

# BTEI Grow your own food course in Celbridge

The course is based in the grounds of the Salesian community in Celbridge. It is known as the ACRE project (A Community Rethinking Education) and involves the development of an eco-friendly horticultural centre.

The thrust of the project is to create a partnership between the broader Celbridge and Straffan community and the Salesian College.

Sixteen men and women are working on the 'Grow Your Own Food' course which is funded under the Back to Education Initiative (BTEI). Pictures show some of the preparation of soil for the project.



## Services

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# Education Brief

COUNTY KILDARE VEC – ADULT & FURTHER EDUCATION NEWS

2011 Volume 2, Issue 1

## Welcome

2011 has been a year which has seen the beginning of change for the VECs in general and the Adult & Further Education sector in particular. Changes in FETAC earlier this year, with the roll out of the common awards system; the announcement in June by the Minister for Education & Skills of the aggregation of VECs along with the announcement in July of establishment of SOLAS as a new Education and Training Authority. In August, the Minister for Social Protection announced the establishment of new National Employment and Entitlements Service (NEES). Finally, in November, the Heads of Bill for the proposed sixteen Education and Training Boards (ETBs) which will replace the current thirty-three VECs was published.



All of these changes will see very significant structural reform taking place within VECs in the near future. These reforms represent serious challenges for the aggregation of VECs into ETBs and especially the establishment of a distinct adult and further education sector. As the IVEA says 'in two years time, the vocational education sector will be radically reformed, restricted and re-orientated to face the challenges of an era'.

As professional educators within Kildare VEC, during these times of change and increased demands for adult education services, we are providing an enormous amount of services for which we can be proud. Our services are person-centred, integrated and responsive to the needs of adults in these challenging economic times when more and more adults are seeking to up-skill and re-train in areas that will best serve the needs of the individual, society and the economy.

2012 will see the rollout of these changes within our educational sector but VECs and our adult education sector is well placed to meet the challenges of helping to respond to Ireland's rapidly changing society and economy.

*Des Murtagh, AEO*

## Childcare Programmes

Kildare VEC Adult Education Service was successful in obtaining the contract from the Kildare County Childcare Committee to run childcare training at FETAC Level 5 and Level 6. Due to the high level of interest (62 enquiries), the VEC was asked to run two Level 6 courses. The Level 6 students are attending classes on Thursday evenings and one Saturday per month and training will be completed in May 2012. The Level 5 childcare courses are being conducted over two years.

## Youthreach Athy

### Signs of Life

On the 9th of November, Youthreach Athy was invited to a photographic exhibition organised by the Irish Deaf Society, titled "Signs of Life." The photographs were snapped by a deaf photographer Johnny Corcoran and provided us with a glimpse of the beauty of Irish Sign Language (ISL) through the eyes of 26 celebrities, each signing the letter of the ISL Alphabet. The aim of the exhibition was to encourage public awareness and appreciation of one of only two Irish languages. ISL is the native language of the deaf community and is used everyday by more than 40,000 people.

Andrea Corr, who had her photograph taken for the exhibition, along with Westlife and Jedward, commented that she "enjoyed learning the sign and discovering what a creative and evocative language it is..... so very personal and beautiful."

It was an interactive exhibition where we were taught how to sign some words and phrases, and even got the opportunity to learn a song "I've got a feeling" by the Black Eyed Peas in Sign Language.



On the day the trainees were given an activity sheet with questions about the photographs. They were asked questions about the photographs in a fun and creative way. The feedback from the trainees after attending the exhibition was fantastic. They were so delighted to have learned how to sign their own names in ISL and even started teaching each other the ISL alphabet. The staff were very moved by the experience and were delighted that this subject is getting the publicity that it truly deserves.

### Songcraft

Rua Red in Tallaght was the venue for this year's Songcraft Awards Ceremony.

Youthreach Athy was nominated in three categories and was victorious in the "Best group vocal" category. Danielle Kelly and Charlie Cox accepted the award on behalf of the group and thanked Ken and Cindy for such a fantastic experience.



# Adult Education Guidance Service

Staff of Co Kildare VEC's Adult Education Guidance Service pictured at the Dunnes Stores Shopping Mall, Newbridge. This is the Guidance Service's annual information event to celebrate AONTAS Adult Learning Festival week.



Bernie Byrne and Angela Doherty of the Guidance Service are pictured with Brendan Dunning, Education Development Officer (Schools).

At another event, Kildare VEC Adult Education was represented at an Adult Opportunities fair organised by KITE (Kildare into Tertiary Education) and held in the Whitewater Mall, Newbridge. This successful event included representatives from local service providers for the unemployed as well as the VEC, I.T. Carlow and NUI Maynooth.



The photograph shows (L to R) Joan Piggott - DSP, Bernie Byrne, Angela Doherty - Co Kildare VEC's Adult Education Guidance Service and Helen Cross - Tutor, VTOS Newbridge.

# Adult Refugee Programme (ARP)

A group of 20 Sudanese and 6 Eritean Refugees who have been living in both Libya, Tunisia and Malta have arrived in Ireland. It is the intention of the Department of Justice (integration section) that these refugees will settle in the Naas area.

Initially, they will attend an Adult Refugee Induction Programme for 6/8 weeks in Baleskin, Co Dublin and from there, they will relocate to Naas where they will be entitled to participate in the ARP programme for 12 months which will be delivered by Kildare VEC in 2012.



Marie Grogan, Stephen Bearpark, Pat Bennett and Des Murtagh.

# Brussels Trip



Nessa Childers, the Labour Party MEP for Ireland East invited the Adult Refugee Programme to visit the European Parliament and attend an EU talk on Lifelong Learning Programme. The Adult Refugee Programme is administered through the VEC's.

Maria Grogan, Outreach Worker for Co. Kildare VEC, represented Co. Kildare VEC on the trip. This visit was to inform Co. Kildare VEC about the Adult Refugee Programme.

The Adult Refugee Programme is open to participants who have Stamp 4 status. A person with Stamp 4 status is allowed to work in Ireland. Each student is entitled to 940 hours of tuition. Funding is provided by the Dept of Education. Funding includes payment of tutors, rent of premises and administration costs.

The route to setting up the course is through Co. Dublin VEC who provide posters and application forms. Students are then assessed on their levels through the Oxford Placement Test.

The steps to setting up the programme are: **Advertise, Apply and Assess.** It is recommended that 12/14 students should be recruited before setting up course. At present there is a huge demand for all courses due to the current economic climate. Running the Adult Refugee Programme would be a way of freeing up places on courses.

There are also other funding opportunities available through the GRUNDTVIG Life Long Learning Programme which is the European programme for mobility and co-operation in adult education across Europe. It provides Learning Partnerships, Assistantships and Visits and Exchanges. Our National Agency for information and funding is [Leargas lifelonglearning@leargas.ie](mailto:Leargas.lifelonglearning@leargas.ie)

Maria Grogan

# ADULT BASIC EDUCATION

## Leixlip Adult Basic Education

### TV Apperance

A TV series 'A Story with Me in it' was launched on RTE. The series teamed up with six well known authors and six adult learners who have struggled with writing throughout their lives. One of the programmes featured Peter Sheridan and a student who attended the Leixlip adult learning centre.

### Tutor Training

Twenty-five volunteers took part in the Initial Training course for literacy tutors. This is the largest number to attend a course and look forward to working with them along with the contribution and new experience they will bring to the centre.

## Athy Adult Learning Centre



Athy Adult Learning Centre held their FETAC Award night on Wednesday 9th November. Over 80 students received awards in 37 different modules in Levels 3, 4 and 5. Six students received full Level 5 Awards in Childcare and two in Level 5 Healthcare Support.

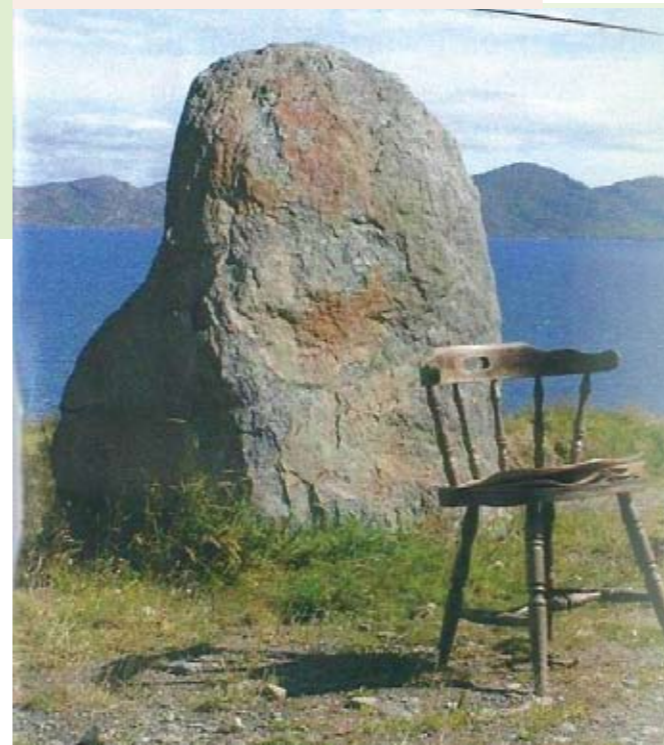
## Kildare Adult Learning Centre

Kildare Adult Learning Centre held their Award night on Wednesday 16th November. Awards were presented to 120 people in 26 different FETAC modules at Levels 3, 4 and 5. Awards were also presented to five Junior Cert English students and five Leaving Cert English students.



# Fred's Creative Writing and Digital Photography Classes

Fred Cutland has run a Creative writing class and a Digital Photography class in Kildare Adult Learning Centre for a number of years. He also runs a Photography Class in the Harvest Centre in Kildare Town. To date the Photography classes have produced a calendar and postcards for sale to aid local charities. The Creative Writing Group produce a booklet of short stories and poems twice a year. This year, both classes have collaborated on the production and have included photographs to enhance the booklet.





# Leixlip Adult Learning Centre

## Retirements

Mary and Damien retired after many years of unstinted commitment to the Leixlip Adult Learning Centre. Mary's retirement was marked by a surprise 'Afternoon Tea' in the centre and Damien's departure was toasted with a little bubbly which was not funded by ALCE budget. Thanks to all who made the occasion so special. We wish them both the best for a long, happy and healthy retirement.



## Tea Party

Staff and friends enjoying the tea party which was organised to mark the retirement of Mary Moore in August.



## Visit to Newgrange

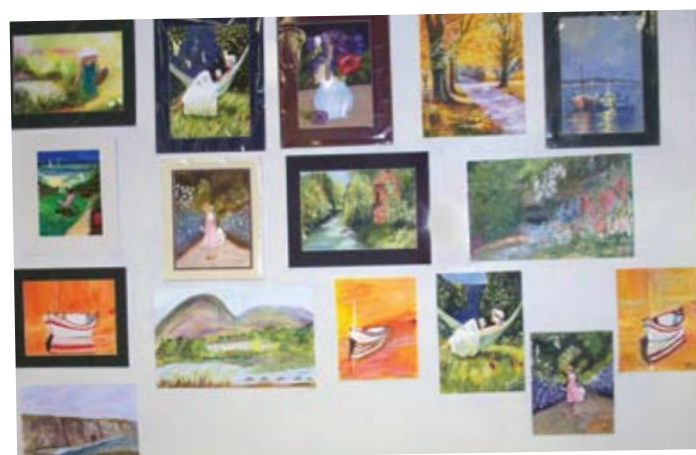
Newgrange Megalithic Passage Tomb which was visited by tutors and students during the summer.

The tomb was built about 3200 B.C. and covers an area of over one acre. It is surrounded by kerb stones, some of which are richly decorated with megalithic art. The inner passage leads to a cruciform chamber which is illuminated during the Winter Solstice. It is estimated that the construction would have taken a work force of 300 at least 20 years.



## Art Exhibition

A sample of the scenes painted by the very enthusiastic Art class and which were exhibited as part of the summer programme.



## Launch of Student Magazine

Mae Leonard, Author and broadcaster from Naas, who launched the annual publication of student writings 'Beauty in Learning' pictured with John Noonan.



## Psychological / Counselling Service

The Adult Education Service was enhanced this autumn in the northern and southern region of the county with the addition of two part-time psychologists/counsellors. This is a pilot project and we welcome Elish Tansey and Orlaith McManus to the service. Their expertise will provide a necessary and valuable support to students and staff.

In the northern region, Elish has facilitated a very informative staff development session for tutors. The theme was 'Establishing Boundaries and Self Care Techniques'. The morning was a mix of discussion and group work with some practical techniques provided to deal with situations which may arise in the tutor / student relationship. Twenty one tutors attended on a Sat morning. They welcomed the opportunity to meet and also to discuss concerns and difficulties that arise in the course of the work. This shows the need there is for the service along with the commitment of tutors, voluntary and paid, to delivering a caring and professional service.

# Youthreach

## Naas

### *The "unsung hero's" of Youthreach Naas*

Naas Youthreach students volunteered their services to the Kildare Volunteer Agency. Volunteering is a new initiative with Youthreach Naas under the Special Education Needs (SEN) programme and is being co-ordinated by Niamh Kelly (resource person). Niamh stresses the importance of "allowing students the opportunity to play an active positive role in their local community".

It is widely recognised that volunteers play a very important part in the fabric of Irish communities and are the unsung hero's of our

time. This is a great initiative which provides the conduit whereby the energy and ideals of young people can be channelled into society with positive and fruitful results.

Students travelled to Monasterevin where they painted the outside of a charity shop. One student spoke enthusiastically of the experience saying "it was a great experience and I felt really great after doing it. I would gladly do it again and the man there was really sound".



# Youthreach

## Athy

A number of trainees participated in the Safe Pass training programme and were successful in achieving their certificates.

The St Patricks day parade in Athy was a huge success. Alice in Wonderland was the theme for Youthreach staff and students.



All students and staff have been busy creating Christmas crafts as part of an autumn integrated programme. The crafts were sold recently at the Athy Fair and funds raised will assist with educational and social activities for the students in reward for the business venture.



# VTOS

Athy



Ann Kilpatrick (tutor); Declan Molloy (VTOS student); Anne Marie Molloy (ex VTOS student) and Kit Farrell (BTEI student)

Anne Marie Molloy was awarded an Academic Scholarship by Carlow IT. She is doing the course in Product Design, Innovation in the IT, having completed an Art Award in VTOS Athy over the past 2 years.



Marie Clancy, Kieran George, Sandra Flynn, Tom Moran, Ken Gorman, Linda Allen (tutor) and Geraldine Brennan.

Students involved in the new module in VTOS called Teamworking.

## Snapshot



STEPHEN HARTNETT, ESO

- Q Name  
A **STEPHEN HARTNETT**
- Q Hails from  
A **KILDARE**
- Q Role in Co Kildare VEC  
A **EDUCATION SUPPORT OFFICER**
- Q Worked in Co Kildare VEC  
A **37 YEARS**
- Q The house I grew up in is in  
A **BROWNSTOWN, THE CURRAGH**
- Q When I was a child I wanted to be a  
A **DOCTOR**

- Q You wouldn't know it but I'm very good at  
A **COMPOSING & TELLING CHILDRENS STORIES**
- Q You may not know it but I'm no good at  
A **GOLF**
- Q I drive a  
A **BMW**
- Q A book that changed me  
A **SOME OR NONE OF A LIBRARY OF SELF IMPROVEMENT & EDUCATIONAL BOOKS**
- Q The person who makes me laugh  
A **OUR GRAND-DAUGHTER**
- Q My Life philosophy is  
A **'RESPECT FOR THOSE I COME IN CONTACT WITH'**

# VTOS

Leixlip

## Presentation to Hilda Walsh.

It was wonderful to see Hilda honoured by Kildare VEC. Hilda has been involved with adult education in the Leixlip area since the early 1980s. She helped establish an Adult Basic Education Service in Leixlip and North Kildare and for many years she was the Adult Literacy Organiser.

Her commitment to the ethos of Adult Education was beyond question and she nurtured these values in all who worked with her in ABE. The education needs of each student were always central to her work. She saw the service grow from the one-to-one service available at the outset to the formation of groups and to the availability of certification.

She managed the service when facilities and resources were very scarce but that was never a deterrent to improvement. Her legacy to Basic Education was a service where people were respected, valued and encouraged to work towards reaching their potential.

Hilda then moved on to work in VTOS where her energy and enthusiasm infected all those around her. These qualities coupled with her gentleness and patience added greatly to the atmosphere of the centre.

She was loyal, courteous and considerate and we all agree that to have worked alongside her for ten years was a privilege. It is not always that professional relationships turn into personal friendships. She revelled in her work and had a lot to be proud of. She had that rare capacity to listen and hone her skills to improve the learning abilities of those she tutored, she left a legacy to be proud of.

She is and will be very much missed as long as we who remember her with such fondness remain at VTOS/PLC Leixlip. Many accolades have come her way during her career, she made a difference.



# Youthreach

Leixlip

Youthreach Leixlip was awarded the Health Quality Mark Gold Standard 2009 – 2012. Award was presented by the Youth Council of Ireland and the National Youth Health Programme.



Lorraine O'Sullivan, Youthreach Co-Ordinator and Kevin O'Hagan, National Youth Council of Ireland.

## Youthreach Leixlip Win Football Tournament

Youthreach Leixlip participated in a football tournament in Athy in 2011. Four teams played in the tournament; Youthreach Athy, Youthreach Naas, Community Training Centre (CTC) Newbridge and Youthreach Leixlip.

All teams put on an excellent sporting display of football skills and determination which entertained many of the supporters who travelled for the tournament.

## "Best Team Spirit"

On Wednesday 26th October Youthreach Leixlip attended the CraftZone Youthreach Music Awards. This first awards ceremony was about acknowledging youth talent and creativity. It was also a chance for Craftzone to thank all the centres who took part in the songwriting workshops throughout 2011.

Our Youthreach Young Mother's group were among the nominees in a category of many contenders for their song "Our Children" and were delighted to win "Best Team Spirit". This award recognised the importance of trust and respect for one another within the group.



Left to right: Halima Suleiman, Charlene Tola, Siobhan Donnelly and Zuhura Baguo.

Youthreach Leixlip made it to the final against CTC Newbridge and Youthreach Leixlip scored the winning goal.

Afterwards Youthreach Athy served refreshments and Youthreach Leixlip were presented with their trophies. An excellent day of Sportsmanship was had by all.



Youthreach Teacher: Donald Mac Cleod with Leixlip Students: Derrick Farrell, Tadhg Doolan, Stephen McNamara, Michael Edwards, Mark Thompson and Martin Lawrence.