

# YOUTHREACH NEWSLETTER

Volume 20– Issue 2

National Association of Youthreach Coordinators

November 2016



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Day!  
Blanchard-  
stown  
Youthreach

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'A journey of a thousand miles  
begins with one single step' -  
Lao Tzu



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# Education and Achievement



## Graduation Day At Blanchardstown Youthreach

This year we saw 24 of our students graduate at QQI level 4 & 5. Our graduates are moving on to employment and further education and we want to wish each and every one of them the best for the future. Their Graduation is the culmination of all their hard work and effort in there time at Blanchardstown Youthreach!



# Education and Achievement



## Marathon Team Relay Medals for Ballincollig Youthreach

Congratulations to the student and staff team who precisely paced themselves to finish the Cork City Marathon Team Relay on a warm June Bank Holiday Monday. This was the fourth Cork City Marathon Team Relay for Youthreach on the Marathon's tenth anniversary. All were delighted to receive these prestigious tenth anniversary medals and t-shirts— well done to all involved!



L-R: Carmel O'Sullivan, Niamh McEvoy, Aoife Walsh and Breda Dennehy

## Celebrating Success – LMETB Youthreach and Magnet Training Centre Achievement Awards

LMETB's Youthreach centres and Magnet Community Training Centre celebrated their highest achievers at QQI Levels 4 and 5 in October at the City North Hotel in Gormanston.

In attendance at the event were students, parents, guardians, teachers and Co-ordinators. Guests from LMETB included Martin O' Brien (Chief Executive), Cllr Oliver Tully (Chairperson), Sadie Ward McDermott (Director of Further Education and Training), Imelda Prunty (Adult Education Officer) and LMETB Board members Siobhan Greer, Cllr Sharon Tolan, Cllr Damien O'Reilly and Cllr Nick Killian.

A truly impressive showing from centres across Louth and Meath saw the award of eleven trophies in all. The recipients from Youthreach were: Andrew Corish, Level 4 General Learning (Ashbourne); Thomas McEnteggart, Level 4 Employment Skills (Drogheda); Cliona Mahon, Level 4 General Learning (Kells); Catriona Joyce, Level 4 General Learning (Navan Foundation); Carmel Beatty, Level 5 General Learning and Kamil Swierczynska, Level 4 IT Skills (both Navan Progression); Adam Rowley, Level 4 IT Skills (Trim).



The recipients from Magnet Community Training Centre were Danielle Cooney (Level 4 Employment Skills), Stephanie Morrissey (Level 4 Early Childhood Education & Care Support), Stacey Stewart (Level 5 Early Childhood & Education) and Lauren McKeever (Level 5 Hairdressing).

# Education and Achievement



## Clondalkin Youthreach Celebrates Achievement

On Thursday, 7<sup>th</sup> of July Clondalkin Youthreach marked the end of another productive academic year with an awards ceremony. Twenty six students celebrated successfully achieving their Quality and Qualifications Ireland (Q.Q.I., formerly FETAC) awards at levels 3 and 4. Another reason to celebrate was the fact that three students also achieved a level 5 Certificate in Occupational First Aid, a first for our centre.

The certificates were presented by native Clondalkin man Jim Gavin. Jim took time out from his busy schedule as manager of Dublin's Senior Football team to come meet the students and help celebrate their success. It was a huge honour to have a home-grown hero officiate the proceedings.

He gave a very inspirational talk to the students and encouraged them to follow their dreams. He compared them to his team preparing for a big game; saying that the students are in preparation for their futures. He acknowledged the great work that Youthreach does with young people.

Our esteemed guest also presented 'Student of the Year Awards' to Toni Cunningham and Erika Williams in recognition of their achievements and commitment to the programme. A special award was also presented to Ryan Bambrick to celebrate his overall improvement on the programme. Graham Warren, Centre Coordinator presented this award.



Toni Cunningham



Erika Williams



Ryan Bambrick

Then as a way of thanking Jim Gavin, Shauna McGrath presented him with a garden gnome, which was sporting a Dublin kit on behalf of all of the students. Families and friends of the students were also present to share the occasion. The event was finished with a buffet lunch, which was prepared primarily by the students.



# Education and Achievement



## Ballincollig Wins X-Hale Youth Awards Competition!

Ballincollig Youthreach has been awarded Overall Senior Winner at the Irish Cancer Society X-HALE Youth Awards 2016. The group scooped the award for its short film "I don't know why I love you" which was showcased at the recent event (Thursday 7th July) in the Lighthouse Cinema in Smithfield. Over 300 young people came together to showcase their anti-tobacco films and projects which they have created to contribute towards establishing Ireland's first smoke-free generation.

Smoking rates among young people have plummeted to their lowest rate yet with only eight per cent of young people between the ages of 10 and 17 now smoking. The rate of smoking among young people in Ireland has seen continuous decline in recent years. While in 1998, 21.2 per cent of young people between 10-17 years were smoking, the numbers dropped to 11.9 per cent in 2010 and 8 per cent in 2014\*. X-HALE is an initiative of the Irish Cancer Society which aims to empower young people to work towards reducing smoking among their generation, by raising awareness about the dangers of smoking and encouraging their peers to be smoke free. Since its inception in 2011, the X-HALE Youth Awards has seen almost 1,200 young people attend the annual event, with over a quarter of a million views for the young people's smoking prevention short films and projects online.

Kevin O'Hagan, Cancer Prevention Manager at the Irish Cancer Society said: "I would like to congratulate Ballincollig Youthreach for taking part and for making a positive impact on their health and that of their peers. They have been recognised for exceptional effort in their project. We need to look at what Ballincollig Youthreach and the rest of the #theXgeneration are saying. They can be Ireland's first smoke-free generation and they are telling us in their own way that the time is up for the tobacco industry in this country. They are educated on the issue of smoking and are refusing to let their health be affected by tobacco."

This is the sixth year of the X-HALE Youth Awards which began in December 2010 when the Society invited applications from youth groups from all over Ireland for funding under the scheme. Since its inception, the Society has invested approximately €130,000 in support for youth groups across the country to tackle smoking. Ballincollig Youthreach received an iPad-mini, kindly sponsored by Bank of Ireland.



The winners of the 2016 X-HALE Youth Awards are listed below. For further information on X-HALE visit [www.cancer.ie/xhale](http://www.cancer.ie/xhale) and to watch the X-HALE entries visit [www.cancer.ie/xhale2016](http://www.cancer.ie/xhale2016).

Follow the X-HALE conversation using the #TheXGeneration , go to the Facebook Page <https://www.facebook.com/XHaleYouthAwards> or the Tumblr blog[www.thexgenerationxhale.tumblr.com](http://www.thexgenerationxhale.tumblr.com)

*Left to Right: Back Row: Trish Lavelle, Bobby Nugent, Niamh McEvoy, Carmel O'Sullivan> Front Row: Urla Cooney, Oscar Scannel, Aoife Walsh*

# Feature: The Actors of Ballyfermot Youthreach



## Ballyfermot Youthreach conquers Edinburgh

*'A lot can happen in three years...'*

Three years ago Unknown Theatre began in Ballyfermot Youthreach. A courageous group of young people, most of whom had never set foot in a theatre before, never seen a play or attended a drama class, decided to take a leap into the unknown. Young people designated as early school leavers whose life experiences, or backgrounds, are such that theatre may not at first be appreciated, may not even be welcomed or may be actively resisted. Through Unknown Theatre, they wanted to prove that they had something to say, could say it in their own way and their own voice, and at a standard comparable to anything else out there worth an audience's time and money.

It began with a taster series of six workshops, Thursday mornings in The New Theatre, with a young cast ranging in ages from 16 upwards. There they laughed, played, cried on occasion, improvised and devised their scenes and stories. In July 2014, *Streets and Stories*, the inaugural production by The Unknown Theatre, was first performed to critical acclaim. A year on they returned with *If Walls Could Talk*, which also received huge critical acclaim, subsequently touring a number of venues in Ireland before returning in July to The New Theatre by popular demand and playing to sold out houses. In between, there have been prestigious awards, including The Olympia Theatre Rising Star Award, standing ovations, full house and successful auditions for Dublin Youth Theatre. Now, to cap it all off, Unknown Theatre have just completed a hugely successful run at this year's Edinburgh Fringe Festival.

They hadn't planned to go to Edinburgh! But everyone who saw the show said they should. And the New Theatre wanted to help. So off they went, Taylor Davis, Luke Weekes, Zoe Kelly, Chelsea Butterly, John McCarthy, Aishling Hickey, Ciara Gavin, Conor Quinn and Danni Hannon, meeting at the airport at 4.00 am, on an August, Sunday morning. For the next four days Unknown Theatre performed in the largest, international theatre festival in the world. And they did not look out of place. They were there on merit, holding their own, standing head and shoulders with all the other shows they saw. They belonged there and they gave an excellent account of themselves and Youthreach.

Unknown Theatre and The New Theatre present

# If Walls Could Talk

devised by Ballyfermot Youthreach  
written and directed  
by Chris O'Rourke

July 21st - July 23rd, 7.30pm

**fringe**

18-29 August 2016  
Official participant Edinburgh  
Fringe Festival 2016

Left to Right:

Chelsea Butterly,  
Luke Weekes,  
Taylor Davis  
(seated front),  
Aishling Hickey,  
John McCarthy,  
Ciara Gavin,  
Conor Quinn, Zoe  
Kelly.



€10 / €5 (student). Booking: [thenewtheatre.com](http://thenewtheatre.com)  
43 East Essex Street, Temple Bar, D2

the  
new  
theatre

Unknown Theatre came about in response to a need. Many conventional drama programmes don't address this need. These students often have a different energy, a different way of doing things and words like "safe place" don't have the same meaning they might for others. They need to lead, to take you to where they want to go, show you while discovering for themselves what they are capable of, discovering the power of theatre by making theatre on their own terms.

Three years ago, who would have thought it? A bunch of Youthreach kids, with no previous experience, performing at the Edinburgh Fringe.

Just shows what can happen and what Youthreach students are capable of. (*Chris O'Rourke*)

## Swan Song

"Cold," I mutter as I stroked her cheek to push her black bangs away from her big, beautiful hazel eyes... Her eyes aren't so hazel anymore, it's as if the life was drained from them... Even though she lays lifeless on the cold tile of the kitchen, I still very much believe she is alive. I hope she is alive. I stroke her hand and pull up her sleeve. As my hand makes my way up her arm, she is so very cold and lifeless. I hope and pray as my hand progresses I find some warmth, I become disappointed and upset as I reach her shoulder. There is no warmth...

I lay there with her for what feels like minutes but happens to be hours. All I can think about is if this will be the last time I see her face, will I allow myself to let go of her and progress with my life and forget she was a person at all or will I simply dwell in what she taught and showed me in my life... There is no in-between for me.

I woke from my distant thought to the sound of grocery bags dropping and Susanna's scream. All I can picture is her face, the look of fear and distress, how the perfect mole that lies directly on her left cheek would look covered by tears. How brown her eyes were before they filled with great sadness, how enchanting she is and memorable. I somewhat knew I would never see her eyes the same after what she had just witnessed.

Everything felt slow and unrealistic as if time forgot about me in my sadness and left me behind. I felt a force grab me, a great force drag me from the spot I had laid in for hours. My eyes never left Susanna's. I'm dragged through the hall to the garden. The garden has lost its colour. The grass is no longer a vibrant green. I keep thinking how I need to cut the grass, it has gotten far too long. I think to myself as if I'll get the chance, sadly I don't know if the opportunity will arise again for me. The sky has turned to a pale grey, I fear this is the first of many times I will feel so trapped.

I am in the back of a car with the faint noise of a siren and blurred blue and red lights flashing in my eyes.

"Did you do it?" a voice asks from a distance.

I jump back to reality and everything seems to have caught up with me. Time has once again remembered me.

"w-w-what?" I replied with a quiver.

I very much knew what he was asking me, I just didn't know the answer to the question he asked. I feel somewhat afraid since the memory of what had happened prior is gone. What did happen?

"Did you do it!?" he said more aggressively and somewhat provoking.

All I can think about is why is he so aggravated? Did this man know the lifeless vessel that lay on my kitchen floor? If so why can't I remember his face, why can't I link him to some chapter of my life? Who is this person?

"If only I knew, sir... If only I knew."--

**Jack Grant, Priory Youthreach**



## Other News and Events



### Youthreach Trim as Ireland's first Quality Centre of Education

Trim Youth Reach is proud of its status as Ireland's premier Quality Centre of Education adopting the educational philosophy of Dr. William Glasser which is centred on the concept of Choice Theory. Using the principles of Lead Management the application of Glasser theory is evident in all aspects of the centre making it a model of good practice at national and international level. As such the school has enjoyed visits from countless students and educational professionals from around the world to observe how the theory is applied here at the centre and to evaluate how this could be applied in their own organisations. Guests to the centre are welcome to observe students and staff interact in an innovative way and they are always impressed by the quality of relationships at student to student level and at staff to student level which we believe is hugely attributable to the application of Glasser theory.

In the context of the centre here it means that everyone operates on the belief that it is impossible to control another human being and that the most important thing is the development of relationships between any two people. The theory is based on the presumption that in order to influence people you need to develop meaningful relationships between any two people. People grow best in a needs satisfying environment and this has major implications both for the relationships in the centre and for the quality of the work that students engage in and produce. Relationships are based on trust and respect and there is a huge emphasis on the equality of relationships between staff and students. Students are all viewed by staff in holistic terms and in terms of achieving the very best that they can do at that particular time. Students are encouraged to make good choices and to always consider the choices they make and to reflect on behaviour in a manner that results in the best possible outcomes for the student.

staff from the Froebel HOPE Teacher Education Partnership in India which was established eight years ago. The Indian representatives are very keen to apply the learning from the visit to trim to their own organisations.

Again the innovative teaching and learning styles were of particular significance to Laura. We were also honoured to be invited as guest speakers at the Maynooth Education Forum, **Transforming Curricula: Empowering Learners** last year, a conference which brings together leading thinkers, strategists, policy makers, academics and practitioners in education in Ireland with international guests to discuss and debate current issues in education. The Centre here was featured as a model of best practice in the delivery of the Quality Model and included presentations from current students at the time which was well received by participants at the conference. A common thread in the delivery of the Quality School model is that the student is at the centre of everything we do here and in this we welcome visitors to observe first-hand the unique teaching and learning experience here at Trim Youth Reach. More information on the Dr Glasser Quality School and on Trim Youth Reach may be obtained by contacting the centre @ Ph: 046 9431203 or email: [egalvin@lmetb.ie](mailto:egalvin@lmetb.ie)



## Other News and Events



### Overnight Trip to Carlingford with Youthreach Foundation Navan

On Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> April a number of our students, as well as Nicola, our Coordinator, and Sharon, our Resource Person, headed off to the outdoor adventure centre in Carlingford for an overnight trip. They took part in lots of activities including Ziptopia, Peer Jumping, and Lazer Tag. There was lots of team building, lots of food and not so much sleep! Everyone had a fantastic time, and the staff in Carlingford commended the students for their participation, enthusiasm and respect.



### Kilkenny Youthreach: 'Because Your Mind Matters'

Kilkenny Youthreach promoted positive mental health and well-being on the 12<sup>th</sup> October during Mental Health Week. The students took part in positive mental health talks, healthy eating for positive minds, mindfulness yoga and many more activities. The L.C.A group, organisers of the hugely successful day, have launched the Amber Flag initiative which aims to raise awareness of the importance of Positive Mental Health and reduce any stigmas associated with it. The students were elated after the triumph of the day and look forward to the rest of their ideas and planning coming to fruition. On behalf of all staff and students, we would like to say a big thank you to the Daffodil Foundation and our lovely yoga instructor, Rachel Ni Neill, for all their help and support on the day.



## Other News and Events



### Kilbeggan Youthreach Summer Blowout 2016

For the first time the centre hosted an event in June 2016 welcoming all walks of life into the centre and of course our other Youthreach centres under the LWETB were invited. The students for the previous 3 months had taken part in Music Generation which is a project ran within Westmeath and Offaly. Two extremely talented musicians Mr Frank Byrne and Mr Johnny Owens used their skills to teach the students how to play a number of instruments with the aim of performing a concert on the 30<sup>th</sup> June to raise awareness of the work being done within the centre and also raise money for Pieta House.

It was a massive success for the centre. It gave the students the opportunity to show others how far they have come, to show their family and friends their achievements and to open people's eyes to the world of Youthreach. It was a chance for staff and students to celebrate achievement and success. The students played a blinder on the day ensuring their guests were entering a positive and happy environment, welcoming people, ensuring all felt comfortable and pleased to be within Kilbeggan Youthreach. There were many compliments given to staff and students about the day which was a great boost for us. There was a fantastic atmosphere within the centre and it was lovely to see all the students' parents and how proud they are of their teens.

The day involved the Youthreach bakery, a face painter for the children and children-at-heart, old school games that were all made by the students, a BBQ and much more. All proceeds went to Pieta House. Students made over €700 for a fantastic cause. This money will go towards helping at least three individuals in their darkest hour.

The Westmeath Examiner and Topic arrived on the day to interview staff and take pictures of the event. Our CE Mr Christy Duffy & AO Mr Garrett Buckley popped in to show their support. The CTC from Athlone and Mr John Costello the Manager of Athlone Training Centre also arrived on the day to support the cause.

As you can imagine the students were extremely proud of what they achieved that day, there was a great team effort between them all, they encouraged and supported each other and the staff, and they certainly did shine, making their mark to all. They definitely did the staff extremely proud and I am sure it won't be the last time.





## Other News and Events



### National 5-a-side Football Tournament

Congratulations to **Youthreach Longford**, overall winners in the 5-A-Side All Ireland indoor soccer tournament at Athlone I.T. 1<sup>st</sup> July 2016.

Also Ballinrobe Youthreach who were runners up in the competition.



Left to right: Seán Ó Súilleabháin (Co-ordinator Youthreach Longford), Chad Reilly Corey Leonard, Tony McDonnell, John Joe Nevin, Michael McDonagh (Captain), Noel Ward Martin Doyle and Richie Doyle. Dean Shaughnessy (Ballinrobe Youthreach), Jonathan Lawrence (Captain), Kaylem Connolly, Stephen Maughan, Shane Lawrence, Michael Maughan, Luccas Griffin, Chris Boshell, Eddie Keane (Organiser Ennis Youthreach), Frank Brady (Co-ordinator Youthreach Ballinrobe).

### Practical Achievement Task– Amy Diggin of Tralee Youthreach

As part of a Practical Achievement Task I decided to do a fundraiser for the Kerry to Cork Health Link bus. I decided to do this because I had spoken to the manager of the service part of a different module and I thought the service was brilliant. I spoke to Breda and asked would I be able to do a small fundraiser for the service, she was delighted. I choose the Kerry to Cork Health Link bus, as it works with people who have cancer, the bus travels to Cork every day bringing people for their treatment. They have a certain time slot in the hospital so people don't have to wait long up there; they go up and down from Cork every day. The bus is completely free for anyone who needs to avail of the service, and they provide counselling for people availing of the service too. They also have a therapy room so the women can get their nails, hair and make-up done. They also have supports for their families, friends and partners.

For my fundraiser I decided to run an event which involved a pyjamas day, sports in the hall, finger food and watch a movie with sweets. I charged everyone a €5 to take part in the event. I also went around to my family and staff in the KDYS to look for donations, the day was a great success and I got to raise loads of awareness about the service. In total I raised €208 for The Kerry to Cork Health Link Bus; Breda was delighted with the funds and also spoke to our group to thank them for what I did. I also organised the newspapers to come in and take a picture of me presenting the cheque to Breda. I was really happy with the event.



Amy Diggin's Pyjama Day– Tralee Youthreach

## Other News and Events



### WICKLOW YOUTHREACH

Ciara, Robert, Glen, Mikey, Jade and Ciara,

Hard-working, enthusiastic, confident, energetic, kind-hearted and bubbly,

Who love new experiences, meeting people and learning new things,

Who feel motivated, excited and nervous for the future,

Who need support, time to mature and a kick in the arse!!!

Who give advice, comfort and reassurance,

Who fear the future, rejection and failure,

Who would like to see an end to poverty, travel the world and success for ourselves,

Who live in fairyland and sometimes a bubble; a world full of opportunities,

We are who we are,

We are us,

Senior Students of Wicklow Youthreach 2016.

### Blanchardstown Youthreach Students getting creative in 2016

Students of Blanchardstown Youthreach entered the “Junk Kouture” 2016 national contest along with many other young designers from Youthreach centres and second level schools from around Ireland and Northern Ireland. The contest is supported by Bank of Ireland which encourages young people to be imaginative in designing and creating couture clothing using everyday junk that is thrown away. The group entered two designs for the competition “The Gladiator” and “Warrior Queen” and we were delighted that The Gladiator themed outfit was selected for the eastern regional final in the Helix March 7<sup>th</sup> 2016. Art teacher Caroline Murray said “ Participating in the Junk Kouture contest is a fantastic and inventive process that encouraged our students to look at environmental issues and is definitely a process we will do again”.

### Students from Balbriggan Youthreach ‘Look at the Law’

During May and June, Balbriggan Youthreach students worked with our Community Guards on a module entitled “Let’s look at the Law”.

Over a number of weeks, students worked with Kate and Dave, the Community Guards at Balbriggan Garda Station to build up a body of knowledge to enable them run an imitation trial. The programme culminated with a very lively simulated trial in Balbriggan Court House with students acting as jurors, witnesses, victims, Gardai and persons bringing and defending a very controversial case. Gerry Curran from the Courts Service was the Judge and he oversaw proceedings at the trial.

“Let’s Look at the Law” module was designed by the Courts Service in consultation with key stakeholders and can be used as part of the C.S.P.E. syllabus. This module aims to educate students about specific areas of the Irish legal system and to empower them as active citizens of Ireland. It was a great hit with the students and helped enormously to develop team work and communication skills.



Students of Balbriggan Youthreach on the day

## My Time at Priory Youthreach

When I first joined Priory Youthreach I was the average cheeky/angry teenager who isn't in school and thinks everybody's out to get them. The teachers were my worst enemy and work was the devil. I didn't have any interest in wanting to get my qualifications and it just felt like another school to me. About 6months after I joined I was just being too bold and I was told unless I cop on I would lose my place. After this one of my teachers had a talk with me, she tried to explain to me from my point of view how much potential I have and why I need this, she explained that not everyone is against me and sometimes people really do want to help, I just needed to let them.

This changed my point of view about Youthreach and why I was here. I started to actually do my work and not be as argumentative towards everyone which made me start enjoying my time here rather than hating it. I started to form relationships with my teachers and classmates, stopped being so defensive and started to have a laugh. It all started getting so good to the point where I actually liked coming in.

If I could give the old me who started here some advice it would be; Youthreach isn't the same as school and the staff actually do care about you and your wellbeing. It's easier just to do the work instead of having a 15minute argument on why you have to answer a question that doesn't suit whatever humour you're in, but most of all the biggest piece of advice I would have given myself is let people help you when you need it because not everyone is out to get you and the outcome could be a better, happier you.

Rachael (Priory Youthreach, Tallaght, Dublin 24.)



## Our Youthreach Story...

**On behalf of all the senior students at Wicklow Youthreach we would like to share our experiences of returning to education and also a poem we wrote to celebrate the next step of our journey to further education and employment.  
(See page 15)**

**'WYR has given me the push I needed to go back to Irish dancing, the sport I loved but abandoned for four years. Thanks to the staff and students for boosting my confidence to grow, mature and become more confident in myself.'**  
**Senior Student, Ciara Ryan**



**'WYR helped me expand my knowledge and become a better person. My experiences on the programme have contributed towards building skills for my future and I loved every minute of it.'**

**Senior Student, Michael O'Brien**



**'WYR opened my eyes and made me realise how important my dreams and goals are in life. I have found my confidence and have realised my true potential to achieve my dream job as a chef.'**

**Senior Student, Robert Goucher**

