



MERCY SECONDARY SCHOOL MOUNTHAWK

MOUNTHAWK • TRALEE • CO. KERRY

Meánscoil na Trócaire • Cnoc an tSeabhaic • Trá Lí • Co. Chiarraí
Tel: 066 7102550 • Fax: 066 7102597 • Email: admin@mercymounthawk.ie

MERCY MOUNTHAWK

SUMMER BULLETIN 2006



MEÁNSCOIL NA TRÓCAIRE

CNOC AN TSEABHAIC

VOL 5. ISSUE 2

WELCOME

Welcome to the 10th edition of the Parents' Newsletter. As you can see, we have decided to revamp the Summer copy by adding photographs and colour. The purpose of the newsletter is to make you, the parents and guardians, aware of the innumerable activities undertaken by the students in the course of the year and aware of the facilities available to everybody, so that you will encourage your children to participate in education in its broadest sense.

As you can see, there is a very wide range of activities and structures, all of which contribute to the complex nature of the school culture. Mercy Mounthawk is an intense, dynamic environment, a social laboratory within which 1161 students are daily negotiating a very significant developmental phase in their lives. Thankfully, the vast majority engage in not only the purely academic side of school, but also in the social, cultural, physical and moral dimension, so vital in the transition to adulthood. Our thanks to Mr John O'Rourke and Mr Jim Fitzgibbon who have been the driving force behind the Parents' Newsletter since 2001. Also, Ms Marie O'Connor has added her very formidable talent to this edition. I hope you enjoy it. Have a very pleasant Summer.

Tony Behan

OUTLINE CALENDAR 06/07

23rd Aug Gemma's the official school uniform suppliers will be in the school from 9.30 to 5.00 for 1st years students and on 24th Aug from 9.30 to 5.00 for all other students.

SCHOOL RE-OPENING DATES:

Thurs 31st Aug	1st year students return
Fri 1st Sept	3rd and 6th year students return
Mon 4th Sept	2nd year students return
Tues 5th Sept	5th year students return
Wed 6th Sept	Transition Year classes return

PARENT/TEACHER MEETINGS:

6th years	Tues 21st Nov 4.15-6.45
3rd years	Fri 8th Dec 9.30-12.30
2nd years	Thurs 1st Feb 4.15-6.45
1st years	Wed 28th Feb 4.15-6.45
4th & 5th years	Fri 16th Mar 9.30-12.30

HOLIDAYS

Oct Mid-term break	Closing on Fri 27th Oct and re-opening on Mon 6th Nov.
Christmas Holidays	Closing on Fri 22nd Dec and re-opening on Mon 8th Jan 2007.
Spring mid-term break	Closing on Fri 16th Feb and re-opening on Mon 26th Feb.
Easter holidays	Closing on Fri 30th Mar and re-opening on Mon 16th Apr.
Summer holidays	School closes on Fri 1st Jun 2007.

IMPORTANT DATES

Wed 20th Sept	CEIST talk for parents, presented by Sr Ella McGuinness, from 7.30 to 9.00 in the General Purpose Area
Tue 3rd Oct at 8.00p.m.	AGM of the Parents' Council
Wed 18th Oct	Talk for parents of first year students, in the school's General Purpose Area at 8p.m.
Open Day	Sat 11th Nov 9.30 to 12.30 and from 2.00 to 3.30
25th, 26th & 27th Jan '07	School play in Siamsa Tíre
Wed 7th Feb	Meeting in Gym at 8p.m. for parents of 1st year students re: 2nd year subject choices
Fri 2nd Mar	Meeting in Gym at 8p.m. for parents of 3rd year and Transition Year students re: Senior Cycle Options and subject choices
Admissions Day	Sat 3rd Mar 2007
Transition Year Night	Siamsa Tíre on Fri 25th May

• Caption for Front cover photo: Group of Mounthawk students at the European Parliament in Strasbourg for Euroscola - April 2006

LCA CHRISTMAS CARDS

Students in LCA designed and produced 20,000 Christmas cards. From the resulting profit of over €5000, €2500 was contributed to the St Patrick's Day Care Centre in Boherbee, as well as a computer, since they intend to introduce some of those who attend the centre to basic computer skills during the next school year. A further €2,500 was presented to Enable Ireland, Tralee, along with a hoist.



THE ACCESS PROGRAMME

We have at this point completed four successful years as one of the participating link schools in the UCC Access Programme. The programme seeks to target students who, for a variety of social or economic reasons, are under-represented at third level and to provide motivational, educational and financial assistance to them through secondary schooling to enhance their ability to compete for third level places.

A number of sixth years again this year used the Access Programme Higher Education Access Route (HEAR) 2006, as well as the CAO form, to apply to UCC and the other participating Universities. We wish them the best of luck in their applications.

The programme funded two drama workshops given by Graffiti Theatre Company in October. The students who participated described the experience as great fun and believed acting in front of their class groups boosted their confidence.

In January our Transition year students visited UCC with fellow transition year students from the other participating schools and enjoyed the facilities of the Mardyke Arena as well as attending an information session on the courses and opportunities available to them at UCC.

Ten transition year students were invited to the Access Programme Easter School, a programme designed to allow students to explore areas of personal interest within the different faculties at UCC and to experience life as a third level student in general. UCC, in conjunction with the Parents' Council, awarded scholarships to two second year students to attend the Gaeltacht during the summer months.

The programme also sponsored project competitions within the linked schools. Each school received vouchers to the value of €750. Prizes and certificates were presented to the 18 first and second year winners at the awards ceremony at UCC on May 10th.

In June, seven second year students who are studying science will participate in the Access Programme Chemistry two-day summer camp. Also, seven students who are studying Irish are invited to attend the Access Programme IT/Irish one-day summer camp. These camps are organized by UCC to provide students with an interactive experience of chemistry or information technology.

At our Awards Ceremony in May, John Devine was the recipient of the UCC Cup (a perpetual trophy), an award for academic diligence.

NO LOGO COMPETITION



Kate Cregan modelling the No Logo creation.

The school entered both junior and senior levels in the "No Logo" Competition. In the Senior category, Kate Cregan and Susan Browne reached the final 6 in Ireland. Each received an i-pod, a digital camera and a trophy for the school. They also were invited to dinner in the private lounge of the Dáil and did a guided tour of the Dáil with a Dublin Fashion Designer and the Green party TD, Eamonn Ryan. Kate and Susan's brief was to design and make an outfit for less than €25. Both girls made a fabulous deb's dress. They travelled to Dublin on May 18th for the Awards Ceremony.

TEXACO CHILDREN'S ART COMPETITION

Katie O'Sullivan won a Special merit Award in the Texaco children's Art Competition this year. The following got a Certificate of Commendation in the competition: Jack Holland, Cionna Evans, Shane Curtin, Colin Horgan, Nicholas Liddane, Amy Trant, Stacy Donnellan, Amy O'Donnell, Celene Moloney, Jessica Irwin, Shane Cleary. Well done to all.

CREDIT UNION POSTER COMPETITION

Congratulations to Claudia Ho and Katie O'Sullivan who were placed in the Munster section of the Credit Union Poster Competition.



First year boys football team, with teachers Ms. Kennelly and Mr. Creagh. Photo taken in Milltown in May 2006.



TRIUMPHANT YEAR FOR MOUNTHAWK ATHLETICS SQUAD

What a year the Mounthawk Athletics team has had! Since last October the team has spent Tuesday and Thursday lunchtimes training in the disciplines of sprints, hurdles, shot, discus, high jump, middle distance and relays. They have travelled to various destinations in pursuit of silverware such as; Castleisland, Killarney, Limerick, Cork city, Nenagh and Santry. But all this hard work and dedication certainly paid off. Not alone have they retained their Best Overall Female Team award in the Kerry Colleges Cross Country Championships for a third year in succession, but they have also maintained their status as the Best Female School in the KerryTrack and Field Championships for a fourth year in a row (With our boy's team coming a close second!). This year also saw the introduction of a brand new team tracksuit and singlet, kindly subsidised by the Parents' Council and the Board of Management (To whom we are very grateful). A special word of thanks must go to the athletes themselves who trained diligently, behaved impeccably and competed ferociously throughout the year. Here are the details of the various events in which our Mercy Mounthawk athletes participated and won medals:

KERRY CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIPS (December)

Junior Girls 2000m (1st Team Overall)
 Aisling Ní Nualláin - 2nd
 Sabina Sayers - 3rd
 Ciara Hill - 5th
 Patricia Tierney - 6th
 Amy O' Donnell - 20th
 Intermediate Boys 5000m (2nd Team Overall)
 Eric Boylan - 3rd
 Michael Brennan - 5th
 Chris O'Malley - 6th
 Gary Nolan - 11th
 Intermediate Girls 2500m (1st Team Overall)
 Lisa Brennan - 2nd
 Caoimhe Casey - 4th
 Ciara Tierney - 6th
 Katie Liston - 10th
 Senior Girls 3000m
 Emily Brick - 3rd

MUNSTER CROSS COUNTRY WATERFORD (February)

Intermediate Girls (3rd Team Overall) • Aisling Ní Nualláin - 18th
 Lisa Brennan - 17th • Caoimhe Casey - 23rd

NTH MUNSTER MEDAL WINNERS AN RÍOCHT & UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK (April)

Gold Medal Winners
 Emily Brick 100H
 Emily Brick 400H
 Senior Girls Relay (Lydie Barnett, Caoimhe Casey, Shauna Lynch, Ciara Tierney), Emma Leen 75H, Ben McGilton 200m
 Silver Medal Winners
 Peter Wheeler 110H
 Lisa Brennan HJ
 Emily Brick HJ
 Emily Brick TJ
 Minor Girls Relay
 (Lorraine Horan, Fiona Reidy, Kerina O' Carroll, Emma Leen
 Aisling Ní Nualláin 800m, Robert Sugrue 200m, Rebecca Spellman TJ,
 David Lee Discus, Caoimhe Case 3000m

MUNSTER INDOOR CHAMPIONSHIPS HELD IN NENAGH (March)

Gold: Ben McGilton, 60m sprint • Silver: David Lee, Shot Putt • David Boyd, 60m sprint. • Intermediate Girls Relay • Lisa Brennan, Aisling O' Mahoney, Rebecca Spellman and Meagan Dunne. • Intermediate Boys Relay • Michael Kelliher, Eric Boylan, Ben McGilton and David Boyd.
 Bronze: Senior Girls Relay • Emily Brick, Ciara Tierney, Caoimhe Casey and Shauna Lynch

BRONZE MEDAL WINNERS

Intermediate Boys Relay (Michael Kelliher, Ben McGilton, Chris O' Malley, Sidney Walker) • Emily Brick 200m • Emily Brick 100m
 Junior Girls Relay (Lorraine Horan, Aisling Ní Nualláin, Emma Leen, Bernadette O'Flaherty) • Emma Leen 200m
 Bernadette O'Flaherty Shot • Shane Clifford 80H • Patrick O'Sullivan 110H • David Boyd 200m • Lydie Barnett Javelin • Ciara Tierney 3000m

MUNSTER MEDAL WINNERS HELD IN C.I.T. (May)

Gold Emily Brick 400H • Silver Ben McGilton 100m • Ben McGilton 200m • Emily Brick TJ Bronze • Emily Brick 100H • Emily Brick 100H

Best of Luck to all Mounthawk athletes competing during the summer in the Community Games, Club finals and The International Children's Games in Bangkok.



Mrs. Kathleen Rice presents the Kathleen Rice Shield for Hurlers & Football.



Group of 1st year students with their certificates for Paired Reading and Maths courses.



Mr. Moynihan and Mr. Behan presenting the Winning team from Spa National School with their Shield.

HOME SCHOOL COMMUNITY LIAISON

Classes and Courses:

Thank you for participating in the courses which we ran as part of the home/school/community liaison scheme this year. The Parenting Courses, Paired Reading, Maths for Fun and Time for Me proved very successful this year. To mark the completion of these programmes we had a very enjoyable Family Night at the school on May 23rd. Parents and pupils who completed these programmes received certificates of completion on the night. Meave Touhy of Kerry Education Services gave a presentation on further courses and classes which are available to adults.

Thanks to all who made the night such a success and once again thanks to Joan Barrett and Sr. Maureen for presenting these courses. Thanks also to Partnership Tralee and K.E.S for their financial support in making these classes and courses possible. The work of the Learning Support department of the school was vital in delivering the paired reading programme and thanks here to Mrs Behan and Ms Mary Daly as well as the transition year pupils who took part. Thanks to Mr Forbes for his enthusiasm with the Maths for Fun programme. Finally, I would like to thank Sr. De Lourdes for making the St. Brendan's Pastoral Centre available to us once again for the night-time parenting course.

If you need more information on any of these programmes or would like to participate or help out, then please contact me at the school. I'd like to thank you for your continued commitment to our programmes

FIRST YEARS '06:

A Table Quiz for incoming first years to our school community was held in the school on 17th May. The quiz was organised by the Local Committee with the help of transition year students and its purpose is to assist pupils in the transfer from primary to secondary school. The standard of answering was very high with the winning team from Spa National School scoring 75 out of a possible 80. A tie-break round was needed to separate the second and third-placed teams. The Spa came out on top here again, just getting past a very good Moyderwell team. Thanks to quiz master, Miss Máiréad Ní Chruaí, and to the primary schools for their participation.

'OKAY LET'S GO' This programme took place again this year, through K.D.Y.S., to assist pupils in the transfer from primary to secondary school. Their school visits took place on May 17th and May 24th. There was great participation in these evenings with lots of questions and discussion. We are confident that those who participated in this programme will benefit when they come to our school in September. Thanks again to all who took part in this programme.

HOME VISITS I will continue with my home visits in September. Please contact the school if you would like a visit at any time. To those homes I have visited in the past year I'd like to express my thanks for your hospitality and commitment to your children's education and I look forward to working with you in the year ahead.

BREAKFAST CLUB Since its introduction, the Breakfast Club has been very successful. Those taking part avoid the queues and the variety of foods available is proving very popular. We expect to continue with the programme in September.

COMMUNITY MENTORING The concept of community mentoring was the brain-child of the local committee of the H.S.C.L. scheme. At present a co-ordinator is in place who will recruit volunteers from the community. These volunteers will be trained over the summer months and it is hoped that about 15 students will benefit next September.



'Russell Shield Winning team with their trainers Mr. O'Hanlon and Mr. Stack'



BOYS' FOOTBALL U16 RUSSELL SHIELD

Mounthawk are the proud winners of the Russell Shield in 2006. In the Final, Mounthawk defeated Castleisland in Ballymac by 2-15 to 2-6. In the group stages, Mounthawk defeated Milltown by 12 points and Castleisland by 1 point. The Semi Final was played in Glenflesk and here they defeated a good Kenmare side by 0-15 to 2-6. Despite the scoreline in the Final, the game was evenly contested until near the end. All the Mounthawk players came up trumps in the final, with excellent displays by Paul O'Sullivan, Michael Harmon, Jamie Lowham, Mossie Shanahan (Capt.), Chris Carmody, Diarmuid Herlihy and man of the match Michael Brennan. Congratulations to all involved, including coaches Mr Tomás O Hanlon and Mr Phil Stack.

LADIES' FOOTBALL

Great credit is due this year to the lady footballers of Mercy Mounthawk. Having been beaten in both finals last year, all the girls set about the 2005/2006 season to go one better. The seniors set the tone for the season in their first game by defeating Tarbert comprehensively and after seeing off Presentation Dingle in the Semi Final, the senior girls were extremely determined to go down in the history of Mounthawk by being the first county champions in the School's history. Played in Beaufort, a good Kenmare side simply couldn't penetrate the defence of Niamh Daly, Gabrielle Stack, Gillian Lewis, Carmel Roche, Emma Sayers (Captain) and Deirdre McMahon, while up front, Jemma O'Connell, Sarah Carey, Síne Williams, Norma O'Brien and Emma Hughes ensured that victory would go to Mounthawk. The junior team, determined not to be overshadowed by the senior team, also played Kenmare in the final. This was a very tight and competitive match and the team was behind at the interval. A wholehearted second-half display by the entire team, inspired by captain Karen Conway, saw victory going to Mercy Mounthawk at the final whistle. Well done to both teams and to Miss Mary Daly and to Mr Patrick Lyne for making history and setting the standard for the future.

COMENIUS

Mounthawk hosted a Comenius Language Assistant for the first time. She came to the school in January from the south of Poland. Among her many tasks, she promoted the Comenius project work in the school. The outcomes can be found on www.sport-gs-luk.de. Magda familiarised herself with the school system and with the culture of our region. She also gave classes in the Polish Language and customs. We hope she enjoyed her stay among us and we wish her well in the future. Magda was very glad to have had the opportunity to do the Assistantship in Mounthawk, to get to know teachers and students here in Tralee. Jestem bardzo wdzieczna za mozliwosc odbycia Asystentury Jezykowej w Mounthawk, poznanie nauczycieli oraz uczniow tutaj w Tralee.



Two exchange students with their Spanish teachers Mrs. Daly and Ms. Fitzgerald'

STUDENT EXCHANGE

Denis Garcia (Bilbao) and Diego Bertello Roderiguez (Las Palmas, Gran Canaria), who spent a very successful year in Mounthawk with their teachers of Spanish Mrs Daly and Ms. Fitzgerald.

ANTI LITTER CAMPAIGN

Colin Horgan's design for the Anti-litter campaign was chosen for the Spring/Summer of the magazine "Beatha agus Sláinte". Colin is a 2nd year student and this is a wonderful achievement at such a young age.





1st year Girls football team with their trainer Ms McCarthy.



1ST YEAR GIRLS FOOTBALL

A great bunch of first year girls trained weekly at lunch time throughout the year. They played a number of challenge games against Rathmore and Gael Colaiste Tra Li before playing both Castleisland and Gael colaiste in the league. The high point of the year was the trip the Rathkeale for the 1st year blitz. The girls had a great win in the first game against Hospital and went on to win their second game against Dromcollagher B. Unfortunately they went out of the tournament at the semi-final stage when they were beaten by Dromcollagher A by a one point margin! You were a fabulous group to coach and "Good Luck" and enjoy your football during the summer! Ms Sheila McCarthy.

WASTE NOT, WANT NOT

Mercy Mounthawk was featured in the Spring/Summer 2006 edition of the magazine "Beatha agus Sláinte"

The newly- adopted motto for Mercy Mounthawk is 'Waste not, Want not'. The Health-Promoting School Working Group, along with the Green School Committee, has made the school a 'litter free zone' in our continuing campaign against litter. The environment was prioritised as part of our Health-Promoting School action plan. An 'anti-litter' group consisting of parents, teachers and students, put their heads together and came up with lots of different initiatives to highlight litter issues. They were conscious throughout that their initiatives should be sustainable in the long term. To raise awareness, they decided to start with a week- long 'focus on litter' campaign.

To be successful they needed to get everybody's support so the students were encouraged to come up with ideas. They submitted poetry, essays, as well as art and photography. The group felt that the 'overwhelming support and participation of management and staff and students was a huge factor in the success of the week.'

The fourth years worked tirelessly to prepare for the week and produced a huge mural that was displayed in the main reception area. "It is amazing to see what I would have considered rubbish, come to life as a work of art!" commented one parent. From the backdrop to the stage, drama is alive in Mercy Mounthawk and 'anti-litter' week encouraged some previously hidden acting talents. A group of transition year students wrote and produced an educational comedy that went 'on tour' through the junior classes.

Managing waste disposal is an area that can be confusing, leading to questions of 'is this material recyclable?' Mícheál Ó'Coileáin (Environmental Health Officer with Kerry County Council) discussed with second year students the growing problem of litter and the alternatives to disposal, such as reducing or recycling. They also visited a local landfill site where the students got some helpful hints on how to correctly manage waste disposal. Eileen Kennelly, HPS co-

ordinator, felt that 'this week was good for students as it strongly focused on the issue of litter.'

SO WHAT'S NEXT?

Overall, the ant-litter week was a great success and helped to highlight an important issue, but it doesn't end there. All the learning and ideas from the week are being used by the school to develop the school's anti litter initiatives and form part of a strategy to gain the school's green flag. It is hoped that the recycling and reducing waste messages practiced in the school will become a habit for each student and so be applied in their homes as well.



Ms Kennelly with parents from the Health Promoting School Committee and a number of students with their art work

LOOK GOOD, FEEL GOOD INITIATIVE

A Look Good - feel Good Initiative in the school in March worked extremely well. Diet and exercise issues were addressed, with lectures on healthy foods, an aerobics class organized by teachers, a walking group and an "Active 8 mentoring Programme", in which a Transition Year student mentored junior students in exercise programmes. As part of the Initiative, footballing heroes Dara O Sé and Siobhán Fleming launched a healthy-eating booklet "Look Good - Feel Good", which aimed to encourage students, teachers and parents alike to adopt healthy eating habits and engage in physical activity. Attached to the booklet was a pedometer to encourage students and teachers to take up walking as part of the initiative. Students Maria Dowling, Emily Brick and Caoimhe Casey wrote the text with the guidance of Ms Kennelly and Ms Maher.

The school signed up as a health-promoting school with the Health Service Executive. The school also took the healthy eating message beyond the school gates as the First Years prepared a delicious lunch at the IT Tralee



Danny Holland - Winner of the Principal's Award 2006



Mr. Culloty presenting Karen Lawlor with the SportsWoman of the Year Award 2006.



AWARDS FOR TOP STUDENTS - AWARDS NIGHT

Students at Mercy Mounthawk were recently recognised for their sporting, academic and extra curricular achievements when we hosted our fifth Annual Awards Night. Among the top awards winners at the ceremony were Pádraig Rice (Student Council Award), Danny Holland (Principal's Award), Jennifer Costelloe (Catherine McAuley Award) and John Devine (UCC Cup).

The school principal, Mr Behan, said in his address: "The Awards night is one of the most pleasant events in the school calendar. We all delight in being associated with success and excellence. With the amount of talent in Mercy Mounthawk, our judges always have a very difficult task. This has been a wonderful year, with our students dominating the media since last September for their achievements locally, nationally and indeed internationally. We also identify in our Awards Night students whose successes have never grabbed the headlines, but whose contributions to the life and success of the school deserve no less to be awarded. Criteria like Christian leadership, creativity, kindness, genuine improvement, leadership ability and good behaviour are of primary importance in the hierarchy of awards in any school."

CONWAY INSTITUTE

In January, Transition Year student Sarah O'Carroll was selected to attend a week-long work experience placement at the Conway Institute of Biomolecular & Biomedical Research. This prestigious facility is attached to UCD. This tremendous opportunity allowed Sarah to experience a range of cutting edge scientific processes, guided by some of Europe's leading scientists. The opportunity also allowed Sarah to participate in elements of the cancer research programme in the Mater Hospital Education Centre, with lectures on Neurosciences, Proteomics, and Genetics. All in all, a fantastic opportunity for this aspiring Mounthawk Science Researcher!! Continuing this link with the Conway Institute, 55 students from Transition Year spent Monday March 6th at "AccesScience Junior 2006" in the O'Reilly Hall in UCD, while 5th year student Henry McCann was one of the final 6 winners of the Conway "AccesScience 2006" Poster Competition, a competition won last year by Mounthawk students Niall Harney and Danny Holland. As well as receiving a cheque, Henry's poster is displayed in "Science Track" in all DART stations, platforms and on trains.



Ms Carey with the Wonders of Science Winning Team at the National Final in Tullamore.

"WONDERS OF SCIENCE"

Congratulations to David Boyd, Seán Enright, Robert O'Neill and Peter Wheeler who came second in the All-Ireland finals of the Student Enterprise Awards in Tullamore on 14th May. Their entry, "Wonders of Science", is a science magazine for primary schools. They have now produced a second issue of the magazine as well as translating the first issue into Irish. The boys can look forward to a career as successful entrepreneurs.

SEACHTAIN NA GAELIGE NATIONAL COMPETITIONS

Congratulations to Rosie O'Dowd, class 2.6, who came second in the Poetry Section of Seachtain na Gaeilge National Competitions.

MOUNTHAWK CELEBRATES BOOK WEEK

Book week was marked in Mercy Mounthawk with an event in the school Library. As part of an initiative in the school to promote writing and appreciation of literature among the students, a creative writing competition was run among First, Second, Fourth and fifth Year students. Prize winners in the competition were announced and the gathered group of aspiring young writers was treated to a reading of each others' work. The prizes for the competition were presented by members of the Parents' Council who funded the event and winning compositions were published in the School Year Book.

As part of the day, three local poets Karen O'Connor, Tommy Frank O'Connor and Eileen Sheehan also read from their work, providing inspiration for the students.



'Mr. Behan presents Jennifer Costelloe with the Mother McAuley Award.



John Devine receives the UCC cup from Mr Behan.



PRESENTATION SECONDARY SCHOOL TRANSITION YEAR SCIENCE QUIZ

Congratulations to Anthony Bailly, Michael Kelleher and Elsie Ronan on winning the Presentation Secondary School Transition Year Science Quiz sponsored by Kerry Group. This is the school's second year in a row winning this Quiz, which is a tremendous achievement. In second place came David Ruane, Seán Enright and Gavin Fitzgerald. Well done to all and to their science teacher, Mrs Mary Enright.

FACULTY OF LAW ESSAY COMP 2006

Laura Kelly and Norman McCann, both 5th year students, submitted winning essays in the UCC Faculty of Law Essay Competition 2006. A presentation of prizes and lecture evening took place at 5:30pm on Thursday 6th April 2006, in Boole 4 Lecture Theatre, UCC. Members of the Faculty of Law gave a short lecture on each of the essay topics to illustrate the impact of law on all aspects of Irish society and life.

RUTA QUETZAL BBVA 2006

Having written an essay in Spanish on the Mayan civilisation, Nessa Daly was short-listed for interview with a view to participating in Ruta Quetzal BBVA 2006, which entails an academic grant to travel to Central America this Summer to study the Mayan civilisation and the discovery of the Americas. Commencing in Madrid, the trip includes a visit to Mexico, Guatemala and Belize. Students have the opportunity to examine many aspects of Mexican and Central American life, cultural, historical, geographical and ecological. Similar trips to Spanish-speaking countries to promote awareness of Hispanic culture have been organised in past years by BBVA International Bank. Nessa is a 5th year student. She studies Spanish and French. Earlier this year, Nessa had the honour of introducing her school in both Spanish and French when she visited the European Parliament in Strasbourg with a group of her fellow-students as part of the Euroscola programme. Nessa intends to pursue a career in linguistics.

GREAT SUCCESS FOR 4TH YEAR MINI-COMPANIES

2006 proved to be a very successful year for the Mounthawk entries to the Kerry County Enterprise Board's Young Entrepreneurs Programme. At county level the school entered four teams. Shebang Bakery and Maybe Baby were highly commended. Zen Pens (Elsie Ronan and Christina Curtin) came third and Wonders of Science, a science magazine aimed at the primary school market, took first prize. The group members, David Boyd, Peter Wheeler, Robert O'Neill and Seán Enright Received a cheque for €400 and the chance to represent Kerry at the National Finals. There they experienced greater success coming second out of 70 different entries at senior level from all across the country. Congratulations to the "Wonders of Science" group. They did Mounthawk very proud!



'Sarah O'Carroll, Emily Brick and Caoimhe Casey, winners of the National Forum of Europe competition'

NATIONAL FORUM ON EUROPE PUBLIC SPEAKING COMPETITION

Congratulations to Emily Brick, Caoimhe Casey and Sarah O Carroll on winning the Regional Final of the prestigious National Forum on Europe Public Speaking Competition.

This is an annual Transition Year competition. In the Munster Euro constituency they beat off a very strong challenge from Scoil Mhuire agus Íde, Newcastle West. They managed to convince the judges with their arguments on the theme "The European Union is taking the lead in promoting environmental sustainable development".

The team then went on to represent the South Euro constituency in the All-Ireland Final in Dublin Castle in April. Victorious in Dublin Castle, as all-Ireland winners, the girls won an all expenses paid trip to Strasbourg for themselves, three teachers and thirty of their classmates, to participate in Euroscola.



Mr McGrigor with 'budding' gardeners.



MOUNTHAWK ENVIRONMENTAL & ORGANIC GARDEN PROJECT

This project aimed to develop many diverse habitats in the school grounds and has been very successful in so doing. This should benefit the educational and general well being of the students and staff alike.

It is important that students know where our food comes from and that they play a hands on role in the planting, maintaining and harvesting of these crops. In the organic vegetable garden, we planted wheat, potatoes, onions, garlic, beans, peas, carrots, spinach, cabbage, beetroot, tomatoes, courgettes and pumpkins. We planted these vegetables deliberately late so that the crops will be ready to harvest in September.

In the flower garden at the front of the school there is a wide variety of herbs growing. This includes many types of medicinal and culinary herbs. These plants are slowly becoming established. First year students weed, mulch, and replant these beds when necessary. There is also a wide variety of unusual cottage garden plants which add a splash of colour to an otherwise grey exterior.

The native and non native hedgerows in the car park area are developing well. A group of fifth year students enjoying a well deserved break from the classroom gave these hedges a good pruning to tide them over the summer months.

The native woodland planted in front of the school is starting to come. The oaks that we planted over the last few years are starting to show above the long grass. Students have been mulching this area with cardboard and wood chips to give the young oaks a chance to establish. The Leaving Cert Applied class planted a hazel coppice as part of their Leaving Cert curriculum this year. Hazel is an indigenous Irish tree. This coppice will add to the diversity of our tree planting scheme.

The wild- life corridor and woodland screen that was planted four years ago is well developed and needs little attention. Three rare heritage apple trees were also planted this year.

Next year we hope to create a pond and wetland area. We are looking forward to getting started on this project. We would also like to establish more cross curricular links with other departments in the school. In a sense, we are endeavouring to create an out-door classroom that could be used by science, geography or home economics teachers etc.

Thanks to all who were involved.

CHORAL COMPETITION ANALYSIS

This year, Mercy Mounthawk Choir was involved in the All-Ireland Finals of the National Choral Competition in Macroom, County Cork. We reached this stage, having qualified through the Munster Finals earlier in the year.

We had been rehearsing since September and in that time we had learned three songs, "Only You", "The Long and Winding Road" and "Sunrise, Sunset", a song from the musical "Fiddler on The Roof" that was produced by the school earlier in the year. Under the persistent training of Ms.Sharon Glancy, our Choral Director, and many lunchtimes of practice, we were finally ready.

On the night we performed extremely well, and everyone was pleased with our performance. We finished fourth overall in the competition, and received a runner-up trophy. It is the first Choral trophy that has been won by the school and we were all very proud of our achievement. Overall, we had an amazing time and have plenty of memories that will live for us for years to come. Hopefully next year we can try again and do even better.

GARDA YOUTH ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Organised by the Kerry Garda Division, Garda Youth Achievement Awards were presented at a function in the Brandon Hotel on 27th January. This competition recognises the input of young people into their communities. Students have been involved in a wide range of activities ranging from the St Vincent de Paul Society to homework clubs and social action groups. They are also involved within the school community, as mentors to first year students and as part of the paired reading programme.

The winners from Mounthawk were:

John Sugrue winner of an overall award

Ciara Baker

Sharon Breen

Mary Sweeney

Laura Kelly

David Rafferty

Liam Maher - all winners of merit awards



"Philadelphia, Here I come", TY Show 26th May 2006 Siamsa Tíre



TRIP TO THE ABBEY THEATRE

The musical was over, the laughing had subsided and most of us were sick to the teeth of the theatre. So obviously I jumped at the chance to head for a drama workshop and performance of "Homelands" in the Abbey Theatre, Dublin!

At ten past nine on a Monday morning it's very hard to find a smiling face, but on our bus heading for a free day we were pretty happy with ourselves. We hit the city around two and made our first stop of the day at Dail Eireann. Our early fears of the Dail being unbelievably boring were unfounded. Of course the highlight for us red-blooded republicans was the original copy of the "Proclamation of the Irish Republic" on display!

After lunch we went to the drama work-shop which focused on the play we were going to see, "Homelands". We discussed the things that have changed in Ireland over the years and did an exercise where we put different images of Ireland under two categories: Old Ireland and New Ireland. This was good fun but led to a nasty fight over whether U2 were outdated or not!

After the work-shop, we went back to the Abbey (after our tour and history lesson earlier in the day!) and sat down to finally enjoy the play. And enjoy it we did! The Play, based on a Man returning home to Ireland on "business" for the weekend and having to face all the things he had left behind made for a fantastic ninety minutes. It was a brilliant play and all of us really enjoyed it! We headed home around ten and it was a very quiet journey because after the day we were wrecked, but it was definitely worth it!

THE BELARUSSIAN ORPHANAGE PROJECT

Wonderful kids, smiles and happiness are just some of the words that spring to mind when someone mentions Belarus. Even reminiscing over a summer spent in the city of Minsk is enough to brighten up any volunteer's wet Irish winter! The Novinki Orphanage is home to about 216 of the most adorable and loving children one could ever come across. Many of these children, aged between the ages of 4 and 24, suffer life-long conditions such as Down Syndrome and Cerebral Palsy. Those in care are known locally and internationally as 'the forgotten children'. Many of these children have been residents in the institution for many years without a break.

Although many of them are bed-bound with special needs, it goes without saying that they are very happy children and even happier when they know that somebody, like you, cares about them.

The volunteers undertake various projects such as refurbishing buildings and classrooms, creating new playgrounds and overall giving the kids the time of their lives. Although the heat is unbearable and the work is hard, it is definitely worth it in the end when you see the kids' smiles.

The overall work of BOP can be seen each day in each institution where we have projects. From the shoes that the kids wear to their clothes, the soap, the toothpaste / brushes, the toys, rooms, games, the mattresses and covers on their beds, the videos they watch, the staff who play with them, the teachers that teach them... All of this is part of the BOP commitment to them.

It's hard to put the experience into words, but overall, the Belarussian Orphanage Project has completely changed our lives in the best possible way and we wouldn't change a minute of it.

IMTA QUIZ 2006

This year once again the Kerry Branch of the Irish Maths Teachers' Association (IMTA) held their annual Leaving Certificate Honours Maths competition in Mercy Mounthawk. A total of 15 secondary schools entered the competition.

The standard was very high with over half the teams within three points of each other at the end. The event was only decided after a double tie breaker round, with St. Brendan's College and Mercy Mounthawk finishing on top. On the night, Mounthawk entered three teams and all finished in the top six.

The Mounthawk winning team consisted of Philip Conway, Orla Quinlan, Mohamed Ballal and Gerald McDonnell. Along with their teacher Mr Lyne, the team traveled to Trinity College on March the 4th and represented the county in the National Final.

From a total of 320 teams that originally entered the competition, the Mounthawk team finished in 5th place. Well done to all.

ISTA JUNIOR SCIENCE QUIZ - TWO IN A ROW!

Out of 57 teams in the county, Mercy Mounthawk emerged victorious at the ISTA junior Science Quiz again this year. Winning team: Leanne O Connor, Fionan Carey, Deborah Leahy.



Villagers from Anatevka: Shane Curtin, Conor Cleary, David Ruane and John O'Donnell.

THE MUSICAL

Every year, Mercy Mounthawk Secondary School stages a production at Siamsa Tire, alternating each year between a musical and a play. Fiddler on the Roof, it transpired, was to be the musical for 2006. There was only one thing, nobody knew anything about it, apart from that song that Gwen Stefan did a cover of. "If I were a Rich Man." Mr. Behan was not fazed though as, for the next two weeks, we huddled into a room every lunchtime, crowded around a television, watching the story unfold.

There were two things on my mind as I watched the screen, the first one being my character. Obviously, I was shooting for the stars and the main role of Tevye was my Orion. Unfortunately, my good friend Kevin was on the same wavelength. We had talked about it before and we realised that, as we were the seniors in this musical, we would be the main contenders for the lead roles. The second thing was the difficult scenes. We would be staging this musical and would have to act out these scenes, so there was always a part of me thinking about the way we were going to approach that dialogue or that choreography routine. But, for now, I wasn't going to worry about that. When we had all grasped the concept of the storyline, it was time to cast. Lunchtimes stopped existing for me. I just had an extra class that changed every day. It was exhausting, it was tedious and it was more than frustrating at times, but there are countless moments that I can look back on and laugh, little jokes that would make no sense to some people but make me laugh like a hyena. I have formed friendships with new people and strengthened old ones. People who I would have never talked to otherwise, I would now be able to chat to for hours on end.

There is no doubt that all the rehearsing has put a lot of strain on me, has sent me crazy to the point where I recite whole scenes in my head and has drained me completely, but nothing can replace the memories that have become embedded in my memory for the rest of my days. But there is one thing that throws everything out of context, that makes everything single thing that I have mentioned seem menial, and that is the thrill of performing on stage. There is no better feeling than to be standing in front of over 300 people, with all of their eyes glued on YOU, their ears listening to you attentively. To hear them laugh at the lines that you have repeated to the extent that the words no longer make sense to you. The adrenaline rush, the buzz, the thrill. Nothing can compare to that feeling. I have to admit, that I have thought to myself several times that I was stupid to have accepted this challenge, to dedicate my time, my patience and my energy to it all. I have moaned, complained, whined and cursed Joseph Stein over and over again but, at the end of the day if I hadn't volunteered myself for this, I'd be kicking myself. It's over now. God only knows what I'm going to do with my lunchtimes. And you can guarantee that, come next September, I'll be down outside Mr Behan's office, once again hounding him just to feed the appetite of my overgrown acting bug.



Staff members involved in the Production: Ms. Glancy, Ms Costello, Mr O'Roarke, Mr Behan, Ms Quinlan, Mrs Barry, Ms. C. MeElligott and Mrs O'Shea Daly.





The Daughters: *Julianne O'Leary, Triona Brick and Caoimhe Casey*



SECOND YEAR TRIP TO BARCELONA 2006

In the early hours of Sunday morning - April 9th, a second year group of 93 students and 11 teachers departed from the school for Shannon Airport on the annual school tour. Barcelona was the chosen destination this year and is, perhaps, the most dynamic and innovative of Mediterranean cities where Antoni Gaudi left his mark on Barcelona's architecture. The city is a scrapbook of galloping gables and organic curves.

Sagrada Familia is Gaudi's greatest work all were in awe of this structure. We saw all the familiar sites of the city including Montjuic the home of the 1992 Olympic games and visited the Olympic Stadium, which has a capacity to seat 55,000 spectators. For the soccer enthusiasts the guided tour of Camp Nou, which has a capacity for 120,000 and also boasts a museum with a permanent exhibition of trophies and photographs was the highlight.

One of the star attractions of Barcelona is Pare Guell. We relaxed on the balustrade bench and it is a great place for views over the city. We had time to visit the main park - Ciutadella where we enjoyed a packed lunch before posing for a group photograph in front of the park cascade.

Tuesday morning brought us to Montserrat which is 1,236m over sea level and the unusual shape of the mountain and the landscape is, in itself, a natural wonder. We had some time to walk down Las Rambles. This grand boulevard stretches to the sea and the artists Picasso and Miro wandered around here in search of inspiration. We spent some time in Port Vell & visited the largest Aquarium in the world which was quite an experience.

There are some things you simply have to experience for yourself. A full day at Port Aventura Theme Park is one of those things. Students have taken home memories of amazing rides and exotic shows that they'll dream of for years to come.

Our Accommodation was at the new 4* Salauris Hotel. All in all, it was a very successful trip and the weather was ideal at 20+ degrees. Finally, a special thanks to all the students for their exemplary behaviour while on the trip and to the teachers for their help, support and commitment.

MERCY MOUNTHAWK TRANSITION YEAR 2005/2006

For three and a half hours on Friday night 26th May the Siamsa tire played host to the annual Mounthawk Transition Year celebration, featuring a wide ranging pastiche of the talents and skills of the class of 2006. This exciting evening of entertainment brought to a close the unique education opportunities structured in to the programme in Mounthawk. During the past year this group of 91 students has experienced a wide range of activities - from taster courses in the sciences and business areas, hill walking on the Dingle and the Kerry Way through kayaking and sailing to volunteer and community endeavours, the group has involved itself in a myriad of educational occasions!! This particular group engaged with programme staples such as the Rosemary Smith Driving Awareness week, Law Modules, trips to the Cork Circuit Court and Cork Gaol, First Aid, organic gardening, involvement in Anti Litter and Healthy Eating campaigns, trips to Paris, Strasbourg and Frankfurt and of course to the Gaeltacht, involvement in "Acces Science" in UCD, UCC and sampler courses at both the North and South Campuses of the ITT allowing for practical research into possible career choices and third level opportunities, Supplemented by 16 days of Work Shadowing, where the reality of careers can be explored Transition Year allows for great clarity in choosing subjects relevant to a career.

Uniquely, members of the class were involved in scripting and making a film for the Amnesty "Voice our Concern" project where ten schools nationally are paired with an international film director, in Mounthawk's case this turned out to be the Oscar-nominated Terry George, director of the acclaimed human rights film Hotel Rwanda - indeed an exceptional opportunity for the students. The resulting film, Child of our Time has now been premiered in the I.F.C. and will be packaged to all schools involved in Amnesty projects in the upcoming academic year.

Stressing the educational worth of the growth in self directed learning and self esteem, the students' achievements stand as testament to the extra ordinary nature of the year's activities. This was immediately obvious in the many successes achieved by members of the 91-strong class. In November class members Anthony Bailly and Sarah O Carroll with the help of a back room team of David Ruane, Elsie Ronan, Kevin O'Keeffe & Emily Brick, presented Ireland's project "Adventure Tourism Potential in Kerry" - compiled under the direction of Mr Frank Fell - at the Aldo Papone International Conference in Frankfurt.



TY Students earning their Gaisce Awards in the Rain!



Also of note was the partnership between a committee of TY students, headed up by Eoin Cregan, Katie Liston, Natalie Ryan and Una Lynch, and The Irish Examiner which culminated in Mounthawk being presented with a cardiac defibrillator- the first school in the state to install this life-saving equipment. Recognition was also paid to the €10,000 raised by the group through ticket sales and their "Once upon a time" Fashion Show, organised under the stewardship of Ms Aoife Fitzgerald and Ms Nora Quane.

The night's talks were drawn to a close by the joint valedictorians- Padraig Rice and Elsie Ronan. Chosen by their classmates to make a signature speech, the two deftly encapsulated the essence of TY in Mounthawk as well as reflecting on how it changed their lives, both displaying great maturity as they begin their fifth year studies!

And so began the eclectic mix of drama, the tragic and the comic, dance, both traditional and modern, song and ballad which now signifies the confidence and sheer exuberance of Transition Year and its end-of-year celebration! Under the watchful eyes of Ms Mairead O'Mahony, Ms Michelle Mangan, Mr Ronan Redican, Ms Noreen Sheldon, Ms Cora McElligott and Ms Sharon Glancy the night's entertainment took final shape in the school dressing rooms in the last days of term. From the rock'n'roll of The Gnomes to Leonard Cohen's Hallelujah beautifully performed by Fergal O'Connor and Caoimhe Casey and the timeless perfection of Leah Herrick's rendition of Carrickfergus to the brilliantly captured drama sequences from Keane's Sive, Mc Donagh's Cripple of Innismaan, Synge's Playboy of the Western World, Friel's Philadelphia Here I come, add in a slice of traditional dance and a piece of Hip Hop specially choreographed by Kerry County Council's Dancer-in-Residence Catherine Young, excellent interpretations of Gift Grub's Eddie Hobbs,



TY out and about yet again!!



Star of 'Child of our Time' - the TY Film for the Amnesty Voice our Concern project.

Tom Cruise and two brilliantly reworked pieces from the Unbelievables, and for good measure throw in three films made by the class, a fantastic Celtic backdrop, created under art teacher Mr Tom Benson, which Rachel Donnellan eloquently explained signified their journey in Transition Year, and of course a gallery area bursting with projects on display and you can begin to imagine the feast of effort, imagination and sheer hard work on display.

In his remarks Mr Behan best encapsulated the night when he said he believed Transition Year was the best opportunity in the Irish system affording students the experience of education in its truest sense. And so with tears and cheers, the highly charged evening drew to its close! Certainly no shortage of positives about young people and education in Siamsa on Friday last, or in Transition Year for the past nine months, a wonderful experience and a most enjoyable and entertaining year for all!

Sean Coffey

RETIREMENTS

2006 marks the retirement of two senior teachers, John O'Donnell and Tony Lyons, both of whom spent most of their teaching careers in St. Mary's Moyderwell, and their last 5 years in Mercy Mounthawk. John and Tony will be remembered for their contribution to education and to their passionate interest in sport. We wish them and their families a long and happy retirement.



Sr. Maureen meeting participants in the Incoming 1st year Quiz.



ENROLMENT FOR SEPT 2007

The school is accepting registrations for enrolment for Sept 2007.

Registration forms can be obtained at the school office and should be returned as soon as possible.

Closing date for applications for Sept 2007 is Sat Nov 11th 2006.

CATHOLIC EDUCATION AN IRISH SCHOOLS TRUST (CEIST)

There will be a meeting in school for all parents and guardians on September 20th 2006 at 7.30pm. CEIST is a project being undertaken to ensure the future of Catholic Voluntary Schools such as Mercy Mounthawk. The meeting will be addressed by Sr. Ella McGuinness and a project team member will explain the purpose, structure and plans for CEIST. The project organisers are anxious to get feedback from parents and guardians regarding the future education and development of the students in school. There is already a website (www.ceist.ie) showing evaluations and feedback from the initial meeting which was held in May in Kilkenny and was attended by representatives of over 100 schools nationally. Please come along and express your views on the night.

GIRLS' BASKETBALL

2005/2006 was a very successful year for Mercy Mounthawk girls' basketball. Our 1st years finished 3rd in the region and qualified for the All-Ireland playoffs where a narrow defeat by Presentation Killarney finished the season.

The Junior team captured Mounthawk's 2nd South west 'A' title qualifying for the All-Ireland playoffs held in Mounthawk. Unfortunately the girls lost out to Mercy Waterford on a 38-31 scoreline.

Our cadets were crowned South West 'A' champions but after a great run in the Cup, they were defeated by a single point by St. Vincent's (Cork) in the All-Ireland semi-final. Mounthawk senior team finished 3rd in the South West 'A' league and had a great victory over Presentation Listowel but before being defeated in the All-Ireland 'A' quarter finals by Presentation Thurles.



Visit to European Parliament in Strasbourg.



Mercy Mounthawk Girls Basketball Cadets