

Funding for energy upgrades

MINISTER for Communications,

Climate Action and Environment, Richard

Bruton, has announced a total of €20 million

funding for community energy upgrades in 2020.

Minister Bruton also announced that funding from the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) programmes in 2020 will be ring-fenced to deliver group retrofits to scale up climate action in communities.

Speaking at the announcement, Minister Bruton said: "To achieve the goals set in the Climate Action Plan we must quickly step up the reach of our programmes from around 22,000 homes per year to 50,000 and encourage people to make more profound shifts in how they heat their homes.

"This can only be done if we start to bundle work so large numbers act together.

"In 2020, we shall be ring-fencing monies from SEAI programmes to scale up the climate transition in communities.

"This means homes with different needs and different opportunities have the chance to group together to make their homes climate resilient for themselves, for their

children and for the wider world.

"In the first of the incentives under this

new approach, I am announcing that €4 million of the 2020 funding for the SEAI community grant scheme will be ring-fenced and used to specifically target housing retrofit projects, which will deliver retrofits grouping home upgrades together, making it easier and cheaper to upgrade your home."

Since 2012, the SEAI community grant scheme has supported over 400 community energy efficiency projects.

This has resulted in

18,200 homes, and over 2,500 community, public and private buildings being upgraded.

The €145 million invested to date has leveraged over €370 million overall investment in communities across the country with annual energy savings estimated to be over €65 million.

Applicants for the new housing retrofit project strand will be able to apply early in the new year while all other projects were accepting applications before Christmas.

All successful

applicants will have a strong partnership approach and will see

communities working together to deliver the proposed project.

Minister Bruton said community partnerships are the focus of the scheme and are crucial to delivering on the objectives set out in the Climate Action Plan.

"We need to see coalitions of change built locally between the public and private sectors, residential and non-residential sectors, commercial and not-for-profit organisations," he added.



St Michael's House Leisure Centre, Coolock, received a Government grant through SEAI for a community energy upgrade last year. Pictured at the event was (from l-r): Paddy Sweeney, managing director, Retrofit Energy Ireland Limited (RIEL); Richard Bruton TD, Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment; Sarah Hewitt, St Michael's House Leisure Centre Manager; and John Randles, Head of Department, SEAI. *PHOTO: CHRIS BELLEW/FENNELL PHOTOGRAPHY*

DublinGazette



Steady, teddy, go for a check!

BROOKE Sharkey was happy to meet RCSI student Cristy Liang and a furry injured friend at the RCSI Paediatrics Society's annual Teddy Bear Hospital day recently. Hundreds of children brought their sick or injured teddies to the annual event last weekend, where Cristy and the rest of her Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI) peers did their best to check the teds over. As well as checking teddies and other beloved toys out, the RCSI crew were also doing their best to help children feel comfortable around doctors and hospitals, and learn how to stay healthy through diet and exercise. In addition, the day also helped to fundraise for St Michael's House, which provides a comprehensive range of services and supports to adults and children with intellectual disabilities and their families in the greater Dublin area. Picture: Julien Behal



Irish Examiner

Book buddies



RTÉ broadcaster Bryan Dobson with Eoghan O'Sullivan, 7, from Rathfarnham, Trixie Hurley, 10, from Goatstown, Liz Reynolds, CEO of St Michael's House, and Lauren Newman, 10, from Rathfarnham launching this year's Bring A Book, Buy A Book fundraising campaign for St Michael's House in Dublin, one of Ireland's largest providers of community based services for children and adults with intellectual disabilities. The campaign runs all next week, from March 1-8. SEE: www.smh.ie

Picture: Fennell Photography



St Michael's House launch 'Bring a Book'

St Michael's House, largest providers of community based services for children and adults with intellectual disabilities in Fingal and around the country, has launched its 12th annual 'Bring a Book, Buy a Book' fundraising campaign, which is running from March 1 to 8.

As part of this year's campaign the charity is encouraging people to balance their time by closing the screen and opening a book. The campaign was launched by RTE broadcaster Bryan Dobson.

To get people thinking about the importance of balancing screen time with technology and reading, St Michael's House is running an engaging social media campaign using the hashtag #BalanceTheBooks with the support of healthcare recruiter, Servisource.

Instagram, and Facebook users will be challenged to balance books on their head and attempt to take four steps. When social media users upload a video or image of themselves completing the difficult challenge, Servisource will donate €10 to the charity. All funds raised will directly benefit the Summer Supports for children with Intellectual disabilities.

To date, the 'Bring a Book, Buy a Book' campaign has raised €400,000 and over 100,000 pre-loved books have found new homes. This year marks the first year that a sponsor has supported the initiative, and St Michael's House is hoping to build on the success of previous campaigns.

Commenting on the campaign and the new 'Balance the Books' challenge, Barbara Wiseman, Head of Communications and Fundraising at St. Michael's House said: 'For the twelfth year of our 'Bring a Book, Buy a Book' we wanted to highlight the importance of balance. As society becomes more dependent on technology, we have noticed that people are spending more time in front of screens. For this reason, we wanted to encourage people to balance their time with screens and consider taking some time during World Book Week to pick up some books, and get reading again.'

The longstanding 'Bring a Book, Buy a Book' fundraising campaign encourages schools, businesses and communities to donate their second hand books which can then be bought by their peers for just €2 per book.

Liz Reynolds, CEO at St. Michael's House: 'The 'Bring a Book, Buy a Book' campaign offers a great opportunity for parents, carers and individuals of all ages to donate used books and access pre-loved for just €2 per book.'

We are hoping to encourage people to get back into reading and to use books as a form of entertainment, to broaden imaginations and to unwind at the end of a long day.'

The 'Bring a Book, Buy a Book' campaign was first piloted in 2008 with 15 different locations taking part. The campaign has since enjoyed growing success with over 250 locations taking part in 2019.

Kilcock students host charity event for St Michael's House

by Andrew Smullen

STUDENTS at Scoil Dara, Kilcock held a 'Bring A Book, Buy A Book' sale in aid of St Michael's House charity on 12th March last.

The sale was held in the school library on 'small break' and at lunchtime, and students and staff took part in the event.

And not alone could they buy a book for €2, they could enter a raffle for 50c a ticket with the chance to win prizes supported by local traders.

The prizes included Easter eggs, vouchers from Browne's, Supervalu hampers, hampers from local pharmacies, goodies from The Chocolate Box as well etc, kindly donated by the businesses.

Clive Mulvey and Miss Jones helped organised the sale, which raised just over €116 for St Michael's House

"There was also an exhibition of story books created by Miss Jones' Transition Year students," said Mr Mulvey.

"These same students helped organise the event and asked the local businesses for prize donations."

Four first year students from Mr Mulvey's first year group, 'Cannes 1c' were on hand to sell the books and tickets. These were Alex Murray, Anna Lambert, Conall Curran and Grace Murphy.

"These students kindly gave up both their breaks on the day to take part," said Mr Mulvey.

St Michael's House is a charity located in Dublin 9 that works with people that have intellectual disabilities.

Its supports include independent living, clinical and day supports, schools and vocational training.



Scoil Dara students (l-r) Alex Murray, Conall Curran, Grace Murphy and Anna Lambert who sold books and raffle tickets for St Michael's House.



CHALLENGE John & Conor

Conor coach steps up for charity run

CONOR McGregor's coach John Kavanagh has kicked off a challenge to raise funds for a special school.

The Straight Blast Gym guru ran 4km at 4am today and members will pick up the challenge every four hours for the next eight days in aid of St Michael's House in Dublin.

The idea was thought up by those taking part in SBG's Wimp2Warrior programme.

Mark Crabbe shed 27kg under the guidance of Mr Kavanagh and is helping to organise the fundraiser.

He told the Irish Mirror: "I have a family member who is using the services of St Michael's House and it's a great cause."

■ Donations can be made by visiting www.gofundme.com/f/wimp-2-warrior-4hr-4k

FINGAL INDEPENDENT

St Michael's House receive generous meal deliveries

SERVICE users from St. Michael's House residential services in Fingal have benefited from generous deliveries of homemade meals and soups, courtesy of Dublin-based catering company Food Co,

Since March, the company have donated over 6,000 meals and 8,000 soups to St. Michael's House services, which has provided invaluable support to staff teams at mealtimes.

The weekly deliveries from Artizan Food Co. have truly reduced cooking times which enables Staff to provide one to one support to service users and conduct activities such as baking, gardening, reading, and exercise.

Barbara Wiseman, Head Of communications and Fundraising at St. Michael's House said: 'On behalf of St. Michael's House, would like to thank the team at Artizan Food Co. for their generosity during this difficult time.

'The meals and soups have been very well received by our service users and there are never any leftovers at the end of mealtimes — Which is clearly a good sign.

"Like many others, our service users are missing family visits and day trips at this time and the delivery of prepared meals allows our Staff to spend time with residents

throughout the day.'

Operating since 2005, Artizan Food Co. is a full-service catering company which caters to the private and corporate sector, offering a range of services including office catering, popup catering, managed contracts and catering for events.

Sarah Buchanan, Senior Operations Manager at Artizan Food Co. said: 'At Artizan Food Co, we are delighted to support St Michael's House residential services.

'In the very early days of the pandemic, we identified a need to help the many charities in and around Dublin as many were forced to scale back their cooking on-site or stop altogether.

'Rather than close our production kitchen we decided to remain open and to support these charities by donating meals to them.

'When our clients heard about our endeavours, a number of them came on board to support us and help us to do more than originally envisaged :

Strangely enough, this has been a very busy period for Artizan Food Co. Four weeks ago, the company launched its sister company, Eatto (www.eatto.ie) - a new online service, offering freshly made frozen meals, produced from the best Irish produce, delivered directly to the customer's door.



Michelle McKinley from St Michael's House receiving a food donation from Artizan Food Co.

Just a perfect day

SPECIAL DAY

With a live, private performance from Irish blues legend Mary Coughlan and a personal letter from the President, Michael D Higgins, the drive-in party at Skerries Mills for graduates from St Michael's House Special National School 2020, was an event no one is likely to forget...

By EMILY DIEBOLD

A VERY SPECIAL drive in ceremony was held in Skerries Mills car park for three graduates of St Michael's House – Jennifer Chiriac, Fintan Whitehead and Kewry Alexander.

There was a huge movie screen, boxes of goodies at each parking spot, an ice-cream van, and a stage decorated in balloons and bunting where Mary Coughlan and guitarist Johnny Taylor performed.

Passers-by were wondering what was going on as cars were guided in to their VIP spaces by Skerries Chamber of Commerce volunteers. It was all by invitation only, otherwise they'd have been swamped.

Every appointed parking space was filled and the big screen flashed the car radio setting that everyone could tune in to and listen to the ceremony and concert from safely inside their cars.

Skerries News spoke to Mary Coughlan as she enjoyed an ice-cream before the gig. How did such a big music star get involved? She told us: "I got the message one day on Facebook from Karen [principal, Karen Byrne] and she just asked me would I do it and I said okay, sure why not!

"I didn't even know what it was going to be but I knew they were greatly disappointed that they

couldn't have their normal graduation. So I just said yes. So this is it. Everyone's going to listen in their cars. It's lovely."

Mary lives in Wicklow so it was a long way to come but she said it was no bother. "Covid has been difficult but okay," she admitted. "I'm just getting a bit fed up with it now. I'd a new album ready to go on May 5 but we're releasing it now this month. I'd 35 gigs cancelled all over the world: Norway, Glastonbury – all gone."

She won't be going on a

'staycation' either. "Sure I have a beautiful garden. I live on the Sugarloaf so it's gorgeous. We have two gigs in Killarney coming up, one in Galway, one in Cavan – in Richard Corrigan's place – just 50 people, but that includes the band and staff so it's only 30 or 40. We did two gigs already and it was just heaven to do it. The money is sh** but it's so good to play again."

Skerries will be one of the first places that some of the songs from the new album 'Life Stories' will

have been played live.

It was certainly a very special evening for the three graduates. All the teachers, their schoolmates and families were there. Teacher Kate Cullen was quite emotional. She told *Skerries News*: "They were all in my class for years. I'm going to miss them terribly. I got out of the car and nearly cried. The three of them are brilliant. It's very sad to see them leave."

As Karen Byrne welcomed everyone she said she had a special message for the graduates from President Michael D Higgins. Mary Coughlan then read the letter, in which the President apologised for not being there and wished them all well in the future.

Karen had a copy of the letter framed for each of the graduates who were then all called up to the red carpet in turn to be presented with certificates and gifts.

As each arrived a little speech was given about them by Kate and Karen. Jennifer was first and was obviously delighted as she waved to the cars and gave a little bow.

"She's kind, she's helpful and she has fantastic abilities," said Karen of Jennifer. "She was our head girl this year and we'd like to wish her all the best."

Fintan was a little more shy, taking it all in, but still well up to the challenge. "We first met Fintan as a shy tiny little boy when he came to us at six," recalled Karen. "He's done so well and we all feel the best is yet to come."

Last but not least was Kewry, of whom Kate said: "When Kewry smiles the whole world smiles with her as she has the most contagious and beautiful smile of anybody I know.

"We learned lots of things from

Kewry, how it's really really good to dance every single day – she's done that through all her years in our school," said Karen, "And we learned that a cup of tea is a very important thing to have and anytime you're feeling low, have a cup of tea. She's been fantastic in our school and we'll all miss her."

Later, Fintan's mum, Mary told *Skerries News*: "They've really looked after him here. His teacher, Kate, has been brilliant. She always finds ways of getting around his challenges. She works very individually with each child. I don't know what I'm going to do without her great support. I wish

he could stay."

After all the presentations, families settled back in their cars with their goodie boxes to watch the big screen where a film looking back on the students' school memories was shown, before Mary's beautiful voice rang out as she serenaded everyone just as the sun set behind the Great Windmill of Skerries. Such a perfect day. ■

'I'm going to miss them terribly. I got out of the car and nearly cried. They are brilliant...'



FUN : Kate Fogarty & Aine McGuinness; Karen Byrne & Kate Cullen



CELEBRATING: Eoin & Cian Caffrey; Emily, Ben, Jake & Richie Wilson



ALL SMILES: Singer Mary Coughlan; Zoe, Matthew, Joe & Sara Rock



GOOD TIMES: Sharon, Eryn & Rhys Collins; Tina and David Gomina

All photos: Emily Diebold



Teachers



THREE GRADUATES: Jennifer Chirlac with her family; Fintan Whitehead with Stephen, Diarmuid and Mary



CONGRATULATIONS: Kewry Alexander & social worker, Niall Murphy

FINGAL

INDEPENDENT

UNIQUE VIRTUAL FUNDRAISING EVENT FOR ST MICHAEL'S HOUSE RAISES A WHOPPING €12,000

VIRTUAL fundraiser organised in aid of St. Michael's House, one of Ireland's largest providers of community-based services for individuals with intellectual disabilities who do great work in Fingal and across the country, has raised over €12,000.

The virtual 'My Mini Marathon' fundraiser took place from 1st - 30th June, with final donations received this month.

Over 145 people signed up to complete run, walk or move 2km, 5km or 10km in one day during June making the event inclusive for all. Participants chose to raise money for a specific St. Michael's House unit or the event project.

Funds directed towards the event project will benefit the development of a Communication Technology Resource Hub for children and adults with intellectual disabilities. The new technology hub will provide tablets on loan to service users to enable them to develop their communications skills and will be managed by the Speech and Language Department.

Barbara Wiseman, Head of Communications and Fundraising with St. Michael's House said: 'Like many other organisations, our fundraising has been impacted by the cancellation of events this year.

'We were delighted to see so many people get involved in our 'My Mini Marathon'. The funds raised will benefit a new communications resource facility which aims to provide suitable communication supports to enable people to communicate independently in their own environments.

'The project is very relevant as we rely more on technology to communicate with friends and family, and we look forward to integrating this training as part of an individual's Speech and Language Therapy.'

All participants received a bespoke St. Michael's House medal and service users across Dublin joined in on the virtual race

over the course of the month. At the top of the leader board was the team in the Boromhe residential unit in Swords who enjoyed some socially distanced exercise as part of the 'My Mini Marathon' fundraiser.

Jacqui McDonnell Fundraising Executive added: 'The 'My Mini Marathon' fundraiser was very popular in our residential units and our service users really enjoyed getting involved. All eyes were on the leader board throughout June as service users across Dublin kept a keen eye on the top times for the individual races!'



St Michael's House fundraiser.

Charity dip at dawn great for 'mind, body and soul'



**Mum Amy and her
junior dipper Suzie
O'Neill**

AMONG the 50 hardy families who took part in the recent Dawn to Dusk Daily Dip fundraiser were Amy O'Neill and daughter Suzie (8), who braved the elements in aid of St Michael's House.

The challenge saw participants tackle the cold waters of the Irish Sea in their local area. The money raised went directly to St Michael's House Assistive Technology Project, which makes information accessible for users with intellectual disabilities.

Participants were encouraged to set a challenge for August, ranging from one swim a day for a week, with some opting to swim once a day for the month.

Amy, who is a St Michael's House staff member from Baldoyle, said; "What better way to raise funds for a great cause than jumping in each day for a swim. We set a goal to try and get in every day, hail rain or shine — although we didn't expect storm Ellen or Francis to get in the way! We safely dodged the Lions mane jellyfish and we have

been enjoying our dip each day together. I would highly recommend It • — Its ' great for your mind, body and soul,"

RNID Section: Covid-19 experiences and staffing in focus for webinar

THE INMO National RNID Section held a webinar in September, covering topics including Covid-19 experiences, intellectual disability (ID) nursing now and into the future, and children and older adults with intellectual disabilities.

More than 160 people were registered to participate in the webinar, which was streamed live and opened by INMO president Martina-Harkin Kelly. The webinar is available to watch back for those who were unable to participate at the time.

Covid-19 experiences

CNS Louise Kenny gave a practical talk on Covid-19 experiences, including simple things that can be done to ease clients' anxiety, such as sending photographs of oneself in full PPE and in regular clothes to houses ahead of time so that clients recognise their nurse.

Ms Kenny also described a new resource developed by St Michael's House, Dublin, for family and residential units, called the Activity Hub. The hub features activities such as baking, art, bingo and gardening, as well as evening activities such as music and sing-alongs. The hub is available on the St Michael's House website at www.smh.ie



Pictured at the RNID Section webinar were (clockwise, l-r): Prof Jonathan Drennan, chair of nursing and health services research, UCC; Ailish Brennan, RNID Section officer; Ann-Marie O'Reilly, RNID Section officer and Niamh Walsh, PhD researcher

Safe staffing

Prof Jonathan Drennan, chair of nursing and health services research at UCC, spoke on workforce planning across various settings, with particular reference to ID services.

Outlining future projections in demographics and capacity, Prof Drennan identified the vital role of RNIDs in delivering high-quality health and social care through all stages of life.

Prof Drennan also acknowledged the challenges facing the

professions in terms of determining safe staffing levels due to a current lack of empirical evidence.

He said that further research is required given the many complex models of care, but that there is room for future development in this area.

Among the other presentations shared on the day was a talk on mixed-ability rugby – a growing sport that has teams in many countries, including two in Ireland, and

a talk by Niamh Walsh, a PhD researcher at the University of Ulster, who spoke about the importance of the RNID voice being heard at every health-care forum.

The RNID Section would like to thank all of the contributors to this webinar, which was chaired by Ailish Byrne, section chair, and Ann-Marie O'Reilly, section education officer.

All of the day's presentations are available to watch back at www.inmoprofessional.ie

Section news round up

All-Ireland Midwifery Conference

THE poster presentation for the 2020 All-Ireland Midwifery Conference is open to all interested parties, by email to jean.carroll@inmo.ie, until Monday, October 19.

The full application form and guidelines are available at www.inmo.ie, or you can email Jean Carroll directly.

The section warmly welcomes all midwives and midwifery students to present a poster at this year's virtual conference, which takes place on Thursday, November 5.

Telephone Triage Section

THIS year's conference will take place online on Tuesday, October 13 from 11am.

The webinar will be

broadcast live, with presentations available to watch back at a later stage. The topics covered will include e-health, chronic disease management and the Covid-19 pandemic.

This event will be of interest to nurses across many disciplines and will be open to all INMO members – visit www.inmoprofessional.ie to book your place.

If you would like your section to be featured in a future issue of WIN, or if you are interested in establishing a new INMO section, please contact section development officer Jean Carroll by email at jean.carroll@inmo.ie

Volunteers brave the cold for Dawn to Dusk Daily Dip

MORE than 50 families and individuals braved the cold waters of the Irish Sea in aid of St Michael's House.

The 'Dawn to Dusk Daily Dip' fundraiser challenged participants to go for a swim between dawn and dusk in their local area.

Monies donated will directly benefit the St Michael's House Assistive Technology Project, which aims to make information accessible for service users.

Participants in the fundraiser were encouraged to set a challenge for August, ranging from one swim a day for a week, with some opting to swim once a day for the month.

Jacqui McDonnell, Fundraising Executive, St Michael's House said: "The Dawn to Dusk Daily Dip fundraiser was perfect for the current time, as

participants could take part in a safe way in their local area.

"It was great to see people of all ages getting involved and benefitting from all the restorative

powers that the sea has to offer. The money raised will assist with the delivery of assistive technology and we very are grateful to everyone for their support."

The challenge, while raising money to support children and adults with intellectual disabilities, encouraged many Dublin locals to take up cold water sea swimming.

Dr Ciara McNevin, from Donnybrook, said: "I committed to a 30-day sea swim challenge while off work with a back injury.

"The apprehension of getting into cold water didn't go away but my confidence increased day by day.

"It provided me with activity while injured, much needed headspace and a sense of community

"Seeking out new swim spots gave me adventure and I felt like a tourist in my own county. Doing it in aid of St Michael's house was the icing on the cake and I would highly recommend it.

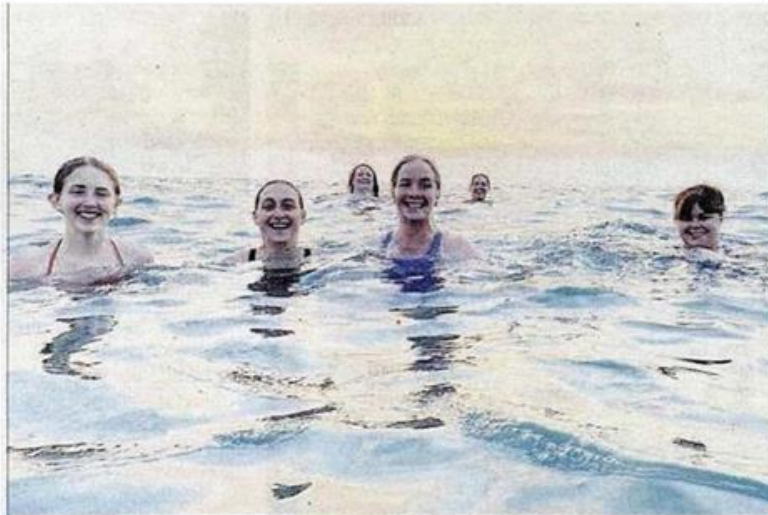
St Michael's House staff member Amy O'Neill from Warrenhouse Residential, Baldoyle, added: "Myself and my eight-year-old daughter, Suzie, decided to go for it because we enjoyed swimming in the Irish Sea. What better way to raise funds for a great cause than jumping in each day for a swim.

"We set a goal to try and get in everyday, hail rain or shine. Although we didn't expect storm Ellen or Francis to get in the

way and we safely dodged the jellyfish."



Dr Ciara McNevin, from Donnybrook.



Alison Buggie and Rachel Browne from Dublin and (front) Rachel O'Brien, Alix Kavanagh, Ciara O'Rourke and Jacqui McDonnell go for a dip for St Michael's House.

Eurospar Skerries to raffle brand new car for St Michael's House SNS

WHAT A GIFT

EUROSPAR Skerries will soon be offering their customers the opportunity to win a brand new Renault Zoe Electric Car, courtesy of Electric Ireland and BWG Foods, owners and operators of the Eurospar brand in Ireland.

The prize, sponsored by Electric Ireland, was won by Eurospar Skerries at the annual BWG Foods' Trade Show, which was held virtually for the first time this year due to Covid-19 restrictions.

The BWG Foods Trade Show is the largest food industry

event of its kind in Ireland and annually brings together more than 200 of Ireland's leading indigenous and multinational suppliers showcasing key offers to more than 1,000 retailers over the two-day event.

This year, the 10th anniversary of the Trade Show, things were done a little differently with suppliers presenting their wares to retailers via Zoom, which was another industry first.

One of the highlights of the event was, as ever, the car giveaway and Eurospar Skerries Retailer Shane Bowe was

thrilled to win the prize..

"We are delighted to have won this fabulous prize and I am really looking forward to ultimately presenting it to one of our customers. We were over the moon to receive the news

that our supermarket had won the prize and I want to thank BWG Foods and Electric Ireland for the opportunity."

Raffle tickets, which are available at Eurospar Skerries, cost €10 and all proceeds are being donated to St Michael's House, Special National School

(SNS) Skerries. The final draw will take place on Thursday, December 3rd, ensuring that one lucky customer will have a brand new car in time for Christmas!

Commenting, Eurospar Managing Director Malachy Hanberry said, "I would like to thank Electric Ireland for providing the 100% electric Renault Zoe to Eurospar Skerries, we really appreciate their support.

"Hopefully, this raffle can raise a lot of funds for St Michael's House, Special National School Skerries. Eurospar Supermarkets have a tradition of giving back to the communities they serve and this is a magnificent example of that."

The winning raffle ticket will be picked during a day-long Freshtival celebration at Eurospar Skerries on December 3rd to mark the occasion.



Des Smyth, Eurospar; Naoimi Callanan, Electric Ireland; Shane Bowe, Eurospar Skerries; David Bagnall, Eurospar chief; Karen Byrne, principal, St Michael's House, Skerries; Malachy Hanberry, Eurospar MD

SKERRIES NEWS

‘I had to pinch myself – this will make such a difference’

PRINCIPAL of St Michaels House Karen Byrne says she was in ‘complete shock’ when told by Shane of Eurospar Skerries that he would give all the proceeds of a car he won to St Michael’s House.

By DAVID DIEBOLD

“Shane said: ‘I know you don’t know me...’ but he said he was at a virtual trade show and got news that he’d won and he said ‘Look I don’t need it, so I would like to donate it to the school’.

“I just sort of pinched myself. I know we’re a small school but right from when I started in St Michaels house in Skerries, in September 2018, it’s been very obvious to me that the community really has

so much love and affection for St Michael’s House and the children that attend it.

“We get small donations, and we get bigger donations, from the golf club to groups that do the Dublin City Marathon for us, to the ‘Dip In The Nip’, to St Vincent de Paul Skerries – but this was just so big. The car is worth around thirty thousand so to look at how that fundraising would roll out. It’s amazing.

“Shane is a very humble person and doesn’t want any credit, but I think he sells himself short! He’s such a community person. He really does so much. He has that wonderful positivity – to have such good fortune but to make sure other people benefit from it.

So it’s been an amazing couple of months and keeping it under wraps until it was all organised has been

difficult.”

The actual raffle will be held on December 4, but there will be a number of events in the lead up. Tickets are €10 through both the store and school, and through different clubs in the community (anyone interested in selling a book of tickets should contact either

Shane or Karen). All money raised goes to St Michaels House.

Says Karen: “Shane asked what we need. The list is long but I narrowed it down to three areas. Early on during lockdown I realised that a lot of kids were going to find it difficult to transition back to school.

“Having a schedule again can be daunting and that is what happened, so I got a Sensory Room through our own fundraising. Now we need to fill it with sensory items. That will be a big chunk.

“The second is electronic devices – the use of these can be so supportive to our kids. Then the third is day-to-day resources for our kids. This money will make such a difference!” ■



DELIGHTED: Karen Byrne, Principal of St Michael’s House School

‘Shane asked what we need. The list is long, but I narrowed it down to three areas...’



Touched . . . Damon

Matt's vid thanking pupils for b'day gift

By AINE CONATY

HOLLYWOOD star Matt Damon shared a sweet message with students in an Irish school after they sent him a birthday gift.

The actor is currently in Ireland to finish off filming his upcoming movie *The Last Duel*.

Earlier in the month, he turned 50 and pupils at St Michael's House in Baldoyle, Dublin, sent him a present.

Yesterday, the school shared a video Matt sent them. He told them: "Thank you for my amazing birthday video and the sign and the cake and everything, so big thanks to you."

"Sorry we didn't get to meet in person on this one but we will in the future I'm sure."

He added: "Thank you so much that meant the world to me."

"That's the best birthday gift I could have asked for. Thank you."

The school said it was a "lovely message" to get.

FRIGHT IDEA FOR CHARITY

THE mother of a young boy who has autism has turned her home into a haunted house for Halloween to raise money for charity.

Joanne Whelan spent weeks decorating her home and garden in Donaghmede, Dublin with ghosts, skeletons and spider webs.

■ Rohan SMYTH

Ms Whelan is raising funds for Dublin-based St Michael's House, which provides a range of services and support for people with intellectual disabilities.

Her son Alex, who has autism, was severely impacted by the

COVID-19 restrictions this year.

"I decorated the house for the kids because I felt so sorry for them as there is nothing for them this year, there isn't even trick or treating," she said.

"I'm filling the bucket with treats and lollies and the kids are coming along and having a ball."



GOOD CAUSE:
Joanne Whelan
at her home in
Donaghmede
which she has
decorated for
Halloween



Skeleton staff



Joanne Whelan at her home on Thornville Rd, Dublin, which she has decorated for Halloween to raise funds for **St Michael's House**, which provides a range of services and support for people with intellectual disabilities and their families.

Picture: Brian Lawless

FINGAL

INDEPENDENT

FINGAL WINNERS IN TEXACO CHILDREN'S ART COMPETITION

Fingal's young artists shine

EIGHT Fingal students were amongst 36 young Dublin artists to have won top prizes in this year's 66th Texaco Children's Art Competition.

In Category G of the competition - reserved for entries from young artists of all ages with special needs - second prize went to Alexis Appiah (11), a pupil at Lusk Senior National School, for a work entitled 'The Boy In The Shadow'.

Alexis's composition was described by Final Adjudicator and Chairman of

the judging panel, Professor Declan McGonagle as 'a very intense pencil drawing, which gives a real sense of a story being told.'

Other Fingal winners - all of which won Special Merit Awards for artworks that Professor McGonagle said were 'imaginative and displayed high levels of skill' - were: Eva McParland (14), a pupil at Malahide Community School; Jennifer Giblin (11) from Rush & Lusk Educate Together National School; Fin-

ley Dillon (11) a pupil at From A To Art, Balbriggan; Anna Watson (7) from Scoil An Duinnínigh, Swords; Jerry Jia Ye Luo (8) from Swords Chinese Art School; Honor Cuddy (5) from St. Oliver Plunkett's National School, Malahide; and Divine Ayhahowa (15) from St Michael's House Special National School, Skerries.

Anna Watson and Eva McParland were Special Merit Award winners on two previous occasions, both in 2019 and in 2018 and 2017 respectively.



Texaco Art winner by Anna Watson.



Texaco Art winner by Jennifer Giblin.



Texaco Art winner by Alexis Appiah



Texas Art winner for Eva McFarland



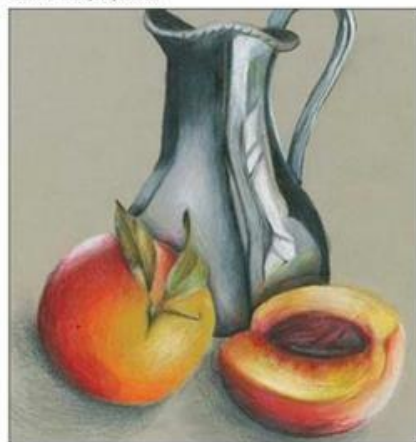
Texas Art winner by Divine Ayubowa



Texas Art winner by Jerry Jia Ye Luo



Texas Art winner by Honor Cuddy.



Texas Art winner by Finley Dillon.

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Texaco Art winner by Alexis Appiah



Texaco Art winner by Divine Ayhahowa



Texaco Art winner by Jerry Jia Ye Luo

Three trek challenge for Lions

NEW FUNDRAISING INITIATIVE FOR LIONS

SWORDS and District Lions Club has undertaken a new fundraising venture replacing its more traditional fundraising activities, due to the COVID-19 restrictions placed on all kinds of events.

Club members undertook a socially-distanced Three Trek Challenge, to include sponsored walks in Howth Head, Newbridge House and Malahide Castle covering a total of 21km and publicising it on its Facebook page.

The club intends to continue supporting its local causes and in particular its Annual Christmas Food Appeal.

Each year members collect food donated by shoppers in early December in the local supermarkets. As food items cannot be physically collected this year the Club is going to provide funding for Food Vouchers which will be distributed to the

needy in our community by the five local SVP conferences, to the approximate annual value of the food collected in recent years. The bulk of its fundraising will go to this.

Club President Mark O'Brien explains that people are strugg-

ling to make ends meet and are greatly in need of assistance. He said: 'We depend heavily on the generosity of the local community and are asking for your kind support in contributing towards this very worthy and necessary cause.'

'We have created a fundraising page which you can access directly: www.iDonate.ie/ThreeTrekChallenge or through our Facebook page or website: www.swordslionsclub.ie.

The club supports groups to including Senior Citizens, St Michael's House Fingal Counselling Service, Snowflakes, Swords Mens Shed and others.



On the steps of Howth Railway Station, Left to Right & Front to Back Club President Mark O'Brien and Mayor of Fingal David Healy, Greg Lewis and Michael Clince, Paul Grace and Sean Sandford



Battling the windy day at Howth: Michael Clince, Greg Lewis and Paul Grace.



At Newbridge House grounds: President Mark O'Brien with Deputy Mayor of Fingal Robert O'Donoghue.

St Michael's House pays tribute to popular Baldoyle service user

Neil Fetherstonhaugh

STAFF and management at St Michael's House have paid tribute to Ivanna Nolan, a service user at Baldoyle Special National School who sadly passed away in May 2020.

Ivanna's friends and family decided to host the annual fashion sale event to support the Baldoyle unit having witnessed the support provided to their family friend.

Ivanna, who was the inspiration for the annual 'New to You' fashion sale, started with St Michael's House as a baby receiving weekly therapy and play sessions.

Ivanna's mother Barbara Nolan recalled how this was huge support to her during a daunting time.

"Ivanna was born with a very rare condition - hemimegalencephaly - that is characterised by the enlargement of one side of the brain," she recalled.

"Ivanna also lived with scoliosis and cerebral palsy. St Michael's House continued to support Ivanna in childhood with education in Baldoyle Special National School and then into adulthood when she attended day services in Raheny and Baldoyle. Ivanna loved being with her friends in St Michael's House."

The first 'New to You' event that took place in 2012 raised €6,304. In 2019 the event generated over €55,000 for people with disabilities.

Over eight years, the New to You Fashion Sale fundraised €277,006 and supported the development of children and adult sensory rooms, bathroom facility upgrades, sensory garden space, accessible swimming pool upgrades and three wheelchair accessible buses.

The rise in funds and popularity of the event is a testament to the hard work of the dedicated team lead by Niamh Hanratty.

Fundraiser Niamh Hanratty said: "We received such high quality pre-loved clothes and accessories that after three years we were able to add a designer show and auction

element to the sale. This created such an anticipation for the event and helped boosted the funds.

"The success of the sale is a result of a huge amount of

organisation by the team of amazing volunteers.

"I wish to thank all of the donors, buyers, models, event volunteers and my fellow committee members, Eileen

Murray, Margo Lavelle, Mary Sherry, Marie Fitzpatrick and Lydia Ensor. We have really enjoyed seeing the difference these funds have made to St Michael's House."

DublinGazette



Club President Mark O'Brien and Mayor of Fingal David Healy (wishing us well); Greg Lewis and Michael Cline; Paul Grace and Sean Sandford

Three trek challenge for Lions club

SWORDS AND DISTRICT LIONS CLUB has undertaken a new kind of fundraiser to replace its traditional Christmas collections due to Covid-19 restrictions.

Club members did a three trek challenge – sponsored walks in Howth Head, Newbridge House and Malahide Castle, covering a total of 21km.

As food items cannot be physically collected this year the club is going to provide funding for food vouchers

instead which will be distributed by the five local SVP conferences.

Club President Mark O'Brien said people are struggling to make ends meet and are greatly in need of assistance.

He added: "We depend heavily on the generosity of the local community and are asking for your kind support in contributing towards this very worthy and necessary cause."

Donations can be made

at www.iDonate.ie/Three-TrekChallenge or through Swords Lions Facebook page or website: www.swordslionsclub.ie.

The club supports a range of groups and events including Senior Citizens Holiday in Trabolgan, St Michael's House (provision of minibus), Fingal Counselling Service in BASE, Snowflakes (Autism Support), Swords Mens' Shed and other needy causes.

COMMUNITY ENERGY UPGRADES GRANTED €20M

A series of community energy upgrades will be funded to the tune of €20m this year, while Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) programmes will also ring-fence funding to deliver group retrofits to scale up climate action in communities throughout the country.

Minister for Communications, Climate Action & Environment, Richard Bruton TD, has said that to achieve the goals set in the Climate Action Plan, ring-fenced monies from SEAI programmes need to scale up the climate transition in communities.

As part of the first incentive under the new approach, €4m of the 2020 funding for the SEAI community grant scheme will be used to specifically target housing retrofit projects, which will deliver retrofits grouping home upgrades together, Minister Bruton noted, when making the funding announcement on 16 December 2019.

Since 2012, the SEAI community grant scheme has supported over 400 community energy efficiency projects, resulting in the upgrade of 18,200 homes, and over 2,500 community, public and private buildings. The €145m invested to date has leveraged an overall investment of €370m in communities across the country with annual energy savings estimated to be over €65m.

All successful applicants will have a strong partnership approach and will see communities working together to deliver the proposed project," he added.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Minister Bruton said: "Community partnerships are the focus of this scheme and are crucial to delivering on our objectives as set out in the Climate Action Plan.

"This builds on the work of over 320 energy communities in SEAI's community network who are working towards longer term sustainable



St Michael's House Leisure Centre in Coolock received a Government grant through SEAI for a community energy upgrade in 2018. Pictured (l-r): Paddy Sweeney, MD of RIEL, Richard Bruton TD, Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment, Sarah Hewitt, Manager of St Michael's House Leisure Centre, and John Randles, Head of Department at SEAI.

energy plans for their local areas. The government is currently designing a new retrofitting model as part of the commitment to upgrade 500,000 homes to B2 by 2030."

The new model will:

- Group homes in the same area together to drive down cost.
- Start with social homes owned by the local authorities, but will embrace privately owned homes in the wider community.
- Introduce easy pay back models (e.g. through your utility bill).
- Develop smart finance (e.g. loan guarantee models, European investment bank).

SEAI will administer the grants and its CEO William Walsh said they're working with hundreds of energy communities across the country, providing them with the knowledge and the means to both plan their own low carbon pathway.

SOME PROJECTS SUPPORTED IN 2019

Waterford County Council is leading a project that will see a selection of Waterford libraries, schools, community centres, GAA clubs, shops and farms carry out insulation, heating, lighting and refrigeration upgrades.

Wicklow County Council is leading a project in both the counties of Wicklow and Wexford that will see a selection of homes, leisure centres, recycling centres, public buildings, a bakery and a hotel carry out upgrades on insulation, heating, lighting, refrigeration, heat recovery and steam generation.

Open to both large and small projects alike, the application process is non-competitive with qualifying applications approved on a first-come first-served basis.

For full details of the scheme and application details visit www.seai.ie

Driving home for Christmas

EuroSpar Skerries handed over the keys to a Renault electric car last week to a lucky customer and Skerries News was there as they took the surprise call

By EMILY **DIEBOLD**

ON THURSDAY December 3, a Skerries fire engine arrived at EuroSpar at eleven in the morning. It wasn't there to put out a fire, thankfully, but instead it was escorting a bus of very important people, students of St Michael's House Special Needs School in Skerries, there for one of the biggest raffle to be seen in Skerries for years – for a Renault Zoe electric car.

The car came courtesy of Electric Ireland and BWG Foods, owners and operators of the

EuroSpar brand in Ireland. Shane Bowe, manager of EuroSpar Skerries had won it for his store in a company event earlier this year.

Shane decided that he wanted to raffle it for his customers and give all the funds raised to St Michael's House.

Shane and his Skerries team, along with managers from the EuroSpar head office, and representatives from Electric Ireland, along with the family and friends of many of the St Michael's House pupils, were all waiting expectantly outside the store to welcome the students with their fire engine entourage.

No one had any idea which winning ticket in the bucket of entries was about to be picked, or how they would react to the call. Someone was about to get a big Christmas surprise.

Two students Jai Keenan and Matthew Rock, had already been chosen to pick the winning ticket together. They were well up for

the job and were busy posing for photos like super stars.

Shane's daughter Alannah had two buckets filled with tickets. Jai had to choose between the two buckets and then Michael had to pick the ticket out of whichever bucket Jay picked. ►►

►► It was very exciting and they got lots of encouragement from the assembled crowd.

The eventual winner was Wendy Reidy from Mourne View. A huge cheer went up when her name was read out and then everybody went quiet as Shane made the call on his mobile. Wendy answered straight away and Shane and Karen Byrne (principal of St Michael's House) tried to explain that she had won a car.

SKERRIES NEWS

She didn't sound convinced until she heard the cheers of the crowd in the background when she verified her name.

Wendy wanted to wait for her husband to collect the keys with her a few days later. What a wonderful Christmas present for them both!

And they weren't the only lucky ones, when all the funds were added up - the grand total for St Michael's House was a whopping € 13,000. Shane is due to present the cheque to St Michael's House on Monday. ■



1, 2020

Photos: Emily Diebold

LOCAL HEROS: The lads from Skerries Fire Brigade are a big hit with all the students of St Michael's House



BIG SMILES: Karen & Matthew & Naomi Callanan of Electric Ireland; Karen & girls with EuroSpar management

SKERRIES NEWS



GREAT DAY:
Karen Byrne
and the gang
from St Mi-
chaels House;
left, Shane
Bowe and Jai
Keenan

SKERRIES NEWS



ANTICIPATION BUILDS: Absolute silence, as Jai Keenan carefully chooses the winning bucket from Alannah Bowe



ALL SET: Shane & daughter Alannah with two buckets of tickets



DECEMBER 11, 2020 SKERRIES NEWS

Photos: Emily Diebold

BIG MOMENT: Manager Shane Bowe steadies the bucket for Matthew to choose carefully and then holds the ticket aloft as he calls out the name



SO EXCITING: Shane greets Jai Keenan; Jai and Matthew Rock all set in their fireman hats; Shane explains the important task to the two boys



READY FOR FUN: Fire Engine arrives at EuroSpar with the school bus behind it; the Hughes family gather to welcome Jai and all his friends

Council bikes for St Michael's House

By JOHN MANNING

Fingal Sports Office were delighted recently to present St. Michael's House in Skerries with the first of the adapted bicycles they have purchased through the Dormant Accounts Fund.

The bicycles are specially designed for people with a disability and will be used by students at the school to take part in programmes such as Cycling Ireland's 'Learn to Cycle' programme.

The bicycles were presented to the school by Sports Inclusion Disability Officer, David Daly. Mayor of Fingal, Cllr David Healy, said: 'I am very pleased to see Fingal Sports Office using the Dormant Accounts Funds for such a hugely worthwhile project.'

'It will be wonderful for the students to be able to take part in a sporting activity by learning to cycle on these specially designed bicycles.' Director of Service, Margaret Geraghty, said: 'Fingal were



Fingal County Council Sports Office present St Michael's House with new bicycles.

delighted to be able to present St Michael's house with the specialized bicycles to take part in the 'Learn to Cycle' programme.

'We work closely with a number of disability groups around the county to ensure the physical activity needs of some of the most vulnerable members of the community are catered for.' The programme runs over six weeks and aims to assist participants with additional needs to learn to cycle independently

in a fun and safe environment.

Sports Inclusion Disability officer, David Daly, said: 'The 'Learn to Cycle' programme has shown to be a truly beneficial and enjoyable activity for all involved.'

'I can see the children becoming more involved each day as their confidence grows and as every lesson offers new and interesting learning opportunities in a different and fun way for the students.'

New grant scheme aims to get groups across Dublin active

Neil Fetherstonhaugh

THE Age & Opportunity Active National Grant Scheme is celebrating a momentous allocation of funding for sport and physical activity in older age-groups.

The grants scheme, a combined initiative from Age & Opportunity and Sport Ireland, will distribute €27,340 across 73 groups in Dublin. Nationwide 712 groups will receive grants totalling nearly €265,000.

The Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, Catherine Martin, said: "The Age & Opportunity Active National Grant Scheme continues to act as a valuable resource in getting older people active."

"Today's investment will help support and

empower thousands of groups of older people to get more active."

"Age & Opportunity are doing a wonderful job of providing opportunities for older people to enjoy all the benefits that participation in physical activity can bring."

The National Grant Scheme provides an accessible and enjoyable means for older people in communities nationwide

to reap the health rewards from doing physical activity.

Speaking about the grant, John Treacy, Chief Executive of Sport Ireland, said that Age & Opportunity's Active programme continues to act as a valuable resource in getting more older

people active.

"Sport Ireland's vision is that sport contributes to enhancing the quality of Irish life and that people of all ages are encouraged and valued in sport," he said.

"To help us achieve this we work with Age & Opportunity to deliver

opportunities and grants to as many clubs and groups as possible.

"We are delighted to award funding to 712 groups all around Ireland this year as part of the Age & Opportunity Active National Grant Scheme."

"Keeping physically active is more important

than ever given the circumstances we've found ourselves in throughout 2020."

"The grant continues to act as a valuable resource in getting more older people more active and we are thrilled to share this good news with everyone today."

Karen Horgan, CEO

of Age & Opportunity, said the grant funding is helping to create an Ireland where more older people are more active and more connected.

"We are delighted to continue our partnership with Sport Ireland," she said.

"Age & Opportunity works to ensure equality of participation for all older people, irrespective of background, culture, identity, setting or location."

"We are delighted that this year 255 successful applications were from designated disadvantaged areas. There were also 80 groups who applied and received a grant for the first time."

Of the successful funding allocations, 146 grants were awarded to Active Retirement Associations, 202 grants were awarded to Irish Countrywomen's Associations and 20 applications were made by Local Sports Partnerships.

The successful Dublin groups are from across the city and include Arthritis Ireland Dun Laoghaire Rathdown branch; Balbriggan Cricket Club; Ballyfermot Sports Complex; Dundrum Arch Club; Kilbarrack (St Benedict's); Kilnamanagh ICA; Kilternan Parish Lawn Tennis Club.

The grants also went to Kincora/Clontarf

ARA; Kingswood & Kilnamanagh Active Age; Mens Club; St Michael's House Goatstown; and the Strafford Lawn Tennis Club.

IRISH DAILY STAR

BIG SWITCH:
The house and
(below) Joanne



Making light work of charity

● THE mother of a young boy with autism has transformed her Dublin home into a Christmas wonderland for charity.

Joanne Whelan spent weeks decorating her Donaghmede home and garden with lights, reindeer installations, giant snowmen and various inflatable Santas.

She is raising funds for Abacas School in Kilbarrack, which provides for children with autism,

and for Dublin-based St Michael's House, which has a range of services for people with learning difficulties.

Her son Alex was severely impacted by COVID-19 restrictions this year.

● "I started decorating the house years and years ago and it has built up gradually over time," Ms Whelan said.

"There's a box on the front gate so people can donate something to the school."





Theresa McKenna

Theresa's special concert

LOCAL singing star Theresa Mc Kenna will take to the virtual stage this Christmas for a very special show.

At 8pm on Christmas Eve, she will be streaming a live performance from her sitting room in front of her Christmas tree to raise money for St Michaels House.

'Join me on Christmas Eve to sing, dance and have a bit of craic,' Theresa remarked. Details at <https://fb.me/e/40S-fhZyY5>

Mid-Louth Independent



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