet conditions caused the ball to go a-stray as Kingscourt overturned and won a free-out.

With the wind at their backs Colaiste Dun an Ri were looking to kick the ball in long and catch our Cootehill defenders out of position. The fullback line of Conan McGahan, Caolan Reilly and Andrew Murray were very disciplined in their tackling as they dispossessed Kingscourt numerous times. This wasn't enough to stop points being kicked as the full forward Michael McKeown clearly had his shooting boots on, scoring 4 out of Kingscourt's 8 points in the first half. Jake Whyte and James Tully showed character as they drove their team forward scoring 5 points between them, with Ben Brennan getting the other.

Unfortunately, we leaked a goal just before the half time whistle to leave us 5 points down at the interval. In the second half we abandoned our sweeper and went with a very high press. Thankfully it worked in our favour as we pinned in Kingscourt on numerous occasions. A brace of points from Jake Whyte and a 45 from Ben Brennan soon pulled the game back to a draw. In the last ten minutes our fitness and hard running really paid off as Liam McCauley finished off to the net to give our lads the lead. Kingscourt to their credit fought right to the end with 2 points late in the match but thankfully our boys held out for a well-deserved two points win. We now play St. Clares BJD in round 2 of the competition so we wish our boys the best of luck. Team and scorers:

1. Max McKeown	9. James Tully (2 Pts)
2. Andrew Murray	10. Euan Crosson
3. Caolan Reilly	11. Ben Brennan (2 Pts)
4. Conan McGahan	12. Shane McCabe (1 Pts)
5. Adam Larmer	13. Jake Whyte (9Pts)
6. Matthew McDermott	14. Shane Shalvey
7. Mochara Lynch	15. Liam McCauley (1-2)
8. John McDermott	Cian Flynn for Shane Shalvey

## Senior Girls Camogie Blitz

St Aidan's played their first senior camogie game in Breffni Park Cavan on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> November. Breffni College was the first game. The girls put up a good battle in this game but knew that they could play better as they weren't playing as a team or to their best ability. The girls used this game as a "warm up" game. In the second half Rose Geoghegan carried the ball from the half forward line and scored a lovely point putting the sliotar straight over the bar. St Aidan's secured the win against a disappointed close rival Breffni College. The girls knew after that game that they would have to play much better if they wanted to compete with Baileborough.

The second game was Bailieborough Community School, this was a much stronger side. The St Aidan's girls matched the Bailieborough girls well and put up a strong fight in the first half and at half time St Aidan's were up by one point. Early in the second half Bailieborough got a goal which put them in the lead, not long after Rebecca Mc Cann scored a goal which put St Aidan's up by one. The girls let it slip coming to the end and Bailieborough got another goal and point which left the final score at 3:04 Bailieborough to 2:03 St Aidan's. An exciting nail-biting match that unfortunately resulted in narrow defeat for St Aidan's. The girls are now through to an Ulster quarter final against Kilkeel. Best of luck to the girls in this campaign.





## St Aidan's Colour Run

On the 24th of November, the school hosted their first ever colour run. It was huge success among students and staff. Everyone seemed to have an enjoyable day with lots of fun, and TY student-led events.

The idea of the Colour Run was brought about by the TY Active Schools Committee. They wanted to organise an active event for the whole school to enjoy. With the help of the GAA Future Leaders and Active Schools classes, Ms. English, Mr. Lennon, Ms. Marren and Mr. Farrell put a plan in place for the day of the Colour Run. Different students were assigned different jobs. Some students were throwing the colour whilst others were marshaling along the route. On the day students set off from the school pitch and ran the usual route. At different stations, colour was thrown onto them

When students arrived back there was a chip van and coffee van outside the school for some well-deserved food and drinks at the TY-led Well Fest. There were drinks and snacks provided for all the finishers - this stand was ably manned by TY4 tutor (Ms Treanor) and students. They were also resident DJs responsible for the music, arguably one of the most important elements of the day. There were lots of different activities for students to get involved in. TY 1 (Ms Coyle's class) were in charge of the photobooth and props that provided many fun and happy photos of the day. TY2 (Mr McKenna's class) ran the various carnival games, that you could play whenever you like. Lots of hard work went into these games, with TYs from various groups painting and designing these. TY 3 (Ms Murray's class) delivered face painting which provided a bright look to many faces Everyone got on board and ensured they played their role, which led to the day running smoothly.

Near the end of the day, we got the chance to sponge our teachers, they were soaked! We had a ceremony for the top finishers in the run, followed by the "cha cha slide" dance led enthusiastically by Ms English. Overall, the day was thoroughly enjoyed by all students and staff. The run and Well Fest created a great buzz and atmosphere around the whole school. We hope to do another event like this soon! Well Done to all involved on raising over 7000 euro which will go towards the development of our fitness suite.

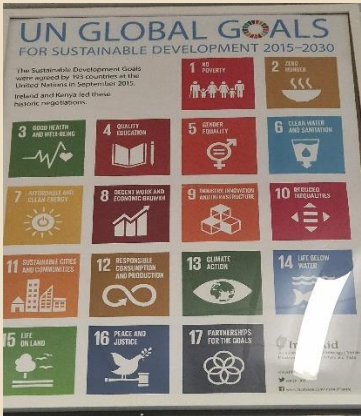
Article written by Amy Fagan, Muireann Daly, Chloe Hannigan & Sarah Reynolds



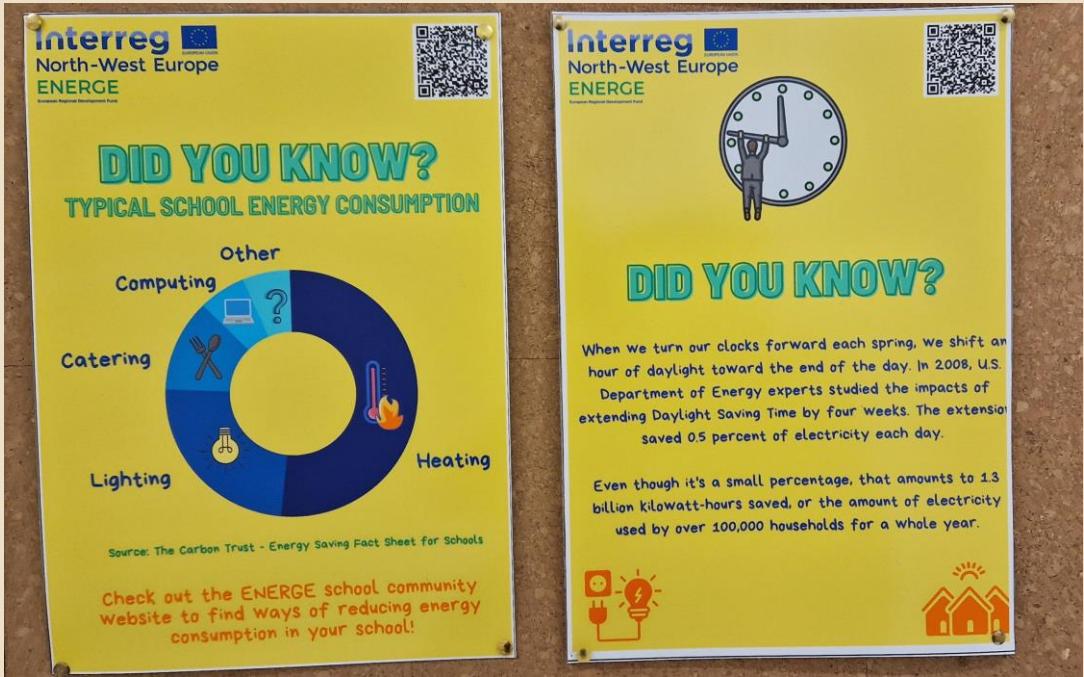


Sustainability News:

Sustainability is at the core of education at St. Aidan's. Students are, and will continue to be educated about, and involved in Sustainability issues.



The TY Enterprise group are involved in various practical projects around the school and its surrounding area. They are involved in a recycling project within the school to encourage the school community to recycle and dispose of waste correctly. Visual signage is evident throughout the school to facilitate this. An education campaign with "Did you know?" posters are now in classrooms and general areas in the school.



New Year Project: Metre meadow:

This Team will also be responsible for planting Metre Meadows to provide an important breeding ground for invertebrates (such as insects), a key food source for many birds, amphibians etc. Students learn about the ecological importance of such a project by being actively involved.

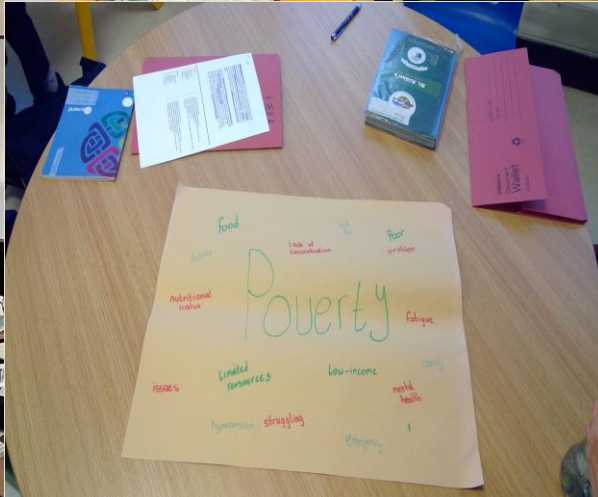
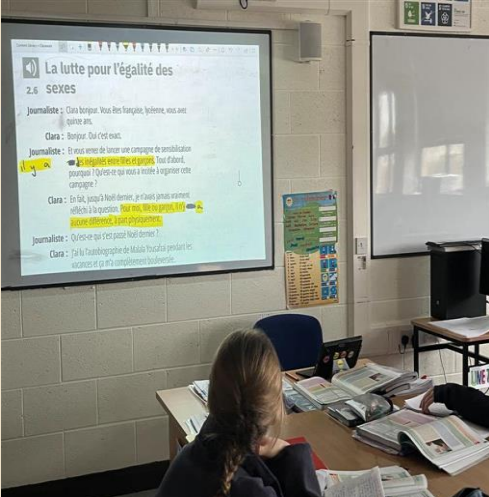


### Take One Week:

The UN Global Goals for Sustainable development 2015-2030 are displayed in classrooms to increase awareness about the importance of these goals in our community and our world. St. Aidan's is involved in the "Take One Programme". Teachers selected one group and taught about one S.D.G. during one class period over one week (20-24<sup>th</sup> November) as part of this initiative. It is hoped that this will again reinforce student awareness in this area.







### Sustainability Workshop:

On Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> November, a workshop was organised for all TY and 6<sup>th</sup> year Construction students about Sustainability. Cootehill Area Development SEC arranged the Energy Actions Workshop. The workshops, which were funded by Cavan County Local Development, were delivered by The Energy Team, Dunleer, who bring education on energy usage and renewable energy options to schools and communities all across the country. Aidan Fitzpatrick, Cootehill Area Development told the students about the ongoing developments with the Greenway in Cootehill and Gerry Reaburn, energy and Renewables Specialist with the Energy Team delivered the workshops too. Other Energy Team members present on the day were: Elizabeth Kearney: Communities Retrofit Programme Lead and Patrick Mulroy: Projects Coordinator.







### Team Hope Shoebox Appeal:

Students at St. Aidan's raised awareness about poverty and its effects (S.D.G/ No 1) through the shoebox appeal which the school community supports each year. This created opportunity for much discussion amongst the school community about Poverty and its effects (S.D.G. 1), Justice Issues (S.D.G. 16), quality education (S.D.G. 4, through sending school supplies in the shoeboxes), Good Health and wellbeing (S.D.G. 3, by sending toys, puzzles, clothes in the shoeboxes), and Reduced Inequalities (S.D.G. 10).



### Waste Project:

Cavan County Council kindly donated litter picking sticks, bibs, plastic bags, gloves to our Sustainability Team to help them in their community work, enabling them to become involved in litter picking in Cootehill town and around the school environs. Thank you to Mrs. Carmel Brady and Mr. Darren Duffy for donating these. They will be put to great use.



## E.S.D. Funding:

St. Aidan's has been granted funding of €5,000 by Department of Education to aid us with our Education for Sustainable Development endeavors. We are delighted to receive this funding and will put it to great use around the school with our various projects.

## **TY ASF**

This year's Active School's committee have been super busy. The group have been involved in surveying all students and staff on their physical activity habits, trying to get an insight into what students and staff would like to see happening in St Aidan's. These surveys were completed and all results were submitted to the school from the University of Limerick. The ASF team have gone through all results and compiled a report which will be presented to staff and students in the new year. The team also used this survey to plan events. Their first notable was a junior table tennis takeover. During lessons on Friday all students in 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year participated in a non-competitive tournament organised and led by the ASF team. The group have planned to do this with senior students in February. Students are also involved in running table tennis and badminton lunch time clubs for junior students. This group played a huge role in the school colour run and Well Fest and should be extremely proud of all their efforts and we can't wait to see what they do next.





## TY AQUA MOVES

Our school has been awarded funding to participate in an aquatic programme in conjunction with Sport Ireland's "Her Moves" campaign. This programme is aimed at getting teenage girls more active. Aqua Moves combines a mix of Aqua Aerobics and Artistic Swimming (previously known as Synchronised Swimming) fundamentals. At the end of the course each participant will receive a certificate of completion, goodie bags and a session with a nail technician. The Transition Years are really excited after meeting Jessica from Sport Ireland and they can't wait to get going over the next 6 weeks.



## U16 and u19 Girls' Basketball

This year St Aidan's were promoted to the C division after last year's successful campaign. Our group included; Ballybay Community College, Inver, Drogheda Grammar and Largy College. Our first outing was on Tuesday the 19<sup>th</sup> September 2023 against Largy College. The girls battled hard but lost out to a strong side on a scoreline of 35:06. Next up we travelled to play Ballybay and this was our best performance of the year but unfortunately we narrowly lost out by just two baskets. Inver proved too strong for us and Drogheda Grammar gifted us the points. The girls put in a tremendous effort all year and we thank them for the hard work and dedication. Team members included:





### U16 and u20 Football

Our u16 team competed in the C competition. Largy College, Breifne College, Colaiste Dun na Rí and Ballybay were in our group. We had our first outing against an extremely strong Dun na Rí side. We were missing a few star forwards due to involvement in club u16 county finals and we ended up losing our first game in Kingscourt. Notable key performers for St Aidan's were Nadine Keappock and Aoife Byrne. Next up we played Ballybay CS in Ballybay club grounds. This was definitely a better performance from our girls despite two of our players receiving nasty injuries. It was a game that we left behind us. Largy College travelled to our school pitch for our last game in the group where a win was a must for us to ensure we continued in the competition. Strong performances came from Isabella Hall and Keela Pepper but Largy College proved too strong. The girls put in a tremendous effort all year and we thank them for the hard work and dedication.

Our senior ladies' Gaelic team started their campaign strongly with a top 2 place on the blitz day held in Breffni Park. Wins came against Inver College and Breifne College and a narrow 1-point loss against Colaiste Dun an Rí. Next up we had to play Scoil Mhuire Buncrana in an Ulster preliminary game to earn a spot in an Ulster quarter final. A number of things went against us on this particular day but we went in at half time with a 4-point lead. The second half proved just as competitive with both teams neck and neck; but we ended up losing out narrowly by 5.08 to 6.08. The girls put in a tremendous effort all year and we thank them for the hard work and dedication.





## Cross Country

Well done to our cross-country participants who ran at the Cavan Post Primary School Competition recently. Well done to our medal winners. The Senior boys won their event, Ed Rowlands and Euan Crossan were 1st and 2nd overall, while Nadine Keappock was 2nd in the senior girls competition. In the U15 boys' event, Brian McDermot was 3rd overall while in the 1st Year boys' competition Charlie Gallagher was 2nd overall. Brilliant achievements by all of the athletes.



### Concern Debates

A group of TY Students took part in the Concern Debate Competition for the third year running. After some training and a few weeks of preparation we launched into our first debate versus Colaiste Orail in Monaghan. St Aidan's were opposing the motion that African nations must be allowed to develop fossil fuel resources to help lift their people out of poverty. Some passionate argument from both sides and some technical issues ended in a tied result with each team sharing three points.

Our second debate was against Our Lady's Bower in Dublin. This time St Aidan's were opposing the motion that Africa will regret its reliance on China. Students spoke on the meaning of the word regret and offered the view that the Global North cannot dictate to Africa who they can form alliances with.

Our final debate was against Castleblayney College and the motion in front of the house was Big business is indifferent to the Sustainable Development Goals. Proposing the motion, St Aidan's offered multiple examples of how big business ignore the needs of workers, consumers, suppliers and the environment. We await the results.

Well done to the TY Debating Group who participated.

## St. Aidan's Halloween Fancy Dress

On Friday, 27<sup>th</sup> of October, the students and teachers of St Aidan's dressed up for Halloween in aid of Cootehill Cancer Care. Each student brought in €2, and donations were made by staff as well. The total raised was €782.85. There was an overwhelming amount of effort put into the amazing costumes and winners from the juniors, seniors and staff. All winners were rewarded with Bluetooth speakers, water bottles and sweets, of course. Overall, it was a great day enjoyed by the whole school community and the donations were greatly appreciated.

*Lily Moynagh (5<sup>th</sup> Year Student Council Representative)*





# Some Halloween fun around the hallways of St. Aidans!



## Fifth year students Lily Foster and Eli Smith were busy composing Music and Lyrics to enter a Song Contest

(Lily Foster)

Taking part in the Cavan Institute Song Competition was both exciting and scary, I have never entered a singing competition before and especially not with a song that I wrote myself. Writing the lyrics for the song was challenging work as I had to try and make the song follow the same pattern, but with time and patience I had a finished song that I was happy with. Eli Smith who composed the incredible piano accompaniment along with my best friend Heidi and my sister Annie came together and helped make this song sound amazing. While writing the song itself was nice, nothing beat the feeling of working together to have a finished piece that was good enough to enter the competition. I am immensely proud of the people who helped me with this song and thankful to them as they gave up their time to make this dream possible. So, thank you Ms. Maguire for your support, and Eli for your piano skills they really brought the lyrics to life and to Heidi for your amazing voice that helped me tell the story and to Annie who provided the harmony.

(Eli Smith)

I had written songs before, which mainly comprised of classical and ragtime compositions which were performed on the piano. This was my first time to write a melody to accompany lyrics. Composing comes naturally to me so writing the melody of the song was straight forward. Parts of the melody of the song could be naturally introduced throughout the song, this is due to the fact that Lily Foster put great time, effort and thought into the lyrics and into the lyrical pattern. When writing the melody, I tried to compose a piece that would evoke and compliment the emotions conveyed in the lyrics, as well as accompanying the story being told. Upon reflection of the process, I felt that improvisation was a key skill that all team members needed to apply as the song was constantly changing, adapting and evolving. The final product would not have happened without good communication, commitment and dedicated teamwork from Lily Foster, Heidi Watson, Annie Foster and myself.





# The Fall of Manchester United

By Luke Watson

Manchester United defeated Swansea City 2-1 on the 12th of May 2013, to lift the Premier League trophy for the 13th time. Ten years later, they've not reached the summit since. Sir Alex Ferguson was leaving, and after the most dramatic end to the 2011/12 season, when United lost the title due to a late Sergio Aguero winner for United's city rivals, Manchester City, against Queens Park Rangers, United fought back, sealing the title with 89 points. Sir Alex had managed the club since 1986, and as the end of an era approached, he urged the fanbase to back their new manager. Ten years of turbulence, drama, chaos and revolt, was just about to begin.

Who was the successor then, to one of the greatest managers the world has ever seen? Well, David Moyes, Everton manager, was his replacement. A fellow Scot, just like Sir Alex, he had seen moderate success since taking the reigns at the Merseyside team near the end of the 2001/02 season. In 518 games with the team, he had a 42% win rate. The story goes is that Sir Alex handpicked Moyes to be his replacement. Unfortunately, that trust was sadly misplaced.

The 2013/14 transfer window for the reigning champions of England was turbulent. None of the main players from the 2012/13 squad left. However, there was very little activity when it came to buying players. Marouane Fellaini, one of the most crucial players in the Everton side Moyes coached, joined for a fee of £27,500,000. Perhaps it was a sign of things to come when he was the only high profile signing in a poor summer for the club.

The season started well. A victory in the Community Shield final against Wigan Athletic, with the previous season's star striker Robin van Persie bagging a brace, with the game finishing 2-0. It would be the only taste of silverware United would taste that season. On the opening day of the Premier League season, United travelled to the Liberty Stadium to play Swansea. Another brace from Robin van Persie, along with two goals as well from Danny Welbeck, secured a 4-1 win away from home. It wasn't a convincing win however, and United fans were upbeat, but also slightly concerned, before two very challenging games against Chelsea and Liverpool. United drew 0-0 against Jose Mourinho's Chelsea team at Old Trafford, before losing the North-West Derby 1-0 to Liverpool, after a fourth minute Daniel Sturridge goal.

Two wins on the trot against Crystal Palace and Bayer Leverkusen, the latter game United's first in that season's UEFA Champions League, set the scene for a mouthwatering Manchester Derby at the Etihad Stadium. United left with nothing. Manchester City raced into a 4-0 lead in the first 50 minutes, with Sergio Aguero, Yaya Toure and David Silva all getting on the scoresheet. Wayne Rooney scored a consolation, to become the highest scoring player in the Derby, but the writing was on the wall. The previous December, United won the exact same fixture with a 90th minute Robin van Persie winner, but this time, United were nowhere to be found. United made up for their defeat against Liverpool by winning against them 1-0 in the Capital One Cup, before losing to West Bromwich Albion three days later 2-1.

Finally, United had found form. October was a good month, at least by the standard of the season. Two draws, against Shakhtar Donetsk, and Southampton in the Premier League were offset by wins against Sunderland, Real Sociedad, Stoke and Norwich City. The unbeaten run continued into November, and despite the month being slightly worse than October, fans of the club could smile after big wins against Fulham, the old enemy Arsenal, and a resounding 5-0 win against Bayer Leverkusen, incidentally their biggest away win in the Champions League. A poor draw against Cardiff City was the low point, and the month ended after a well earned point at White Hart Lane against Tottenham Hotspur.

December began with Moyes facing Everton for the first time at Old Trafford. The game ended with an 86th minute winner from Everton player Bryan Oviedo, before another loss against Newcastle United, sparked fear into the fanbase. Six wins on the trot eased those fears however, ending 2013 on a positive note. In the year where the club had sealed a 20th league title, some fans may have been forgiven for feeling dissatisfied at the start to the 2013/14 season, but there was still hope at Old Trafford.

2014 began with a high profile signing. Juan Mata arrived from Chelsea for £37,000,000, and as things were on the up, United could potentially look forward to a very fruitful year.

The wheels came off in January. Three losses at the beginning of the month saw United knocked out of the FA Cup at the hands of Swansea, and suffering a first leg defeat to Sunderland in the semi final of the Capital One Cup. United did get their revenge against Swansea in the league, but it was yet another false dawn, as they lost to Chelsea 3-1 at Stamford Bridge, a Samuel Eto'o hat trick proving decisive for the Blues. The second leg against Sunderland came around, and United won it 2-1, bringing the game to a penalty shootout. It was to be the end of United's conquest for a first major trophy of the season however, as Sunderland prevailed 2-1 on penalties. The month ended with a 2-0 win against Cardiff, that saw Robin van Persie provide a goal after returning from injury, Juan Mata make his debut, and former United striker Ole Gunnar Solskjaer return to Old Trafford as Cardiff manager. We might hear about him some more in the future.

February was another tough month. United only won a single game, getting the league double over Crystal Palace. They lost 2-1 to Stoke, drew 2-2 and 0-0 with Fulham and Arsenal respectively, before suffering an embarrassing 2-0 loss to Olympiacos in the Champions League Round of 16 first leg. Things had to change, and the first calls for the head of David Moyes were coming from the United faithful.



Was March any better? Yes, it was. United won four games, against West Bromwich Albion, West Ham United, Aston Villa, and a remarkable Champions League comeback against Olympiacos, winning 3-0 at home. They did, however, lose the second North-West, and Manchester Derbies of the Premier League season, losing both 3-0 to Liverpool and Manchester City, both at Old Trafford.

April proved to be the end for Moyes. A tough draw against Bayern Munich in the Champions League saw them lose 4-2 on aggregate to the German champions, before Moyes' final win as manager came against Newcastle United, with his side winning 4-0 against their old title rivals. It was quite ironic the Moyes era ended after a 2-0 loss to Everton at Goodison Park, with Leighton Baines and Kevin Mirallas putting the final nails in his coffin.

So who would replace Moyes? Why, nobody except United legend Ryan Giggs. He entered the dugout against Norwich, and after reverting back to a familiar Ferguson 4-4-2, they trashed the Canaries 4-0, with Wayne Rooney and Juan Mata both scoring twice. Was it a false dawn? You could say so. The following week, United lost to Sunderland again, before clinching their final win of the season against Hull City. Matchweek 38 of a dismal season loomed. Manchester City and Liverpool were going toe to toe for the league title, with City ending up as champions again, after a 2-0 win against West Ham on the final day of the season. United's campaign ended with a 1-1 draw against Mauricio Pochettino's Southampton. Their title defence had been abysmal. The Red Devils finished seventh, missing out on European football for the first time since the 1989/90 season. Failure wasn't a word associated with Manchester United, but it was about to become very normal indeed.

The off-season saw Louis van Gaal appointed as permanent manager, but after a season where they went from scoring 89 to 64 points, could he wave his magic wand and fix England's dominant side? Only time would tell.



**Doomed from the start by Daisy Sibanda**

Their love had blossomed in the strangest place:  
One cold and distant, devoid of hope,  
A place where dreams  
Had turned grey  
And hope's  
flickering flame  
dimmed,  
long ago.  
And yet  
They'd hoped  
And dreamed that  
Their love would flourish.  
But  
like fleeting petals,  
Their love was bound,  
Destined to fade without a sound,  
A decorative boom, destined not to last;  
Leaving behind only memories of a beautiful past.

**St Aidan's  
Writers**

## Sign O' The Times by Orlaith Smith

In a world so vast and wide  
A fifteen-year-old takes it all in stride  
Screens and memes, they fill our days  
In this digital world, we find our ways.  
We see the world through a different lens,  
Making countless friends,  
In this world that's ever-changing,  
Our youthful spirit never-aging.  
We dream of futures bright and bold,  
With stories waiting to be told.  
In our hearts a burning fire,  
To reach, to grasp our hearts' desire.  
We see the world through a different lens,  
In a world of followers, we set the trends.  
Despite the chaos, we're engaging,  
Our youthful energy, never waning.  
So here's to us, the young and free,  
Seeing the world at a mere fifteen.

## Writer's block by Eabha Slowey

I'm sitting down to write a poem  
But I don't know what to write.  
I'm battling with the pen and paper  
And I'm giving up the fight.

The words aren't flowing as they should:  
I can't think of any rhymes.  
My bin is overflowing  
From scrapping all those lines.

My mind is hazy and clouded  
My Inspiration's running low;  
But I sit and wait for it to arrive -  
Because it will come, I know.

For inspiration is all around -  
Where we least expect to look:  
In the nooks and crannies of the world around  
us;  
In the spine of every book.

So I wait for it to hit me;  
Like rainfall on a slate,  
For inspiration is all around,  
And comes to those who wait.





There are many different coding initiatives and competitions which are open to all students to enter. Students interested in entering any of the competitions listed should speak with Ms Noone.

### 1. Bebras First Round 2023 – 13<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> November 2023

Coding and Computer Science students from St. Aidan's Comprehensive School participated in "The Bebras Computing Challenge" which introduces computational thinking to students, by allowing them to solve interactive tasks online. It is run in over 50 countries and takes place every November. The tasks can be answered without prior knowledge about computational thinking or information and communication technology.

All students will receive a certificate for taking part. The top performing students are then invited to the National Finals in 2024. In 2021 three students representing St. Aidan's Comprehensive School were invited to the National Finals which were held online.

### 2. Hour of Code – December 4<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> 2023

The Hour of Code takes place each year during Computer Science Education Week December 4<sup>th</sup> – December 11<sup>th</sup>. Computer Science Education Week is held annually in recognition of the birthday of computing pioneer Admiral Grace Murray Hopper (December 9, 1906). All students who complete their Hour of Code will receive a certificate.

### 3. Scratch – Closing date 20<sup>th</sup> March 2024

The next National Scratch Competition is open for entries and deadline for project submissions is 20<sup>th</sup> March 2024. All students who take part and enter a project will receive a certificate. Project entries can be from an individual or from a team of not more than 3 students per team. The Scratch National Final will take place in University of Limerick, May 2024 with the date to be confirmed.

### 4. OECD PILA Project

Ms Noone was invited to participate in the OECD Platform for Innovative Learning Assessments (PILA) as one of three Irish schools currently participating in the International Pilot stage. Students in Singapore, Brazil, Netherlands, Germany and Ireland have been selected for the Pilot Stage September 2021 – April 2022. St. Aidan's Comprehensive School has successfully participated in previous Pilot Programmes for introducing Coding, Computer Science and ePortfolios.

PILA provides 'learning assessments', which are assessment experiences that include resources and structured support (i.e. scaffolds) for learning. During these experiences, students iteratively develop programs using various forms of support, such as tutorials, automated feedback, hints and worked examples. The assessments are cumulative, asking students to use what they practiced in earlier tasks when completing successive, more complex tasks.

Throughout January – March 2022, Coding and Computer Science students from 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and TY will participated in PILA. The final report is being launched on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2023 titled: ***The Platform for Innovative Learning Assessments: Supporting teachers to use digital tools for developing and assessing 21st century competences.***

**Dream Space Ambassador Programme**

Dream Space Ambassador Programme is a student leadership programme about digital technology and learning how to mentor other students in STEM education. The Dream Space Ambassadors are TY students: Chloe Hannigan, Clara McCaul, Draiocht NiDubhshlaine and Grace Brady. So far, we have taken part in a training course learning about Microbit, and several live events for occasions such as Maths Week and Climate Action Week. As part of the programme, we have set up and started running a computer club for first year every Tuesday at lunchtime, where we teach students about internet safety, coding and other things that they are interested in learning about.

**Written by: Dream Space Ambassador Team 2023-2024**

**Digital Media Literacy**

The Digital Media Literacy students have been busy developing their skills for presentations using PowerPoint. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Year students created some excellent presentations on the UN Sustainable Goals. (Images)

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Year students are currently working on their CBA on social media safety and awareness. The results of their work will be published in future newsletter. Webwise is an excellent resource for anyone who has any questions about social media applications with a special section for parents with explainers. [www.webwise.ie](http://www.webwise.ie) (Images)



**TY Business**

TY Business groups this year enjoyed a new experience. They prepared Curriculum Vitae and Letters of Application and applied for realistic jobs that were advertised. Their completed applications were forwarded to Link Credit Union, Cootehill who hosted formal interviews for each student. Some students were very nervous about going into their interviews and breathed a sigh of relief when their interview had concluded. All students enjoyed the experience more than they had anticipated. Link Credit Union sent individual feedback to each student with pointers on how to improve and the students got a goodie bag for their endeavours. Congratulations to all!