

Dublin and Dún Laoghaire ETB

# NEWSLETTER

**ddletb**



Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna Dublin and Dún Laoghaire  
Atha Cliath agus Dhún Laoghaire Education and Training Board



## Meet Darwin & Murph School Therapy Dogs



Where are they now?  
Catching up with past  
students

EAL & Ethos

Mental Health Month

Festival of Music  
Save The Date!

Everyone A Reader

Leadership Connect  
+ Much More!

**NEWSLETTER EDITION 16 - DECEMBER 2024**



# Welcome

I am delighted to introduce the 16th edition of the DDLETB Newsletter.

As we near the close of another productive and inspiring year at DDLETB, I want to take a moment to express my heartfelt gratitude to each of you for your hard work, dedication, and unwavering commitment to excellence in education and training.

To our incredible staff, your collaborative approach to teaching and learning has been the cornerstone of our success. Your passion and innovation continue to create an environment where learners thrive and achieve their goals. Thank you for going above and beyond, not just in your roles but also in fostering a culture of care and mutual support in our schools, centres and colleges.

To our learners, we are truly grateful for your enthusiasm, resilience, and trust in DDLETB as part of your educational journey. We are honoured to support you in reaching your potential.

To our wider DDLETB community, your support and partnership have been invaluable. Together, we nurture an inclusive and vibrant educational environment where everyone can belong and succeed.

As we near the end of 2024, we can be proud of all that we have achieved together this year. Let us carry this momentum into 2025, ready to embrace new challenges and opportunities with the same team spirit and dedication.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your families a safe and peaceful break and the very best wishes for the year ahead.

Warm regards,

Caitriona Murphy  
DDLETB Chief Executive.



# Launch of an Inclusive and Sustainable Programme - Sásta-Nable Living

**Adult Education Service Balbriggan were delighted to launch their Sásta-nable Living QQI Level 2 Programme on Tuesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2024. This was a collaborative effort between the Adult Education Literacy Service in Balbriggan and Down Syndrome Ireland funded under the Adult Literacy for Life's Collaboration and Innovation Fund.**

It was officially launched by the Mayor of Fingal Brian McDonagh. Also in attendance was Cllr. Grainne Maguire, Joanne Russell, Adult Education Officer, members of the Down Syndrome Ireland team, learners and their support workers from Prosper Fingal and colleagues from DDLETB.

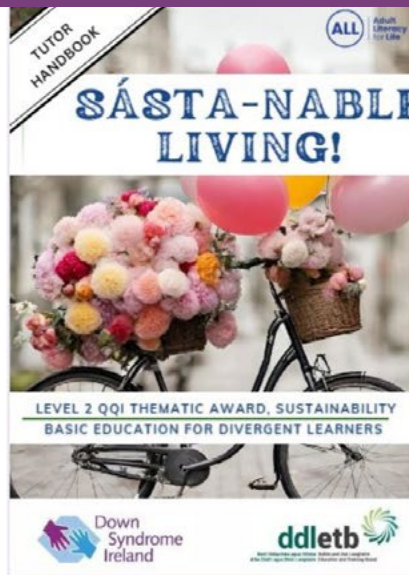
The launch event was a resounding success, highlighting the importance of collaboration in adult education. The Sásta-nable Living QQI Level 2 Programme is designed to empower learners with the knowledge and skills needed to make sustainable choices in their daily lives.

The project team led by Melanie Loughran and a team of expert teachers created an innovative, engaging programme which will be transformative for our learners in

Dublin and Dún Laoghaire ETB and many other ETBs around the country when it is shared nationally. The programme will support learners to play their part in being more sustainable and environmentally conscious.

Participants engage in a variety of activities and projects focused on environmental awareness, waste reduction, and sustainable living practices through mediums such as horticulture and art. The programme aims to foster a sense of community and shared responsibility among learners, encouraging them to take active roles in promoting sustainability within their own communities.

The Adult Education Service Balbriggan and Down Syndrome Ireland are excited about the potential impact of this programme and look forward to seeing the positive changes it will bring to learners and their communities. The initiative represents a significant step forward in further integrating sustainability into adult education, ensuring that learners are equipped to contribute to a more sustainable future.



# A Mayoral Visit to Ardgillan College

The Ardgillan community were delighted to welcome the Mayor of Fingal, Councillor Brian McDonagh, to Ardgillan College on the 6th of November. The mayor was welcomed to Ardgillan by our Head Boy, Head Girl and Student Leadership Team.

The mayor was the guest of honour at our pride flag raising ceremony for Stand-Up Week. Stand Up Week is a national campaign for schools to take a stand against homophobia, biphobia and transphobia bullying. Equality is a core value of Ardgillan; our participation in Stand Up Week is a proud declaration of the ethos of the College.

At the flag raising ceremony, the Mayor reflected on the importance of a week such as Stand Up Week for young people in schools. Our Head Girl took us through the history of the progress pride flag, which flies with pride at the entrance to the College. Our Principal, Ms Ní Mhurchú, gave an eloquent reading of the poem "Pride". Thank you to the Stand Up Week Committee in Ardgillan for another successful week!

The Mayor also gave a speech to all 180 of our 1<sup>st</sup> Year students, and was invited to do so by class 1D, who had started an anti-litter campaign in CSPE class. Students in 1D had previously written asking for a greater provision of bins in the Castlelands area. It is fantastic to see 1<sup>st</sup> Years exemplifying the core value of Community so early on in their learning journey. The Mayor spoke about active citizenship and thanked them for their invitation to Ardgillan College.

Ardgillan College 1<sup>st</sup> year students are delighted to report that their campaign worked, and that a new bin has been installed by Fingal County Council!



# Ardgillan's Erasmus Journey

Ardgillan College's Erasmus + project focuses on 'Fostering staff and student wellbeing through the development of digital skills'.

In November, five enthusiastic staff members — Ms. Ní Mhurchú, Ms. Dunne, Mr. Walsh, Ms. O'Connor, and Mr. Young — traveled to Santa Cruz in the Canary Islands to participate in an Erasmus+ course on Digital Skills. They were thrilled to take part in the course, "Empowering Classrooms in the Digital Age," organised by the Europass Teacher Academy.

During the week-long mobility, staff engaged in hands-on, practical workshops and lessons focused on enhancing digital technology use in the classroom. A key highlight was exploring how artificial intelligence (AI) can support lesson preparation and planning. The Ardgillan team also had the chance to meet and collaborate with teachers from across Europe, sharing experiences and insights on integrating digital skills in education. This unique opportunity provided valuable perspectives on how advancements in digital technology can enrich the teaching and learning experience.

*Participants from Ardgillan College would like to thank Priscilla Kirwan, DDLETB Erasmus Development Officer, for her help and guidance with this mobility. We are very much looking forward to seeing where this Erasmus journey takes us next!*



# EGGCITING TIMES IN BALLYDOWD SPECIAL CARE SCHOOL

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**The super students in Ballydowd Special Care School have been busy working on some terrific and unique projects recently.**

Led by the keen interest shown by current students in caring for animals, the school hatched a plan! But that wasn't all that hatched.....

John from Glennon Farms who offers an incubation programme for schools was contacted and one of our classrooms became home to 20 freshly laid eggs and an incubator. Students named the eggs and got to work on a fun and collaborative chicken project. The stages of development of the chicks inside the eggs were tracked and after 2 weeks the eggs were candled to capture a visual of what was going on inside each individual egg.

One week later, 'Finnuala' hurtled into the world followed in quick succession by her siblings, apart from 'D' who stuck a leg out first instead of her beak and required some extra special care. She was in the right place and students ensured that she had the conditions and minding necessary to thrive and thrive she did. The chicks are going from strength to strength and have a good home lined up beyond the classroom. In between keeping a watchful eye on hatching eggs, learning about and rearing chicks, students somehow found the time to avail of a really showstopping opportunity. They met with Marianne, the lady in charge of set design in RTÉ, to discuss ideas for props that they could create to feature on the set for the Late Late Toy Show!

Students were entrusted with the top-secret theme of the Toy Show and got to work around the clock (or around the cluck!). The workshop in the North Pole hasn't a patch on the standard and speed of production that has gone on in the Art and Woodwork classrooms of Ballydowd. The Toy Show is often the most-watched programme of the year on Irish television and they certainly came to the right place for the contributions of creative, talented and deserving young people. Special thanks for facilitating both these projects goes to our eggcellent Deputy Principal Bronagh Fagan.





# Collinstown Park Community College The Great Outdoors in Clondalkin

The Neilstown Road may not be the first place we think of when talking about activities in the natural environment, but Outdoor Education is alive and well in Collinstown Park Community College. In keeping with the college motto 'Encourage Inspire Enrich', students have been undertaking a range of activities connected with Forest Schools and Bushcraft. These activities include shelter building, pioneering, fabrication projects using forest materials and tools, fire lighting skills and cooking.

## Learning Safe Skills

Such activities encourage experiential learning that develops key skills which are beneficial in their own right but can also be transferable to other facets of life. Some key outcomes for the student can be improved communication, negotiating and compromising when problem-solving, and working with others. These activities also benefit the student – teacher relationship. Participating in Outdoor Education and Forest Schools can help to develop a more relaxed relationship which can then transfer into a better classroom-based relationship. In turn, this can improve the student's motivation to engage in academic activities.

## Food Prepping

Not all forest school activities have to happen outdoors. Students also enjoyed a pioneering project ('A' frame seat) indoors on a rainy day.



For more thoughts, ideas and benefits of forest schools, click on the links below:  
<https://www.wildones.au/blog/outdoor-activities-for-teens>  
<https://ltl.org.uk/forest-school-ideas/>

# Mental Health Matters at Deansrath Community College

**An innovative initiative aimed at improving Mental Health services was launched recently with support from local organisations including Dublin GAA.**

The idea to create the campaign arose from informal discussions among members of the Ethos and Wellbeing student action group at Deansrath Community College. The students noted that while various groups support Mental Health in different ways, there can be a reluctance among young people to speak out about such matters. There has also been some confusion about how to access support and identify the most appropriate service.



**Philly McMahon (Dublin GAA All-Star), launches Mental Health Matters alongside, Eoin, Donncha, Aaron and Matt Corbett (Deansrath Community College)**

The Mental Health Matters campaign seeks improvements by calling for: clarity of service provision as well as a simplified referral process; increased support from government to support community clubs and facilities; and finally, the campaign aims to 'end the stigma' by normalising conversations around mental health through curriculum development, which will increase opportunities for classroom discussion and the training of student leaders.

The initiative has even reached the floor of Leinster House with local TDs supporting the programme and committing to pursuing its recommendations at relevant sub-committees of the Oireachtas. The Mental Health Matters campaign received universal praise during a Dáil debate in October for carrying out a "huge amount of working in breaking the stigma on Mental Health". Well done to all involved!





# 'Everyone a Reader' school library project launches in Clondalkin | Childrens Books Ireland

**Congratulations to Deansrath CC and St. Kevin's CC who have launch 'Everyone A Reader' project that has been sponsored by a local engineering company and supported by Children's Books Ireland.**

The project aims to build a love of reading among students, staff and the wider community. Each school will receive 400 new books for each year of the project. Of these, two hundred will be chosen by the expert Children's Books Ireland team, selected to capture the students' interest and attention, and to reflect the richness and diversity of Irish society. A further one hundred titles will be chosen by the students and teachers in each school, further building a sense of ownership over their new library.

Every year for the three years, the schools will also receive class sets of books, which make up the final one hundred books and which will facilitate

the set-up of book clubs for TY students. A Champion of Reading – a well-known Irish author or illustrator – will work with the school over three years to encourage creativity and engagement with the library.

Staff will be trained in maximising the use of their new library, while school-wide surveys will measure the long-term impact of the project.

Yvonne Crowley, a teacher at Deansrath Community College, said: 'The Everyone a Reader project is a massive opportunity for our school to develop and foster a love of reading and encourage reading for enjoyment in our students. 'The excitement in the faces of the students as they browsed all the books is one that I have never seen before and gave them a new way to experience modern titles and books that they could relate to. We are so grateful to have this programme running in our school to enhance our students' love of reading.'



# Catalan Ministry of Education visit Rath Dara Community College and Coláiste Chillian

Nuria and Sandra, visitors from the Catalan Ministry of Education, were warmly welcomed and hosted by DDLETB (on behalf of the Department of Education). They visited Rath Dara Community College to find out more about supports for EAL students and why Ireland does so well in reading in PISA studies (Ireland rated 2<sup>nd</sup> out of 81 countries in 2018, and 11<sup>th</sup> in both Maths and Science out of 81 countries).

In Rath Dara CC, they were amazed at the work being done by Ms Deane and Ms Thomson in the EAL Department to support students who had recently arrived in Ireland and who FOR NOW, had little English.

The visitors learned about the school's dedication to inclusion and wellbeing, going above and beyond to support all students. They explored the library, managed by a full-time librarian, and toured the impressive new STEM/Digital room. This space allows students to engage in hands-on learning and creativity, experimenting with science, technology, 3D printing, podcasting, robotics, and more, both during classes and after school.



Nuria and Sandra also visited Coláiste Chillian to explore how immersion education operates in a setting where parents may not speak the language of instruction, and where the school actively fosters an environment that immerses students in the Irish Language. This is similar to what is happening in Catalunya where Catalan is becoming more of a minority language as Spanish is spoken more and more in schools.

A highlight of the visit to Coláiste Chillian was the outstanding performance by the school's talented traditional Irish musicians.

Go raibh míle maith agaibh go léir!



*The Erasmus group in Adamstown CC with Mr Kenny, EAL Coordinator.*

# Erasmus Edina Project, Visit to Dublin

**In October, 21 teachers and researchers, from Belgium, Netherland and Spain, participating in an Erasmus project, visited 2 DDLETB schools: St Kevin's CC and Adamstown CC.**

The focus of the visit was to discover more about the integration and language learning journey of students from a migrant background who have been completely immersed in school life from their arrival in the country. The system in Ireland is different from what young people experience in other European countries where a parallel system is in place. Students reach a specific language level and can then transition to be with their peers.

The visitors were impressed with their school visits and noted some very positive aspects in each school:

- They were impressed by the availability of the school newsletters and digital displays in multiple languages, and the wide range of languages offered for the Leaving Certificate, with exams taken in students' own schools, amazed them.
- They praised the school journal as an excellent communication tool with parents, noting its comprehensive and relevant content.
- They highlighted the importance of friendships and peer interaction as opportunities to practice the language of schooling.
- The normalcy of diversity in Irish schools stood out to them and they appreciated the inclusivity of allowing scarves (hijabs) matching the school uniform, contrasting it with bans on religious symbols in some European countries.
- They were intrigued by students using their first language in class to support learning and valued the collaborative environment. The integration of students into mainstream classes, regardless of language ability, was highly commended, as was the emphasis on high expectations and challenging, age-appropriate content.

- They were surprised by the rapid improvement in students' English proficiency and their awareness of their CEFR levels within a year of arrival.
- They noted the enrolment policies, catchment areas, and the REALT Coordinator's role in ensuring all students can access local schools and they were also impressed by the high retention rate post-Junior Certificate
- They appreciated Ireland's mixed-ability approach and the delayed finalisation of subject choices, contrasting it with early streaming in other countries.
- Language support during Irish was seen as a safe space for students, offering respite and comfort.
- And initiatives like Breakfast Clubs, HSCL visits, iPads, coding, and Home Economics were noted as strengths within the school environment.



*Talking to students in St Kevin's CC and getting their perspectives on their language learning journey.*

Thank you to Ms Purcell and Mr Duffy and thank you to all who participated and gave up their time and for the hospitality shown in both schools.



## SUSTAINABLE STAFFING FOR EAL IN DDLETB

Teachers from Adamstown CC, Castleknock CC, Grange CC, Mount Seskin CC, Luttrellstown CC and St Finian's CC have all recently trained to teach EAL - which will ensure the quality and sustainability of staffing provision for EAL across our schools.

Teachers attended class in June and sat their exam on 23<sup>rd</sup> August to gain

internationally recognised certification from Cambridge English.

2 teachers from City of Dublin ETB, 2 from Tipperary ETB and 1 Limerick and Clare ETB also took part in this training. We were also delighted to welcome 2 Ukrainian teachers and other teachers who heard of the course through the Migrant Teacher Project, Marino.

### Feedback from the participants was extremely positive:

*"As an NQT/recently graduated PME, I found that this course benefitted my career greatly. It has equipped me with strategies that will support my teaching. I have also thoroughly enjoyed exploring an area of education I haven't had the opportunity to experience yet. It has been very beneficial to mention in interviews and it has been particularly enjoyable to engage and network with colleagues from across the country"*

*"This training gives me confidence to work with EAL students and to encourage other staff members in its approach"*

*"My awareness of L2 learners' experience in the Irish classroom has become much more informed"*

*"This course gave me a proper insight into teaching EAL. I feel like I understand how to go about organising/coordinating EAL to a high standard. I feel more confident explaining EAL to my colleagues in school and making sure all EAL students are catered for"*

In 2025, the course will take place over a week beginning June 23<sup>rd</sup> June. For more information and to sign up: [marykenny@ddletb.ie](mailto:marykenny@ddletb.ie)

# ETHOS NEWS

## IDENTITY MULTI-BELIEFS AND VALUES EDUCATION (IMBVE)

We are excited to welcome new schools coming on board the IMBVE journey. An online pop-up information session will take place on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> January at 10.30 am. This session will be aimed at schools who are looking to implement the curricular expression of ETB Ethos for the next academic year. It will look at timetabling the curriculum, who is best placed to teach the course, and the training and resources available to schools.

The podcast Let's Talk Ethos episode 10 looks at IMBVE and how it can be implemented in schools from the school leader's perspective.

For more information contact DDLETB Ethos Coordinator [carolinedaly@ddletb.ie](mailto:carolinedaly@ddletb.ie)

## EXCITING NEW INITIATIVE: DDLETB STUDENT ETHOS AMBASSADOR PROGRAMME

We are thrilled to announce the launch of the DDLETB Student Ethos Ambassador Programme, designed to empower students to engage with and promote their school's core values.

This programme emphasises student voice and leadership, providing students with the opportunity to support their school's ethos and culture. Through their involvement, students will develop essential skills such as communication, teamwork, and advocacy, while actively contributing to their school community.

Each school is invited to register a team of up to 5 students to participate in the programme. Participation will involve attending two in-person workshops and one inter-school meet-up. The teams will collaborate on a values-led initiative and present their work as a team. Upon completion of the programme, participants will receive an Ethos Ambassador badge, which can be worn throughout their journey in DDLETB, as well as a certificate of participation.

## LET'S TALK ETHOS PODCAST!

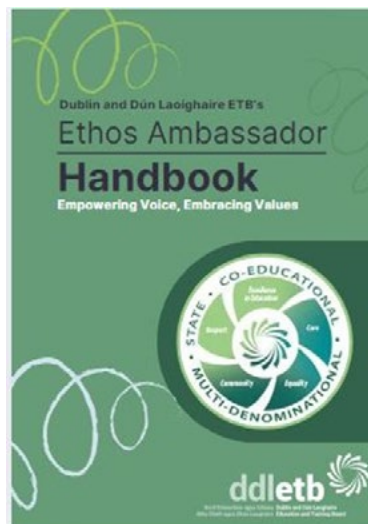
Join us on the 'Let's Talk Ethos' podcast as we explore

the ETBI Patrons

Framework from the diverse perspectives of stakeholders, shedding light on what defines the ethos of ETB schools and what it truly means to be part of an ETB school community. We will also be having discussions with a varied group of influential speakers from across many different backgrounds.

Tune in for enlightening conversations that unravel the core values and how they shape ETB schools, diversity, anti-bias, racism and much more. Find the podcast on Spotify and subscribe to be notified of new episodes.

A massive thank you to our colleagues in DFEi for their support and expertise in bringing this vision to life.



For our Gaelcholáistí, the workshops and handbook will also be available in Irish, and they should register through the designated Irish registration link. Every team must have a link teacher for support, registration links have been shared with Principals.

We look forward to sharing more information in the new year as this programme gets underway. For further details please contact our DDLETB Ethos Coordinator [carolinedaly@ddletb.ie](mailto:carolinedaly@ddletb.ie)



# FESTIVAL OF MUSIC

NATIONAL CONCERT HALL  
4TH MARCH 2025

## SAVE THE DATE

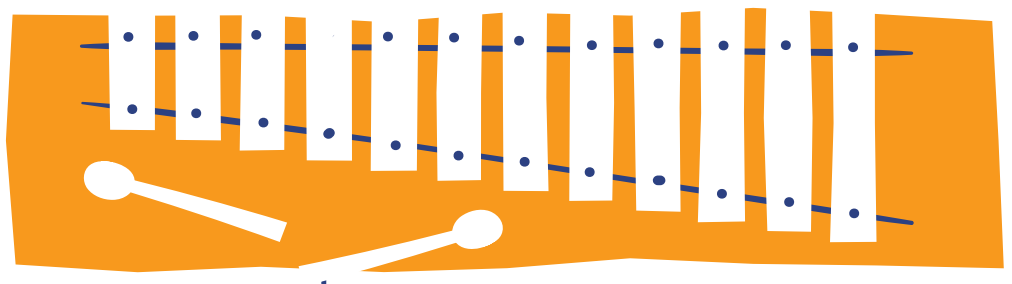
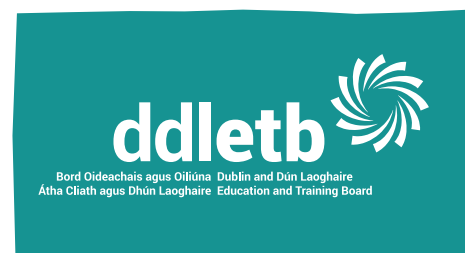
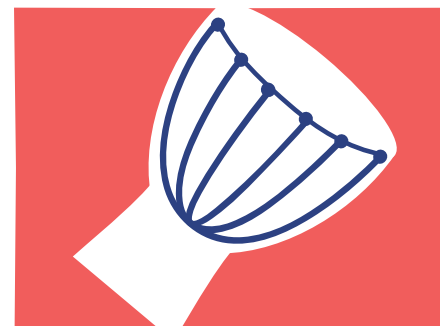
The annual Festival of Music returns next March with performances by students from DDLETB Community Colleges and Gaelcholáistí.

From Pop, Rock, Traditional, Folk to Classical Music the students perform as soloists, in groups, in bands and as part of the DDLETB Choir. It promises to be another fabulous evening of music, showcasing the musical talent of the students in the DDLETB.

The Festival is a great opportunity for the second-level students of the DDLETB to meet and create music together on the stage of the country's premier music venue. We are immensely proud of the achievement of our students and delighted to support this performance

This ticketed event is open to all students/learners and staff. Tickets will be available to purchase directly from the National Concert Hall (NCH) in early 2025.

**Full details will be made available on our website ([www.ddletb.ie](http://www.ddletb.ie)) and also our Social Media Channels with the link to NCH.**



# Ethos in Action at Fingal Community College

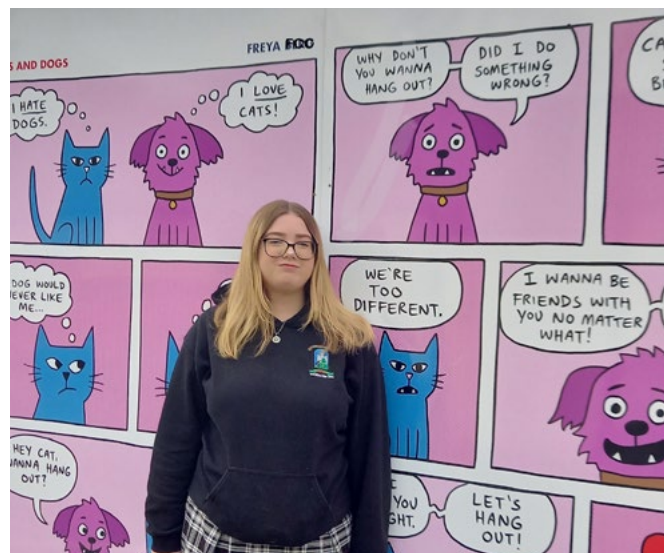
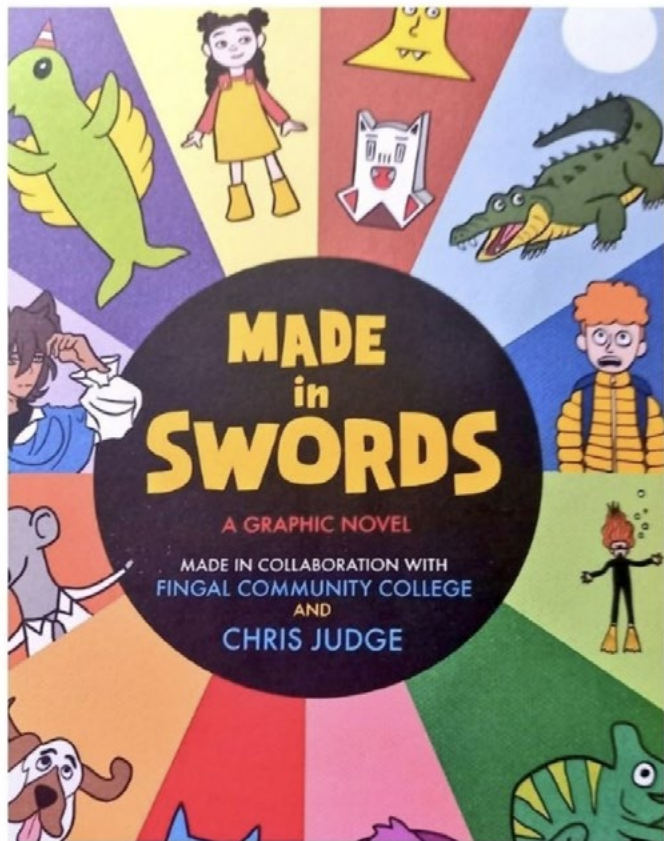
Our ETB core value of Community has remained at the forefront of Fingal Community College in recent months. With the guidance and support of art teachers, Siobhan Lynch and Liza Coggins, 3<sup>rd</sup> year art students collaborated with the hugely talented author, artist and illustrator, Chris Judge, on an inspiring art and literacy-based project.

Students worked with Chris to produce an entertaining, graphic novel titled 'Made in Swords'.

This exciting initiative gave students the opportunity to develop and engage their artistic, imaginative and creative skills to create hilarious, thoughtful comics. 'Made in Swords' was officially launched at the Magic of Stories Festival, hosted by Fingal Libraries, in Swords Castle at the end of September. This fantastic project is now available to access on Fingal Library's Borrow Box platform.

Furthermore, a large-scale mural has been installed on hoarding next to Fingal Community College showcasing the wonderful artwork created by its students through this project. The artwork has brought a welcome vibrancy and splash of colour to the local community, especially appreciated on these dark winter days. The next time you happen to be in Swords, make sure to take a worthwhile visit to North Street to have a look.

***A special thank you to Fingal Libraries for making this incredible project possible.***





Dún Laoghaire Further Education Institute (DFEI) celebrated its annual Health and Wellbeing Week from October 21st to 24th, 2024. This event was a resounding success, featuring a series of inspirational presentations and engaging activities aimed at promoting health and wellness among students and staff.

The week included talks by renowned speakers Cathy Shah and Sharon Fennelly, who shared their insights on maintaining a healthy lifestyle. The Marie Keating Foundation, St. James Guide Clinic, Active Consent, and Sarah Keogh from Eatwell conducted informative discussions that broadened students and staff knowledge on various health topics.

In addition to the educational sessions, the week offered moments of relaxation and mindfulness. Participants enjoyed mindfulness sessions and engaging drum circle activities, which provided a perfect balance to the more informational aspects of the week.

These activities were designed to help attendees unwind and focus on their mental well-being. Thanks go to teachers Eileen Connell and Liam Toner for their efforts in organising this event. Their dedication ensured that Health and Wellbeing Week was not only informative but also enjoyable for everyone involved.

Overall, DFEI's Health and Wellbeing Week 2024 was a fantastic initiative that highlighted the importance of health and wellness in the educational environment. It provided valuable knowledge and practical tools for maintaining a healthy lifestyle, making it a memorable and impactful event for all participants.



# DFEI Celebrate Health & Wellbeing



# Literacy Changes Lives



**2024 has been a spectacular year for adult literacy in DDLETB FET. This year we have provided literacy, numeracy, digital literacy and ESOL programmes to approximately 7000 learners in our Adult Education Service.**

Programmes range from Levels 1 to 4 on the National Framework of Qualifications, and many are accredited through QQI. In addition to this, we have continued to provide Key Skills support to other FET learners including Study Skills for apprentices in our 3 Training Centres. Literacy is still a major challenge in Irish society, contributing not only to financial hardship and unemployment but also impacting health and wellbeing.



**Almost 1 in 5 adults (18%) struggle with reading and understanding everyday text.**



**1 in 4 adults (25%) have difficulties using maths in everyday life.**



**Almost 1 in 2 adults (47%) lack basic digital skills.**

However, we are determined to help learners gain the skills and self-confidence they need to transform their lives and the lives of people in their family and community. Our work in adult literacy this year has included implementation of the national Adult Literacy for Life (ALL) Strategy.

The Strategy has enabled us to apply for additional funding to support collaboration and innovation in our provision. Our ETB was the first to produce a regional action plan for adult literacy. We did this in collaboration with partner organisations such as the libraries, DEASP, Citizens Information and the banking sector. Many of these are representatives of our Regional Adult Literacy Coalition. This group meets regularly to help create literacy-friendly communities throughout Fingal, South Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Rathdown.

We are very proud of our learners who have overcome significant obstacles to undertake their learning journey with us. We are very grateful to our tutors who embody our core values in DDLETB of professionalism, excellence, equality, respect and support. While it is impossible to capture all that we have done in adult literacy over the last 12 months, here are some of the highlights.

- We piloted a QQI Level 2 programme on sustainability and the environment for neuro-divergent learners in Balbriggan, in partnership with Down Syndrome Ireland.
- We became the first ETB in the country to receive a charter from Age Friendly Ireland for our adult literacy and adult education provision for older learners in Swords.
- We began a partnership with the local financial sector in Blanchardstown to improve their customer service for vulnerable customers and we held a financial literacy event which was attended by the Minister for Finance.
- We have collaborated with South Dublin County Council libraries to offer Media Literacy and Financial Literacy talks to over 450 people in 6 local libraries in Lucan, Clondalkin and Tallaght. We have also strengthened our partnership with libraries in Fingal, South Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Rathdown to enable them to offer a welcoming and inclusive experience to library users with literacy needs.
- We piloted a bespoke ESOL programme for visually impaired learners in Tallaght: the first of its kind in the FET sector.
- We delivered a pilot programme in Dún Laoghaire on reducing barriers to learning by using assistive technology and adopting a Universal Design for Learning (UDL) approach. The programme received a special commendation from the international judging panel in the John Kelly Awards for Universal Design in Further and Higher Education.
- We ran summer programmes in Loughlinstown on the theme of health and wellbeing and developed a creativity and wellness toolkit.
- And we welcomed over 100 tutors to an event in October to celebrate their contribution to our adult literacy and ESOL provision.



# Junk Kouture Design Success at Swords Community College

# JUNK KOUTURE DUBLIN



2024, the Year of the Dragon, symbolises good luck, fortune, and power. Inspired by this theme and celebrating women's influence in fashion, young designers from Swords Community College created an award-winning design for Junk Kouture 2024.

While sustainability in the fashion industry is growing, it still has a long way to go. These young designers aimed to inspire women to lead change in the industry, reminding them of their strength and influence.

Drawing from mythical legends where dragons are attracted to and protect gold, the design features gold as its central colour. Flames were cleverly illustrated using potato sacks at the bottom of the skirt, with red symbolising the dragon's dominance and power. Crushed tealights, used as scales, added a fiery, textured element to the design.

Swords Community College is thrilled to have qualified for the Junk Kouture World Final, an impressive achievement in only their second year of participation. This success highlights the dedication, teamwork, and creativity of both the design team and their educators, showcasing the spirit of excellence and innovation that defines Swords Community College.

Design name: INFERNO ATTIRE  
Teachers: Sarah Ryan & Sarah Barton  
Design Team: Siobhán McGrane,  
Bibi Lynch, Nel Czubak - 5th year Students

# Teacher Leadership Programme 2024

We are delighted to see the return of the Teacher Leadership Programme (TLP) this year, following its 'Reflect and Review' phase.

The programme continues to empower educators to drive positive change and innovation in their schools. Have a look at the exciting titles for this year's TLP projects, showcasing the creativity and dedication of participating teams.

Congratulations to all teams who have successfully completed two general learning sessions and are now diving into their project work. Best of luck as you continue to put in the hard work, passion, and ingenuity to make a meaningful impact in your school communities!



**LEADERSHIP  
CONNECT**  
PROGRAMME



**TEACHER  
LEADERSHIP**  
PROGRAMME

- **Eriu CC: Mastering Maths symbols and Action verbs**
- **CP Setanta: Empower and Energise: Impact of Brain Breaks on Student Learning**
- **Ardgillan CC: Attendance Boost: Every Student, Everyday**
- **St.Kevins CC: Chatty Corner**
- **Fingal CC: Nourish to Flourish: Supporting 6th Year Student Well-being with Healthy Food Choices**
- **Castleknock CC: Smart Schools: Shaping the Future with AI**
- **Coláiste Cois Life: "Ag Spreagadh Feabhais: Aitheantas Iarrachta ar VSware a Fheabhsú" "Inspiring Excellence: Enhancing Student Effort Recognition on VSware"**
- **Skerries CC: Using Restorative Practice to shape positive relationships in our school community**
- **Griffen CC: Outdoor Classroom**
- **Grange CC: Leaving Certificate Mentoring Programme**
- **Luttrelstown CC: Morning Moments: Structuring Tutorial Time for Positive Impact**
- **Donabate CC: Supporting our NQTs and PMEs**
- **Lusk CC: Exam excellence: Designing a Rubric for Success**
- **Adamstown CC: Fuel for Focus: Breakfast Club**
- **Firhouse CC: The Effective use of teacher feedback by students**
- **Swords CC: UDL (cross school project with CP Fóla)**
- **CP Fóla: UDL (cross school project) with Swords CC)**
- **Lucan CC: Optimising Student Revision: A Structured Approach to the Use of Revision Templates**
- **Collinstown Park CC: Scaffolding for Student Success**
- **Kingswood CC: Good News Story's**
- **Greenhills CC: Mastering OneNote**
- **St Finians CC: An investigation into the effectiveness of Restorative Practice**



*Fáilte  
go LCC  
& CNT!!*



# New Team DDLETB members at Luttrellstown Community College and Coláiste na Tulchann.

**We are delighted to announce that our two new school therapy dogs – Darwin and Murph – have officially arrived at Luttrellstown Community College and Coláiste na Tulchann!!**

Following our successful application to My Canine Companion (MCC), a national Irish charity (RCN 20079147) – LCC recently received the fantastic news that the two young puppies were to be assigned as therapy dogs to our school.

On Friday, September 20<sup>th</sup>, Darwin and Murph received a warm and heartfelt welcome on their very first day at LCC; helping them to feel instantly at home in their new surroundings!

The *School Therapy Dog Programme*, developed by My Canine Companion, was the first of its kind in Ireland. Initially piloted in Munster in 2020, it now supports over 60 schools across the country. Research has consistently shown

the positive impact therapy dogs can have in educational environments. Schools involved in this programme have reported significant improvements in wellbeing, mental health, anxiety levels, attendance, as well as staff and overall school morale.

Even in their first week at LCC, Darwin and Murph have created a wave of positivity throughout the whole school community. Some of the students took the time this week to discuss the effect that the dogs have had since their arrival: Junior student Alex told us that *“I love dogs. they just put a smile on your face every time you see them”*.

His fellow 1<sup>st</sup> Year classmate, Kate, added

*“They just make everyone feel loved... You try to get to school early to see if the puppies are there. If the dog is excited to see you, it makes you feel excited but also when they’re calm, it can make you feel calm too.”*

Senior cycle student Samuel remarked that he *“can really see the benefits of having them in the school already – The morale around the place has just risen right away – Everyone is so happy to have them about.”*

The two dogs will continue to attend school and will have regular training sessions with My Canine Companion until they graduate as part of their School Therapy Programme; [You can view some of their fellow therapy dogs’ recent graduation on MCC social media here.]

Darwin and Murph will generally be accompanied by their handlers, who are designated members of LCC staff. The dogs will live with the handlers and, as they mature and complete further training, their involvement in school activities will gradually increase. The puppies will always be on a lead, and they will only interact with those who request it. LCC Board of Management has recently approved our School Dog Therapy Policy and associated Risk Assessment, which are published on our school website and contain more information in this regard.

*Please contact the school office if you have any questions or wish to notify the school about any concerns around your child’s interaction with the therapy dogs.*

We welcome any assistance the community may be able to offer, whether through sponsorship or helping with the care and maintenance of our therapy dogs. If you are interested in contributing in any way, please don’t hesitate to get in touch via [info@luttrellstowncc.ie](mailto:info@luttrellstowncc.ie). A massive thank you to those of you who have already contacted the school to offer your support.

To sum up the overall impact of Darwin and Murph on school life, Leaving Certificate student Sarah explains:

*“School can be stressful sometimes...and even though dogs don’t say anything, it’s just their presence. They don’t judge anyone, they just want to love everyone...If you’re having a bad day and you meet one of the dogs, they just want to get to know you and to say “hello. It really boosts your mood, and*



*I suppose, it helps you to feel better about yourself”.*

The school community is embarking on a truly exciting journey and couldn’t be more enthusiastic about the positive effect that this initiative will bring to students and to the entire school community in the coming years.

***Darwin is an energetic and affectionate Irish-Doodle and his buddy Murph is a playful, yet quite laid-back, Golden Retriever. Both are already proving great company for each other during the school day!***

# Communities of Practice Enhancing Subject Department Collaboration in Firhouse Community College

For the last three years, Firhouse CC Maths department have been involved with the Access Maths programme in Trinity College Dublin. The school are delighted to be a part of this innovative project which allows the Maths department more opportunities to collaborate and plan with Maths teachers around the country.

They redeveloped our Junior Cycle units of learning to incorporate more task-based learning to improve student problem solving capabilities and they have found that students are more resilient, willing to take more risks and more engaged in Maths lessons. Working closely as a department and collaborating on all lessons has also introduced peer observation within the department.

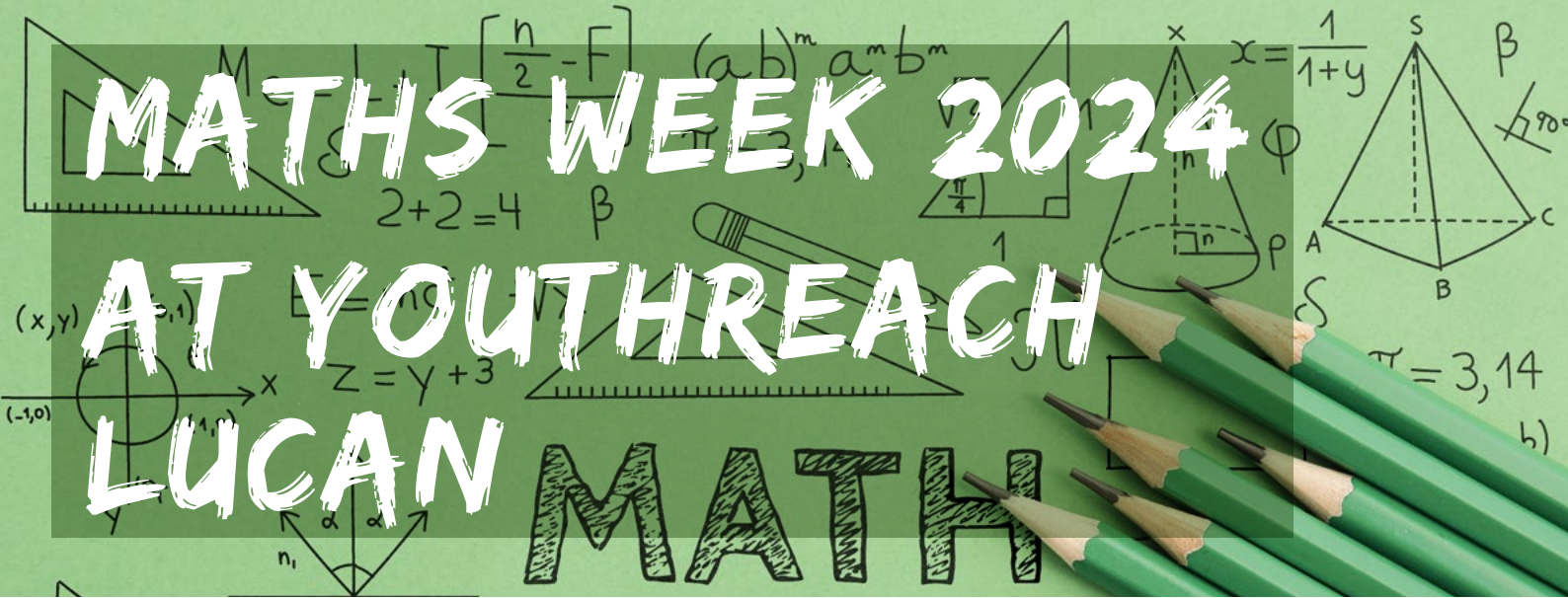
Firhouse CC are also part of an Erasmus+ programme with Trinity College which involves developing units of learning with teachers from schools in Austria, Sweden and Czech Republic. Teachers have found this sharing of best practices invaluable in supporting improvement within their departments.

As part of the programme, students have participated in a Maths Fest in Trinity College Dublin which has provided a wonderful opportunity for them to experience Maths outside of the classroom.

If any DDLETB schools are interested in working on Maths Units of Learning or other resources to enhance learning in Maths classes, the team at Firhouse CC would love to start up a Community of Practice in this area. Contact [aoifelyons@firhousecc.ie](mailto:aoifelyons@firhousecc.ie)







**During Maths Week at Youthreach Lucan, we held a variety of engaging activities from Monday to Thursday, exploring different aspects of mathematics. We kicked off the week with a video produced in-house, highlighting how maths is integrated into each subject taught at Youthreach.**

One of the week's highlights was a treasure hunt through Lucan village, where students discovered the maths involved in everyday life. We also held a bingo game, replacing numbers with maths-related words for a fun twist.



On the following day, we focused on estimation. Students were given a jar and one sweet and had to estimate how many sweets would fit inside.

They also estimated the height of a tree in the car park using just a meter stick, and for fun, they guessed the distance to the nearest shop in "bananas" as a quirky unit of measurement.

Additionally, we challenged them to estimate the combined height of all the students if they stood on each other's shoulders.

The next day, we revealed the actual values for each estimation activity and compared them to the students' guesses.

On Thursday, we explored probability, setting up a roulette table and giving a presentation on gambling, its risks, and how it affects the brain.

We found resources on the website <https://www.problemgambling.ie> After demonstrating the game, we predicted that players would lose their money quickly, which they did.

We wrapped up the week with a table quiz, revisiting the maths found in each subject. Prizes were awarded to the top-performing students, bringing a fun and educational week to a close.



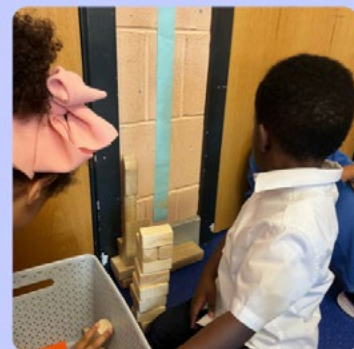
# MATHEMATICAL MASTERY: CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION DURING MATHS WEEK.

At Scoil Chormaic CNS they celebrated Maths week with a focus on encouraging playfulness. Incorporating playful elements into our Maths lessons through games, hands on activities, Maths hunts, stories, and challenges.

Some learners created Maths related challenges through creative problem solving. They also had an estimation station where each pupil got to guess how many sweets were in the jar and Butlers Bingo was a whole school event that gave many belly laughs. Using ICT pupils played fun interactive games, as well as using the Beebots to learn in a fun way. There was lots of collaborative learning to instil a love for Maths.



## Building and measuring free-standing structures!



Last week, DDLETB FET hosted a highly successful Learner Forum in collaboration with AONTAS. The event, held at the Maldron Hotel in Tallaght saw an impressive attendance of 94 learners, as recently confirmed by AONTAS.

The forum provided a valuable platform for learners to share their experiences and feedback, which will be instrumental in shaping future educational strategies. Learners appreciated the opportunity to be heard and valued the efforts of both DDLETB and AONTAS in creating a supportive and engaging environment. One learner remarked, *“I appreciate that there are organisations dedicated to ensuring student comfort and improving the overall quality of education”*.

The feedback received from learners was overwhelmingly positive, with many expressing their gratitude for the opportunity to voice their opinions and contribute to the improvement of educational services, *“I liked the space created where we could be honest and be heard,”* (FET Learner Forum Attendee 2024).

## Successful Learner Forum Highlights DDLETB FET Collaborations

In addition to the forum, attendees were introduced to the new SOLAS FET Strategy, which outlines ambitious plans for the future of further education and training and some learners met with SOLAS to add their voices to the completion of the strategy.

The event also highlighted the ongoing collaborations between DDLETB and AONTAS as well as DDLETB and SOLAS, which aim to enhance the learning experience for all FET participants.

DDLETB extends its heartfelt thanks to all DDLETB centre and Head Office staff, and to AONTAS for their dedication and hard work in making this event a tremendous success. The collaboration and support from all involved have been crucial in achieving such a positive outcome.





## A new 'Éire' of Music for Scoil Chormaic Community National School

At Scoil Chormaic CNS, embracing our ETB core value of Community, we continuously liaise with our local community to provide excellence in education. Through our strong links within the community, Scoil Chormaic CNS was selected by The Irish Music Institute & Song to participate in a new Traditional Music access programme which began in September of this year.

The programme named 'Pathway to the Well' is Funded by the Arts Council & Music Network Ireland. This new initiative will see the institute work in partnership with Scoil Chormaic CNS, as well as many local community groups and musical bodies to introduce traditional Irish music to children from culturally diverse backgrounds.

The programme will be led by Niall Preston traditional music educator at the IMIS, and all pupils will have the opportunity to learn how to play many instruments such as; the Bodhrán, Tin Whistle, The Harp, and many more. A short documentary will be recorded across the year to record the pupils progress throughout the programme. The pupils will also have the opportunity to perform with other local schools in the local music Theatre 'The Lark' and some students will be offered music scholarships at the end of the year.

## The Launch of the Programme:

Speaking at the official launch, programme director Dr Seán McElwain noted the inclusive nature of traditional music and its valuable contribution to the creation of community.

***“Traditional music has long been community-based music. Allowing people from various backgrounds to come together through music is at the heart of music-making throughout Ireland. However, it can often lie beyond the experience and reach of many new community members. With this programme, we hope to make traditional music more accessible and visible to our culturally diverse local community and contribute to the development of an even more inclusive community for traditional music in the Fingal region, which now has the largest population of young people in the country”.***



# Provision Mapping in DDLETB

## A Whole School Journey

Provision Mapping was initially created in 2016 by Dr Johanna Fitzgerald, Mary Immaculate College in collaboration with Limerick and Clare ETB. This process is currently being implemented across the sixteen ETBs in over 200 Community Colleges. Twenty-four DDLETB Community Schools are currently engaging in the provision mapping process (since 2021).

Provision Mapping is designed to foster collaboration in inclusive special education between school staff, students, parents/ carers and wider education partners, benefiting all students, including those with additional needs and disabilities. The process uses school self-evaluation (SSE) to develop a school provision map, reflecting current provision for students with additional and special educational needs across the Continuum of Support.

Areas of Need investigated for provision across the Continuum of Support include Numeracy, Literacy, Language, Social and emotional learning, Physical / and or Sensory Needs, Social and communication Skills, Behaviour, Self – Management and / or organisational Skills, Study Skills, Life Skills, Exceptional Ability including dual / multiple exceptionalities and medical needs. Schools compile all these evidence-based provisions into a single summary document known as a provision map.

Provision Mapping affirms and acknowledges existing good practice in relation to inclusive and special/ additional education in schools. It focuses on capacity building. It serves as a foundation for strategic budgeting, resource allocation, and identifying staff professional learning and development needs.

Provision Mapping enhances coherent approaches to school improvement by integrating existing policies and frameworks across the Continuum of Support (i.e. the implementation of the Ethos Framework, the Wellbeing Policy Statement, the Guidance Framework and future Bí Cinéalta Framework).

*If your school has any queries in relation to Provision Mapping or would like to engage in Provision Mapping from September 2025, please contact Frances Shannon, DDLETB Special and Additional Education Needs Development Officer ([franceshannon@ddletb.ie](mailto:franceshannon@ddletb.ie)) or any member of the Development Team ([DevTeam@ddletb.ie](mailto:DevTeam@ddletb.ie)).*



Balbriggan Community College presenting their Provision Mapping Journey at the National Provision Mapping Induction Day for 2024 Schools Cohort in Athlone on 01 October 2024

# St. Finian's Community College Future Pathways Fair: A Resounding Success!

St. Finian's Community College, Swords recently hosted its highly anticipated Future Pathways Fair, an event designed to provide students with invaluable insights into their future career options. The fair, held on Wednesday 27th November featured nearly 50 exhibitors, including universities, colleges, apprenticeship programmes, local industries and health organisations offering a wealth of information to students and visitors alike.

The Future Pathways Fair proved to be an exceptional opportunity for St. Finian's students to explore the wide variety of pathways available after school, from further education to training and employment options. The event was not only beneficial for our own students, but also for the wider community, as many local residents dropped by to gather information and explore career opportunities. It was an exciting day filled with discovery, as both students and community members had the chance to meet with representatives from a diverse range of sectors.

One of the opportunities of hosting the fair was creating partnerships with local schools as each school and guidance counsellor in the area were invited to attend. We were delighted to welcome students and guidance counsellors from Loreto College Swords and Gormanston College, as they took the opportunity to explore the various pathways on offer.

Our local Jigsaw Youth and community engagement worker was available on the day to chat with students about the services they provide to young people in the area. The collaboration with other schools was an excellent opportunity to showcase the resources and opportunities available at St. Finian's and our local community, and we were thrilled to see such a positive turnout from the schools in attendance.

Parents also found the event extremely beneficial. Many took the time to speak with exhibitors and explore the wide variety of options available to their children. Feedback from parents was overwhelmingly positive, with many commenting on how impressed they were with the event and the wealth of information on display.



Senior cycle students were particularly appreciative of the fair, with many providing very positive feedback about how helpful the event was in shaping their future decisions in the coming months. For many students, the fair was instrumental in clarifying their next steps, whether it be pursuing further education, seeking apprenticeships, or considering local job opportunities.

The fair also gave students valuable insight into the industries available locally, helping them to better understand the wide range of career options that exist right on their doorstep. A highlight for many students was meeting An Garda Síochána Swords, who were on hand to talk about recruitment as well as allowing students to try on different parts of the Gardaí uniform!

We are incredibly proud of how the Future Pathways Fair turned out, and we look forward to making it an annual event for both our students and the community. The success of this year's fair highlights the importance of showcasing the pathways available to students and giving them the tools they need to make informed decisions about their futures.

A big thank you to all of the exhibitors who participated, as well as to the staff, students, and all who made the event possible. We are already excited for next year's fair and look forward to welcoming even more schools and community members to St. Finian's Community College.





# Where are they now?



## **Tara Swift, Firhouse Community College**

Tara graduated with the Class of 2021. She went on to study for a Level 8 undergraduate degree in Economics, Politics and Law and then progressed on to Level 9 LLM Master's Degree in Policing Security and Crime.

Well done to Tara and the wonderful things she has achieved.



## **Pauline Tawyodh, Firhouse Community College**

Pauline graduated from Firhouse Community College in 2021. She is not in her final year of the Level 8 Course in DCU where she is studying to be a Primary School teacher. Congratulations to Pauline and we wish her all the best in her final year.

We hope to welcome Pauline to a DDLETB Community National School in the near future.

## **Gnóthachtáil as Gaeilge – Excellence in Irish-medium education delivered**

Fiú agus na daltaí tar éis imeacht uainn, is údar bróid iad i gcónaí agus an méid a bhain siad as a dtréimhse linn in iarbhunscoil de chuid líonra BOOACDL. Bronnadh Gradam Na Mac Léinn DCU ar dhalta ón gcéad chohórt de Choláiste na Tulchann ag searmanas sa Helix le déanaí. Is as 17 gcontae ar fud na hÉireann iad na daoine a fhaigheann an dámhachtain seo chun aitheantas a thabhairt dá ngnóthachtáil acadúil san Ardteistiméireacht.

Tá na mic agus iníonacha léinn sin cláraithe i gceann de chúig dhámh na hollscoile. Tá Orin cláraithe i nDámh na hInnealtóireachta agus na Ríomhaireachta faoi láthair agus ba dheas é seasamh leis thar cheann na scoile agus Uachtarán na hOllscoile ag bronnadh duaise air.

Even when the students have graduated, we continue to be proud of their achievements and the result of their time in the DDLETB school network. A student from the first graduating cohort of Coláiste na Tulchann was awarded the DCU Scholars award at a ceremony in the Helix recently.

Recipients of this award to honour their academic achievement in the Leaving Certificate hail from 17 counties across Ireland and represent the university's five faculties. Orin is enrolled in the Faculty of Engineering and Computing and what an honour it was to stand by his side on behalf of the school as he accepted his award.

Ar aghaidh linn le misneach.

# Where are they now?

## Luttrellstown Community College and Coláiste na Tulchann

Luttrellstown Community College and Coláiste na Tulchann bid one last long goodbye to the Class of 2024. Among the group that sat down for a chat with Oide Smith on a sunny, rainy, windy afternoon in September were soon to be engineers, business leaders, a designer, a radiologist, and those who are not yet sure but are happy with taking the time to figure their next move out.

We put some questions to our former students about their time in our college and the answers, just like the people themselves, were wide ranging, all-encompassing and very honest.

**“Your school years are something you don’t get back so make them for you”**

was a key message from **Senan Mooney** who is soon to embark on his first-choice university course in International Business in Dublin City University (DCU).

Senan spoke of the success during his time at LCC, moments such as captaining the school to their first county hurling title. *“Transition year gave me the chance to learn who I was”* an endorsement for a programme that both LCC and CnaT are immensely proud of.

**Alexia Angelova**, spoke of how her German lessons in TY helped her achieve in that subject come exam time, embracing the lack of exam pressure allowing for students to enjoy the language in a more social setting and share it with each other. Between Amazon projects, Market Day stalls, trips, and sports teams this group really covered all the bases during their time in Luttrellstown Community College. Alexia is beginning her undergraduate this month in Radiography in University College Dublin (UCD).

**Charles Anigala** spoke of how he is looking forward to embarking on his preferred PLC course, studying Business in nearby Dunboyne College of Further Education. *“I have too many interests”* he laughed when asked what he saw in his future, but his value of people and relationships marks him as someone who will be immeasurable asset in whatever he finally decides to do.

**Daniella Hensman** spoke on how students should **“plan to your strengths”**. A confessed musical lover, Daniella soon realised her dream of studying Graphic Design in the National College of Art and Design. So, while studying for her mocks and preparing her notes for her language exams Daniella was also putting together a portfolio and preparing for an interview for her chosen course.

A plan about three years in the making, she felt that preparing a portfolio and interviewing for her course allowed her to really learn what she wanted to do and that the points race is something that needs changing.

Other students who have successfully navigated their way on their career journey are **Conor Ó'Muilleoir**, studying Computer Science at DCU, Remy Leger undertaking Engineering at the Technological University of Dublin (TUD) while **Orin Ó'Conghaile** begins his Engineering undergraduate at DCU and Adnan Abikarim is building the foundations for his Law career at DCU also.

Not even the points race proved an obstacle to the first group to emerge from Coláiste na Tulchann, an Aonad Lán Ghaeilge at LCC. Having studied many of their subjects as Gaeilge throughout their six years on campus, they forged a new educational path for young people in the area and demonstrated - Is féidir linn!

As our reminiscing began to come to an end, I had one last question for the grúpa. Did they have any advice they would give to incoming first years and other prospective students?

The group were unanimous on one point, **“Be yourself, who else is the journey for?”** and **“Be the best version of yourself”**.

These daltaí personified our school ethos “united in our diversity to educate, integrate and facilitate excellence in the modern world for a better future.”

LCC and CnaT thank them and wish them all the success in the future. They deserve it.

Maith Sibh!

# Student Voice - Youthreach, a Learners Experience

## Hello, my name is Darja.

I am endlessly grateful and proud to be able to tell my story here and I hope to reach out to people that feel they are in a system that may not be working for them.

Firstly, a little bit about me. I come from an immigrant background. My parents were challenged with settling into a new country, but they have remained steady and resilient. My parents have been a great support for me throughout my whole life. Raising a child in a country you know very little about is often a difficult task and I am endlessly grateful for their hard work.

As a young child I really enjoyed school. I enjoyed learning and was always ready to jump at any opportunity to participate in clubs. However, I was also a deeply anxious child and struggled to get help when in secondary school. I would continue to try and be involved in my school's extra-curricular activities and did my best in the academic sense. However, I sometimes found relationships in school difficult.

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In my teens I started to go through mental health issues, and I struggled. My knowledge of getting support was very limited and I began to miss a lot of days in school. I did try to find support, but I found it difficult, and I knew I had to find an environment that would suit me better and support me to a greater extent.

When I decided to leave school, I initially faced some hesitation about transitioning to Youthreach. Even though I had stopped attending school, it seemed like staying in

school and completing my Leaving Certificate was seen as the only way to succeed academically. Despite this, I was determined to follow a path that felt right for me and while my parents were initially unsure about my choice, they stood by me and supported me throughout the process.

Youthreach was a completely different world, much smaller and with a lot less people. Due to the smaller numbers, teachers had more time to engage with the students individually, and the subjects were unlike what mainstream education taught. Although I did find that I missed some subjects like Art and History.

In mainstream school, I often felt like success was measured by how well you could remember information. In contrast I felt Youthreach focused on preparing students for both the workforce and higher education. It also emphasised learning at your own pace, and any setbacks were met with support. I feel that this helps to create an environment where progress and personal growth are prioritised. I had no idea what I wanted to do in life, but I had a lot of interests, and I felt like Youthreach gave me a massive push forward to explore my various options. I felt supported by my teachers, received excellent guidance and the time and space to participate academically while taking care of my mental health.

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I graduated from Youthreach with a major award at QQI Level Four. I then enrolled in a PLC in Liberties College for Applied Social Studies. I still had no proper idea of what I wanted to do but took an interest in the subjects. This was such an important period for me, where I rekindled my passion for learning and was able to get a good footing for the next big step in my education which was being accepted to Dublin City University (DCU).

My years at Youthreach did come with several challenges for me personally. I had a hard time finding myself, and as with all group situations, there were at times conflict between people in my class. This however made me understand the importance of conflict resolution and in a way, it helped me grow.

It is important to recognise the opportunity Youthreach gives students to thrive. I feel that alternative places like Youthreach where students can pick themselves up again and get support are vital in recreating a better education system.

I believe there is always room for change in education. I would like to be a voice for that change, and I will continue to share my 'life saving experience'. I attended a small Youthreach centre, but it gave me a big stepping stone forward. I am now in my first year in the BAJH programme in DCU studying both Human Growth and History and I am one of many people that have taken an alternative pathway to education.

For me, Youthreach changed my life, it gave me the opportunity to learn, and the teachers encouraged me and spent time ensuring my self-esteem and confidence grew. I still visit Balbriggan Youthreach often, and I will never forget what the teachers did for me.

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***Thank you to Darja for sharing her story with us and being so open about her experience of education. We wish her every success at DCU and in the future and look forward to connecting with her again.***

# YOUTHREACH

For more information visit [DDLETB Youthreach website here](#).

# ddletb



Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna Dublin and Dún Laoghaire  
Átha Cliath agus Dhún Laoghaire Education and Training Board

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### in Dublin and Dún Laoghaire ETB

#### Editor

Janet Murphy

#### Development Team

Janet Murphy  
Caroline Daly  
Mary Kenny  
Suzanne Graham  
Frances Shannon  
Deirdre Dunne  
Priscilla Kirwan  
[devteam@ddletb.ie](mailto:devteam@ddletb.ie)

#### FET Contact

[jessicasheekey@ddletb.ie](mailto:jessicasheekey@ddletb.ie)

#### Design & Layout

Jennifer Farley

#### Contributors

- Jessica Sheekey – FET Development Team
- Niall Smith – Luttrellstown CC
- Daithi O Murchu Luttrellstown CC
- Evelyn Ní Raghail - Coláiste na Tulchann
- Paul Sloan – Ballydowd School
- Guidance Team Nicola, Nadine, Kathy – St.Finian's CC
- Aoife Lyons – Firhouse CC
- Rachel Gorey – Firhouse CC
- Eithne Hogan – Collinstown CC
- Lorraine Darcy – Balbriggan Youthreach
- Darja – Past Learner Youthreach
- Matt Corbett – Deansrath CC
- Sarah Yeates – Scoil Chormaic CNS
- Gerard Swift - Lucan Youthreach
- Sarah Ryan – Swords CC
- Cillian Walsh – Ardgillan CC