

Special points of interest:

- The First Le Chéile School Year concludes
- St. Dominica Ballyfermot wins one of the first Yellow Flag Awards
- Success for FCJ Colaiste in Major Choral Competition
- Report on RE teachers' cluster meetings
- Best wishes to our retiring teachers
- School News

Le Chéile in Spirit and in Action

As the school year draws to a close we would like to extend our congratulations to all students, staff, parents and Boards of Management on their achievements throughout the year. It is a great tribute to all schools that they have maintained a high quality of care and education, in a challenging social, religious and economic context.

September 2009 saw the official handover of Trusteeship of the schools of thirteen congregations to the Le Chéile Schools Trust. This handover was celebrated in different ways, each school highlighting its congregational heritage and celebrating the gifts of all members of the community, past and present. Celebrations embodied the values of Le Chéile; inclusion, holistic development, a caring community and excellence in all its work, particularly in Faith Formation, provided by committed teachers in partnership with parents and the local Church.

For the Le Chéile "Working Group" – the Congregational representatives who worked on the formation of Le Chéile - their "First Friday" meetings ended in March as the newly appointed Boards of Directors took up office. Along with Dr. David Tuohy the Working Group has laid a very solid and positive foundation for a Trust that will unite the schools in their educational vision while at the same time nurture and develop the individual heritage of each congregation.

The Le Chéile team has worked with both the congregations and the schools during this "transition" phase, getting to know and understand the philosophy and the practical application of the responsibilities of the Le Chéile Trust. The Conference in February was a wonderful demonstration of "le chéile" in spirit and in action.

We look forward to the challenges ahead in creating "*unity in diversity*". The seeds are beginning to blossom, with students and staff from different schools already getting to know each other and building up supportive relationships. We wish all the congregations and the schools continuing success on this new journey together, ably guided by the Boards of Directors.

Dominican College Ballyfermot achieve Yellow Flag Status

The Minister for Tourism, Culture and Sport, Mary Hanafin T.D. joined in a celebration of Diversity and the Awarding of the Yellow Flag with the staff, students and friends of St. Dominic's Secondary School, Ballyfermot on 14th April 2010. The school was one of two secondary schools to be awarded a Yellow Flag.

What is the Yellow Flag?

The yellow flag is a recognition that a school takes practical steps to ensure that all students, parents and staff are valued. It is a pilot intercultural education project which is coordinated by The Irish Traveller Movement. The Yellow Flag Programme is unique in that it promotes a whole school approach in supporting inter-culturalism on both a practical and theoretical level. Sr. Liz, Deputy Principal who is a member of the co-ordination committee with teacher Aisling Griffin says "I am delighted that St. Dominic's has been recognised as an inclusive school which was also noted in their Whole School Evaluation Report.

Congratulations to Principal Mary Daly and all her staff and students on this wonderful achievement. The warm welcome on the day and the joyful spirit in which the event was marked made a real impression on all who were privileged to attend.



**LE CHÉILE
TRUST**

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At the end of this school year we give thanks to God:

For all the teaching and learning that have taken place in our school, both in and out of the classroom,

For the talents and gifts that have been shared and the challenges that have been faced

For the burdens that have been lifted and the hurts that have been healed

For the respect and care that have been given.

We give thanks for the friendships that have just begun and for those that have grown.

For the faith that has been lived in our daily struggles,

For the hope that has lifted our hearts on the dark days

And for the love that has kept us going.

We give thanks for the community that we are and we ask you Lord -

bless our students as they sit their exams: may your Spirit inspire them with confidence and calmness

bless our families as we take our holidays, may our time together leave us with memories to cherish.

Pour out your love on us that we may return renewed and refreshed to continue our journey together .

We make this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen

Induction of New Teachers

At the March Cluster Meetings, attended by Principals and Chairpersons, Principals shared their ideas and practices on the induction of new teachers. Most schools have a special induction session for new teachers before school reopens in September. New teachers are introduced to the “nuts and bolts” of the school. They are usually presented with a Staff Handbook which outlines policies and procedures and in some schools they are assigned a Mentor, an experienced teacher who will support and guide them through their first year. The Mentor may, but not necessarily, be teaching the same subject. Their guidance on classroom management and school procedures is highly valued by the new teachers. Some teachers have been formally trained as mentors through Pilot Induction programme (UCD) or through post graduate courses (UL).

Le Chéile plans to supplement the work of schools by offering an induction session, in September, for teachers in their first or second year teaching. Sessions will have a particular emphasis on the Le Chéile educational vision.

Community Schools

Le Chéile is delighted to welcome the Community Schools of the Holy Child, Holy Faith and St. Louis sisters and the Patrician Brothers into the Le Chéile activities. Two “Cluster Meetings” were held during the year where issues of specific concern to them were discussed. Among these was the role of the Trustees in the co-patron model.

Congratulations to Laurel Hill Colláiste FCJ Limerick winners at Cork Choral Festival



Nótaí Árda i Luimneach

Bhí cúis mhór cheiliúradh i Laurel Hill Coláiste FCJ, Luimneach le déanaí nuair a bhuaigh an Cór an chéad áit i roinn na scoileanna ag Cork International Choral Festival. Faoi stiúir Orla Colgan-Ahern, múinteoir ceoil sa scoil, chan an cór dhá phíosa ‘There is Sweet Music’ agus ‘Caifé Gaelach,’ cumadóir Ben Hanlon.

Bhí ríméad ar gach éinne nuair a fograíodh an lá dár gcionn go raibh an Cór tar éis Duais John Cunningham don chór is fearr a bhuachaint chomh maith.

Tá 118, scoláirí sa chór, idir scoláirí ó bhliain a haon suas go bliain a sé agus bhain chuile dhuine sult as an ócáid fíor speisialta seo. “Táimíd an-bhródúil as na cailíní go léir sa chór a fhanann siar tar éis scoile chun cleachtadh a dhéanamh. Cuireann an ceol chomh mór san le spiorad na scoile. Comhghairdeas ó chroí libh go léir agus go háirithe le Ms. Colgan”, arsa Aedín Ní Bhriain, príomhoide na scoile. Mo cheol sibh!



Congratulations to Diarmuid Brennan, 4th year Student in De la Salle Waterford, (pictured with Michael Starrett, CEO of the Heritage Council and his Art Teacher Nicola Lee), who has been named as winner of the National Heritage Week Poster Competition. Diarmuid's poster will be developed by a professional design agency and feature in the National Heritage Week Advertising Campaign which will include TV, print and online. The theme of Diarmuid's winning poster is 'Discover your Roots'. Visit the Heritage Week website in August to see the diverse range of activities going on around the country <http://www.heritageweek.ie/>

Best wishes to all our students who are about to embark on their exams and in particular all the students who are leaving our Le Chéile Schools this year. We wish them all the best in their future choices as the next phase of their life unfolds.

St Louis Africa Day

"A world, healed, unified and transformed"

Six St. Louis Schools participated in the inaugural St. Louis Africa Day held in Dublin on the 13th May highlighting the important links between the Irish and African Louis schools. Students displayed their school projects amongst some very colourful prints and costumes and displays from St. Louis schools in Nigeria and Ghana. Participants were able to attend a variety of workshops dealing with specific countries, developmental and eco issues. Next year, following some exchange visits from Irish schools, they hope to have some students and teachers from Africa join the event.

Mary Immaculate College in Limerick have announced details of a new MA course in Christian Leadership.

Details about it may be found at www.mic.ul.ie

Report on Cluster Meetings for RE Teachers

A series of afternoon cluster meetings for RE Teachers in Le Chéile Schools took place at six venues around the country between April 20th and May 5th. The meetings were very well attended and in total 86 teachers were present at these very informative gatherings. The feedback was very positive and the participants especially enjoyed the opportunity to share their experiences with their peers and to get to know a little more of what the Le Chéile Trust is all about.

The Schools in the Trust are, for the most part, aware of the tremendous heritage that they have received from the Founders of the Congregations and are happy to be part of trying to ensure that the dynamic vision of the Congregations be passed on. However there is a widespread concern that the whole question of ethos might be left to the RE teachers. The fear is that ethos, instead of being central to the identity of the school, informing policy and planning, could be regarded as rather peripheral. There was an awareness of the need to review and evaluate RE policies. Many schools are following the Junior Cert Syllabus even if they are not taking the exam and a range of views were expressed on the merits or otherwise of students sitting the exam. Many teachers feel that it has made a positive contribution to the RE in the school while others fear that it has led to a diminution of the faith formation and pastoral dimensions of RE.

Great work is being done in many schools by very dedicated teachers but issues around timetabling and the employment of qualified staff still arise. While the positive contribution of many unqualified RE teachers is recognised it is not helpful if teachers are still being "gently" coerced into teaching RE.

While the enthusiasm of the teachers for their subject was obvious and even infectious, there was also an honest appraisal of the difficulties of teaching RE especially in the senior cycle. The rapidly changing context of Irish society and the crisis in the Church present very real challenges to teachers in offering a programme that is relevant and affords opportunities for an authentic faith development. A desire for help in this area was expressed by many of the participants. Some felt that it would be of benefit to teachers if retreat days could be organised that would address the spiritual needs of all the teachers in our schools. An area of great concern was chaplaincy, with widespread agreement the important role of the chaplain and the need for all schools to benefit from their role.

We are still in the very early stages of building the Le Chéile identity but the spirit of good will present at these gathering suggests that we can do much to help and encourage each other on the way to ensuring that the Le Chéile can grow and prosper.

Thanks to everyone who took part and special mention to Lorraine Gillespie whose expertise and input was greatly appreciated.

For the full version of this report please go to the Le Chéile Website under publications



Visit www.lecheiletrust.ie for further news items, logo's, photographs and archive materials. If you have any news items or pictures that you would like to see on our website pl please send them in!!

Best Wishes

We send our congratulations and our best wishes to all our Principals and Deputy Principals who are retiring this year. We are sincerely grateful for the many long years of dedication, inspiration and hard work that they have selflessly given to their schools. We wish them and all our colleagues retiring throughout the country every best wish for a long, healthy and happy retirement.

Retiring Principals include Geraldine Ruane Gortnor Abbey - John O'Keeffe St. Joseph's College, Galway - Patricia Fitzsimons Dominican College Muckross Park - Dr. Sinead Breathnach on secondment from St. Louis Carrickmacross

Deputy Principals include: Ann McDermott - Dominican College, Muckross Park and Marie Shields, Holy Faith Secondary school, Killester.

One should guard against preaching to young people success in the customary form as the main aim in life. The most important motive for work in school and in life is pleasure in work, pleasure in its result, and the knowledge of the value of the result to the community. Albert Einstein (1879 -1955)



Orla Fallon
Singer
Musician
Past Pupil of
Mount
Sackville

"I have been privileged in the places that music has brought me," says Orla Fallon. "Playing in such places as the White House or the Vatican, you never realize when you're growing up that you'll ever see inside these places, let alone sing and play. I think that's the wonder of the whole thing. It's amazing the doors that music can open up for you!" Orla Fallon is a singer / harpist who comes from the village of Knockananna in Co. Wicklow. "I have very happy memories of my time in Mount Sackville and if I hadn't gone to school there I know my life would have taken a very different path. Had I gone to another school I wouldn't have had the opportunity to learn harp and I have had so many wonderful experiences with my Music over the past few years. My sister and I still talk about our time in school with fondness". Her debut album *The Water Is Wide* debuted in the Billboard World Music Top Ten upon its release in the United States. The crucial thing in her life, says Orla, is her willingness to try new things, to always push herself and to never become complacent. Now, after four wonderful, exciting years with Celtic Woman recording and touring all over the world, Orla feels that time has come to embark on a different journey, touring and promoting her new solo album and she looks forward to what is yet to come.

Competition

We are offering our readers a chance to win a copy of Orla's new album *A Distant Shore*. Send your name, school name and home address to Thérèse at the Le Chéile Office.

School News

Dominican College, Santa Sabina celebrated the opening of their new Astro Turf hockey pitch and Sportlann on Friday May 7th with a hockey match between past pupils and the current senior team. This was followed by a Mass of Blessing and celebratory lunch for two hundred invited guests and the event was enjoyed by all.

Congratulation to **St. Joseph's Patrician College** Galway where the Second Years won the National Basketball Title for the second year in a row.

Le Chéile in Spirit and action Well Done and thank you to **St. Louis Community School Kiltimagh** who had a very successful cake sale raising €3176 which was divided between the Jesus and Mary and St. Joseph of Cluny congregations for their sisters' work in Haiti. **Blakestown Community School** also raised €1000 for St. Joseph of Cluny projects in Haiti.

De La Salle Churchtown celebrated their Le Chéile handover with a Mass marking the feast day of St. John Baptist De La Salle. Two students from Our Lady's Grove school presented thirteen flowers and a Le Chéile vase to represent the thirteen congregations coming together in the offertory. This lovely celebration concluded with the traditional ice creams for everyone!!

St. Pauls in Greenhills also celebrated their handover on the 26th April with a wonderful liturgy in which the significance of the handover was beautifully expressed through artwork and liturgical dance.

Congratulations to **Manor House, Raheney** TY students on the publication of their new school prayer book.

Best wishes to **St Wolstans in Celbridge** on the upcoming launch of their book 'The Optimism of Youth' developed by TY - further details on their website <http://www.stwolstanstowards2015.blogspot.com/>. Take a look at their TY charity swim, twenty seven and a half miles were completed to raise money for Barretstown and Our Lady's Hospital Crumlin. An amazing achievement was made by Niamh Tallon, who swam over 2 miles on the day and 5 miles over the weekend.

Le Chéile Debaters

Congratulations to all our schools who participated in the Concern Schools Debates, particular congratulations to St. Dominic's Griffith Ave and St. Dominic's Ballyfermot for reaching the quarter finals and to the latter for also winning the best Whole School Participation Prize.