

Dream becomes a reality — Salerno celebrates and says thank you

A dream of more than 20 years as last realised as Salerno officially opened its new Sports Hall on Thursday April 26. The Salerno Community was honoured to receive a blessing from his Most Reverend Bishop of Galway, Brendan Kelly as he joined with members of the Le Chéile trustees, members of The Board of Management, staff, students, and parents to celebrate this very special day for the school.

Sr Gerarda Lawler, Principal of Salerno for the past 27 years, is delighted to finally see the fruits of all the hard work of the past years after tirelessly petitioning the Department of Education and Skills for funding and seeking backing from many friends of Salerno to bring this project to its conclusion.



Marie Flannery (Deputy Principal) speaking at the opening of Salerno Sports Hall. on Thursday.

Photo:-Mike Shaughnessy

Backed by the Boards of Management of many years, parents, staff, students, neighbours and friends, Sr Gerarda tirelessly petitioned the Department of Education and Skills for funding and sought backing from many friends of Salerno to bring this project to its conclusion.

“This is a very exciting time for Salerno and I am delighted to eventually see the hard work pay off for every single person involved along the way. It is also fitting that the opening coincides with the Jesus and Mary Bicentenary Celebration. We celebrate 200 years as a worldwide Congregation this year. Here in Ireland, the Jesus and Mary Bicentenary Year was celebrated in Knock in October 2017. The final celebration will take

place in October 2018 in Lyon, France, where St Claudine Thevenet began the Congregation in 1818,” she said.

As Principal, Sr Gerarda spearheaded the campaign for the Sports Hall realising that it was a much needed facility for Salerno and would be a valuable and necessary asset for the overall wellbeing of students now and into the future.

The Sports Hall, a ‘sprung structure’, is not a typical block structure. It is dome shaped with a lightweight aluminum substructure and an architectural membrane. Internally it has two mezzanines, changing



Students at the opening of Salerno Sports Hall on Thursday. Photo:-Mike Shaughnessy

room facilities with showers and an office and kitchenette.

It is fully furnished with equipment for all sporting disciplines including a



At the opening of Salerno Sports Hall on Thursday were (l-r) Michael Mooney and Ray O Connor (former chairpersons Board of Management) Sr. Gerarda Lawler (Principal), Bishop of Galway Brendan Kelly, Caitrona Connaughton chairperson Board of management with students Jessica Purdy and Elaina Harkin.



Elena Harkin (School Prefect), Sr Gerard Lawler (Principal), Paul Meany (Le Cheile Schools Trust), Orla McNulty (School Prefect).



Ray O'Connor (Former Chairperson, Board of Management), Michael Mooney (Former, Chairperson, Board of Management), Sr. Gerarda Lawler (Principal), PJ Loughlin (Builder) Brendan Slevin (Consulting Engineer), Catriona Connaughton (Chairperson, Board of Management).



Salerno's sports stars who represent Ireland in various disciplines line out at the opening. Back Row - Alison Blaney (Basketball), Sarah Dunleavy (Hockey), Lisa Blaney (Basketball), Rebecca Conneely (Irish Dancing). Sarah Bradley (Waterpolo). Isobel Ryan (Waterpolo). Sadhbh Doyle (Soccer). Front Row - Kate Molloy (Gymnastics), Jane Heffernan (Gymnastics), Sarah O'Connor (Irish Dancing), Ella O'Connor (Irish Dancing). Photo:-Mike Shaughnessy



Fr Paul Connell (St Finians, Mullingar), Sr. Gerarda Lawler (Principal), Paul Meany (Le Cheile Schools Trust), Bishop Brendan Kelly (Bishop of Galway), Marie Flannery (Deputy Principal), Ellis Humphreys (Le Cheile Schools Trust).



dance studio and a fully equipped gym.

The Sports Hall meets the requirements for national basketball matches and has already played host to the All-Ireland under-19 Basketball playoffs and the Western Regional Finals, earlier this school year. Salerno is now able to train for and host their own basketball games on site. The Sports Hall is also marked for indoor hockey,

and has four badminton courts.

Salerno can now provide a full PE programme on-site for the school's 675 students, in accordance with Department guidelines, as opposed to having students travel off campus to other facilities. The PE teachers are delighted with the new state-of-the-art facility and now provide an extensive PE programme that appeals to all students

covering the athletics, games, adventure, dance and health related activities and gymnastics, strands of the PE syllabus.

The Salerno Sports Hall allows the school the opportunity to train many of the school's sports teams and individual competitors and it facilitates and encourages participation in physical activity among the students and staff.

The school community is extremely thankful

to everyone who helped realise this dream by taking part in fundraising activities over the years. They are forever grateful to those who 'walked the prom for 24 hours', crossed the three bridges into Galway City', attended the 'race night', 'danced the night away' in Salthill, tested their knowledge on 'Who Wants to be a Thousandaire' and all who sold and bought

50-50 tickets and took part in fashion shows, cookery demonstrations, bake sales and Christmas markets.

Sincere thanks to all who donated and sponsored prizes for their events and to everyone who gave so freely of their time and talents. Their combined efforts over the years have helped make the sports hall dream a reality.



Salerno Students meet in Galway City after crossing the City's three bridges to complete the second Salerno Challenge in 2004 in aid of the Salerno Sports Hall.



Sarah Thornton, Past Pupil, with Staff member Vicki Byrnes. Sarah and friend Erin Ryan launched a perpetual sports award in memory of Sarah's late sister Laura Thornton.



1000 miles completed - Millennium Run 2000

And I would walk 1000 miles... Kathleen Morley, June Smith and Maree Howley of Salerno celebrate the first Salerno Challenge with students completing a 24 hour walk on Salthill Prom to fundraise for the Salerno Sports Hall.

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Salerno School Choir under the direction of Carmel Doolan entertain guests at the opening ceremony.