



CASTLEPOLLARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Cionn Talk



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Celebrating Our Students: Awards Day 2021

We were proud to host a very successful Awards Day this year. Despite the restrictions, the staff and students were able to celebrate the achievements of so many over the past year.

Student awards were presented at Senior and Junior level in all subjects along with Awards for a range of extra-curricular achievements, such as the BT Young Scientist and Music.

This year saw the introduction of a new award, sponsored by former Principal, Mary Coyle. The award recognises resilience and is entitled, The Misneach Award. Conor Sheridan was presented with the award for his outstanding display of resilience during his time in the college.

The Sports Star Awards were won by Nathan Smyth and Elisha Gavigan at Senior level. Callum Burns and Caoimhe McCormack picked up those awards at the Junior level.

Other notable awards were handed out on the day, such as The Leadership Award which was clinched by Shauna Cribbon who has been an excellent role model for students in this school. Shauna was a key member of the student leadership team as a Prefect and member of the Student Council.

The School Spirit Award was presented to Jack Scally. Jack has brought such positivity to the school and represented



Deputy Principal, Mr McGrath, Lauren Fitzsimons (Student of the Year) and Principal, Mr Walsh

the college in a range of activities, most notably as a member of the successful Junk Kouture group.

The final award of the evening was the Student of the Year Award.

Having been selected by 6th Year tutors and the SLT, the following students were nominated:

- Nathan Smyth
- Elisha Gavigan
- Lauren Fitzsimons
- Shauna Cribbon
- Mickey O'Reilly
- Saoirse Butler
- Emma O'Hara
- Naoise McCabe

Students were interviewed earlier that week by an interview panel including

the 6th Year Tutors and Deputy Principal, Mr McGrath.

The panel noted the high quality of the interviews and how difficult it was to pick a winner.

It was however, Lauren Fitzsimons who impressed greatly in her interview as she was Awarded Student of the Year 2021.

Lauren has taken to the stage and field during her time in the school and has represented the school admirably in these areas. She has developed into a strong and confident leader in our school community. Lauren hopes to work in the field of Psychology and is aiming to start a degree in the area in UCD next year.



Misneach Award Winner, Conor Sheridan and Ms Coyle

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Editorial: The views and opinions of our Editorial team

The importance of friendship during lockdown

By Sinéad Clarke (5th year)

“True friends are never apart, maybe in distance but never in heart.”

Little over a year has passed since Covid-19 arrived in Ireland, and it's safe to say it has impacted the lives of every person in the country – some by just a little, most by a lot. The most striking change to me has been the restrictions on social interactions. Seeing friends is greatly discouraged nowadays, making it a lot harder to form and maintain relationships. Ironically though, we've never needed friends more than now.

Most of us have experienced a feeling of isolation in some form or another since the pandemic began. Between lockdowns and social distancing, our interactions with friends have changed. Now that we are all wearing masks, even a friendly smile to an acquaintance is a thing of the past. There's no doubt that these measures have been huge barriers to developing friendships, but as they say, “nothing worthwhile is ever easy”.

Our friendships are important to us. Families and teachers can offer support and guidance, but

only our friends can truly understand what it's like to be a teenager during the pandemic. These are meant to be the most important years in our social development, but at times it can feel like we are watching these special years pass us by. Discos, parties, restaurants and cinemas are all a distant memory. Only our peers really know what we have missed out on. It's for this reason that I think our friendships are more precious than ever. There's great comfort in knowing that we are not in this alone. Every missed celebration is one that we've all missed equally, and sharing our feelings about this unites us.

In my opinion, friendships mean more now than they ever have. It's not so easy to keep in contact with friends from outside of school since sports training and clubs are closed down. We need to work at keeping in contact with people now and social media plays a big part in that. It may seem so simple to send a text to check in with people every once in a while, but I think I

only speak for all of us when I say it goes a long way. To think that someone cared enough to reach out can make all the difference. It only takes a minute to make someone else's whole day.

I'm lucky in that I've had great support from my friends over the last 12 months but I realise how difficult this past year would've been without them. With that in mind, I recommend that we all make the effort to reach out to somebody, whether that be to reconnect with an old friend or perhaps someone you know who you haven't contacted before. There aren't a lot of opportunities to make new friends at the moment, so a virtual hand stretched out in friendship to a classmate might be the very thing to make a difference to someone.

Summer is coming and hopefully it will bring with it the end of lockdown. We might try to forget the pandemic, but we will always remember how our friends got us through it.



Motor Column: IN THE RIGHT LANE

By Charlie Flynn (1st year)

The Monaco Grand Prix is coming up soon, and I have to say that it's done a good job surviving 90 years. Especially with the state of Formula One nowadays, what with the mass of tarmac modern FIA Grade 1 (The standard requirement to host a Grand Prix) circuits (we're looking at you, Circuit of the Americas) are nowadays and the overpaid Canadians in midfield teams who have virtually nil talent (bar Lance Stroll, he could win races).

The point that I'm making is that if such a circuit like Monaco applied to get a Formula One Grand Prix, the FIA (the organisers of F1) would laugh at them and tell them to get a life. In Monaco, there is no runoff. No tarmac, no gravel trap, not even a tire barrier. In some sections, there is only a steel

barrier to stop errant cars. And it's too short.

But the only thing keeping Monaco alive on the calendar is its history and its charisma. The fact that it's been going for over 90 years is an achievement in itself, and the fact that it's Monaco is just too much eye candy for Bernie Ecclestone and his ragtag army of followers. And the fact that it's Monaco means that you can charge exuberant and ridiculously expensive ticket prices, so that means Liberty Media (the owners of F1) gets more dollar bills to help the sport through the worst crisis since the FISA-FOCA war in the early 1980s.

But as more and more street circuits are added to the calendar, Monaco's



special place is fading fast. And with the recent announcement of the Miami Grand Prix for 2022, at the Hard Rock Stadium on a STREET CIRCUIT, it might not be long before one of the longest-standing Grand Prix is removed from the calendar, possibly never to return. And if that happens, Formula One will have lost a huge part of itself.

Vox Pop:

Students' vox pop

By Ava Fagan (5th year)



Where in the world would you like to go on holidays and why?

Kayla Leddy-1st year

"I would love to go to Spain for a holiday. It was the first ever holiday I went on with my mum and brother. I really enjoyed it and would love to recreate the memories."

Callum Maher-1st year

"I would like to go to Greece because it's warm and there are a lot of ancient structures."

Joshua Egan-1st year

"I'd go to America or Japan because they've both got typically balanced climates and in America you've got tons of places and things to do. In Japan you've got nice food and more technologicaly advanced stuff, they're also big into anime and stuff like that. I couldn't decide between the two."

Sarah Lancaster-1st year

"I would like to go to Spain because the Spanish language is amazing to listen to. I've been learning Spanish just so I can understand what they're saying when I visit there."

Rebecca Murray-3rd year

"I would like to go to New Zealand as I would like to go do silage for a year."

Niamh Connell- 3rd year

"I would go to Bondi beach in Australia but I would hate the long flight over."

Ella Nea- 5th year

"Bora Bora as I've always wanted to swim with the pigs and stay in the hotels on the water."

Kaellum Morgan-5th year

"I would like to go on holidays

to Spain because I haven't been there in a while. The heat is great and there is so much to do festival wise."

Halle Cahill- 6th year

"New York, definitely, because the city is beautiful and the theatre aspect."

Mickey O'Reilly- 6th year

"Well, I'd love to go to Japan, especially after the confinement. The food there is out of this world, literally! Some of the usual Japanese experiences you can see here in Ireland are the sushi conveyor belt and sake bars. A trip to Japan gives one the opportunity to indulge in the legitimate cuisine. Also you can experience a thrilling hike around the country, if that's what you're into. There's an equal amount of natural beautiful landscapes and advanced contemporary infrastructure to balance each other out to give you a nice time on holidays."

Teachers' vox pop

If you could speak any language fluently, what would it be and why?

Ms Carberry

"I would like to speak Mandarin fluently as it is the most spoken language in the world and I am interested in the fact that it uses a non-lettered alphabet."

Mr Caffrey

"Firstly, being born in Ireland, being fluent in Irish (we all should be). Secondly, from travelling a lot of south and central America, being fluent in Spanish would

have helped majorly in my travels.

Ms Smith

"I would love to be able to speak Irish fluently! I am always jealous of other people speaking their native language fluently when I am on holidays! I would love to be able to chat away As Gaeilge!!!"

Ms Smith (Irish teacher)

"Spanish. It will be useful for holidays in 2022 hopefully!"

Ms Leonard

"Woof Woof so I can understand my dog."

Mr Melody

"Irish. Would love to be able to speak Irish fluently."

Mr McGrath

"I would like to speak Spanish. I have been travelling to the Canary Islands for over twenty years and I know very basic conversation, 'Hola', 'Adios'."

"Learning another language is not only learning different words for the same things, but learning another way to think about things"

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Interview with Westmeath Footballer John Egan

By Patrick D'arcy
and Clarissa Harmon

Tell us about your career as a footballer and how long you have been a part of the GAA.

I have played football for as long as I can remember. I think I started with Athlone GAA when I was 4 and played the whole way up to Senior. I also started playing football with Westmeath from U13/U14 development squads and was lucky enough to play minor, U21 and senior with Westmeath. I played on some very good county and club teams and we were unlucky not to win an U21 Leinster medal where we lost to Dublin in the final but should have won. We also had a few good days at senior level, winning league titles, beating Meath in Croke Park and getting to two Leinster finals. We were unlucky to be playing in a time when Dublin are so good. I stopped playing football in 2018 as my kidney disease had taken over and impacted my energy levels. I also had bad knees so I felt it was the right time to concentrate on my health.

What is the process in receiving and donating an organ?

The process for receiving an organ is fairly complex. Unfortunately, you need to be sick enough to require an organ. You will then go through a number of tests to make sure that organ donation is the best route for you. I went through about 5/6 tests before I was eventually placed on the transplant list. You are also required to meet the transplant & surgery team before you are placed on the list.

Once you are on the transplant list, people may put themselves forward to give an organ. In my case, some people have put themselves forward to give me a kidney, unfortunately my sister and father were both rejected. To receive an organ from another living person is called "live donation". The bar is very high for this to happen as the live donor also needs to pass a series of blood, tissue and mental wellbeing checks before progressing and being allowed to donate. There is also a deceased donor list. This is where, unfortunately, someone has passed away and the deceased person or their family has allowed their organs to be donated. Someone on the transplant list can get a call at any time if a suitable deceased donor becomes available. This is where someone has mentioned to their family they want to be a donor if they pass away of if they had a donor card.

How can this story help you raise awareness?

I am hoping this story can raise awareness for organ donation and highlight the importance of becoming a donor by carrying a donor card. There are thousands of people in Ireland that require a transplant to save their lives. Being a donor means that many more lives will be saved on a yearly basis. It is important to have the conversation as unfortunately illness can happen to anyone at any time and a family member of you may require the help of organ donation. Essentially, you are giving someone the gift of a new life if you are an organ donor.



How important is your GAA family at times like this?

The GAA family has been great since my illness has become more known, especially my club Athlone GAA. Some of my best friends and family are all part of Athlone, Westmeath and the GAA in general. The club have offered me help with lifts to appointments etc which I am very grateful for. I have also received many well wishes from the wider GAA community, from other counties and clubs. People in general are very good when there are serious issues and will always try to help out where they can. I have really good family, friends and my partner Traci has been great keeping me positive.

What is your view on the recent years opting out for organ donation with people like Joe Brolly who spoke out for change in Ireland's system?

I would be very much in favour of the opt-out system. It has worked very well in countries across Europe too. By having the system in place it means that we are automatically a donor. This means that awareness doesn't need to be pushed as much and a conversation doesn't need to happen for someone to become a donor. I have found that so many people discuss being a donor but don't take the time to give their wishes to their family or get a donor card. By having an opt-out system, it means that more people will be a donor without needing to be impacted directly before becoming one. It would be a huge boost for organ donation across Ireland and offer a lot more hope to people on the transplant list.

Junk Kouture Success

A look into Castlepollard Community College's new Junk Kouture design 2021

After huge success with their 'Darkness into light', the boys are back at it again with their latest Junk Kouture design 'Coaticue'. Inspired by the Aztec god, a creator and destroyer of nature, it represents the current ongoing issue of global warming. This vibrant, colourful design is made from man-made materials such as briquette cables, a motorbike helmet and even car parts!

In contrast to the man-made products, natural materials such as wool and recycled denim are at the heart of the design. Unlike the last design, this topical, eye-catching outfit is modelled by David Tulgara who is also one of the creators, along with Robert Kennedy and Jack Scally.

By Ava Fagan
(5th year)