

## Transition Year

This years 115 transition years began their year with a team building day in Killarney on the 2nd of September. Their mettle, stamina and ability to work together were tested while participating in activities as diverse as rope climbing, orienteering, archery and cycling. On Friday of their first week the pupils were involved in a day long induction process delivered by the core team where the ethos of our transition year was outlined to them. Due to the less academic nature of the year the pupils were encouraged to enter into a contract of learning and to take on, for the year a learning project of their choosing.

During the induction day the pupils chose whether to participate in the Young Social Innovators (Y.S.I) programme, Interact (junior Rotary Club), the European Studies Programme (E.S.P.) or the Young Entrepreneur Programme (Y.E.P.). We have five separate projects entered for YSI, two large groups participating in interact, a small but busy group examining European affairs (and attending the European Youth Parliament in Cork and the Model European Parliament at St. Andrews in Dublin). These pupils are at the moment making a short movie of their vision of Europe in 2050. Interact have been busy involving themselves with the local town community by visiting nursing homes and performing community based tasks such as bulb planting and litter picking. Those involved in YEP attended the BluSky day of entrepreneurship and are busy working on ideas for the young entrepreneur awards to be held later in the year.

The academic aspect of the programme is well catered for in TY and a mid year report will be sent home before the February mid term break. We hope that this will allow students to focus on their Maths, English, Irish, French, German, Spanish, History and Geography. The science and business based subjects are studied in modular form during the year. The report will outline their academic achievements to date in both tests and projects and based on this outline they will be encouraged to identify areas of possible improvement for the remainder of the year.

## Jig Saw – Youth Mental Health

Jigsaw brings together community supports to meet the mental health and wellbeing needs of young people aged between 12 – 25 years. It involves existing agencies in Kerry working in partnership to provide to provide supports, which can help young people get through difficult times.

Mercy Mounthawk is one of five schools chosen in Kerry as a pilot school to develop strategies to support young people. The School, as a Health Promoting School, has already done a lot of work in the area of mental health over the last few years. We look forward to liaising with Jigsaw to promote a positive community approach to mental health issues.

## Under 17 Boys' Football Report

This years under 17 boys football team entered the Kerry Colleges Dunloe Cup competition which is the premier competition for this group in Kerry. Mounthawk were drawn into a highly competitive group consisting of the St Brendan's Killarney, Intermediate School Killorglin and Tralee CBS. The first outing was against St Brendan's Killarney where we earned ourselves a two point win after tremendously spirited comeback from being 12 points down at one point in the second half. On the day it was an excellent team display, with players like Daragh Carmody, John Courtney, Cillian Fitzgerald and Jack Barry setting excellent example throughout.

The second outing placed us away from home once more and again after a hugely competitive game we just about came out on top with a narrow win, with Donnacha McGarry, Ciaran O Connell and Jack Cahallane putting in solid performances. Our final group game pitted us against Tralee CBS, and although we had already secured qualification from the group the team once again, as displayed in the previous games showed great spirit but unfortunately we lost by a point.

Subsequently that set us up for a semi final against another quality team in Pobail Scoil Corca Dhuinhe. This game was played in Annascaul, and again it was a very testing game resulting in a hard earned 4 point win. Good performances from Cian Sayers, Micheal Maher, Daragh Carmody, Cillian Fitzgerald and Goalkeeper Kieran O Connor ensured Mounthawk a spot in its first ever Dunloe Cup final.

The final itself was played in Lewis Road Killarney with a big crowd in attendance, and on the day our opponents were Tralee CBS. The game began great pace and both teams settled in well and were evenly matched throughout the early stages. However, Tralee CBS began to get on top before halftime, which ended 0:8 – 0:5 in favour of the CBS. Again the second half opened up brightly with both teams putting scores together, before Adam Kelly latched on to a ball and finished it to the net to give Mounthawk a much needed lift, which levelled matters. The Green to their credit responded well and in a short spell scored an additional 2-1 to put them seven points up. In the circumstances many teams would have folded but once again as was the case right throughout the competition the team rallied and persistent teamwork coupled with excellent play from Cillian Fitzgerald at full forward resulted in Mounthawk tagging on points and eventually narrowing the gap down to a point after Daragh Carmody had dispatched a high pressure penalty.

The team continued to press forward for an equaliser but unfortunately the clock ran out, resulting in a tough one point defeat. It was a difficult defeat to experience for the whole team but it must be stated that the full panel of players displayed excellent commitment and enthusiasm throughout. Unfortunately it was not to be in the end but it definitely sets the school and this bunch of players in good stead for the future.

## School Calendar

### January

1. January 17th – 21st
2. January 18th 7.30 – 9pm
3. January 19th 10am to 3pm.
4. January 26th 8.00pm
5. January 27th – 29th 8.00pm
6. January 31st 9.30 – 12.30pm ~ A - L  
1.30 – 3.45pm ~ M - Z

### February

1. February 9th 4.15 – 6.45pm
2. February 9th Gym @ 7.30pm

3. February 10th – 14th
4. February 11<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup>
5. February 18th – 28th

### March

1. March 4th Friday Gym @8pm
2. March 5th Saturday
3. March 8th Tuesday
4. March 8th Tuesday 4.15 – 6.45pm
5. March 22nd – 24th

### April

1. Week of April 4th
2. Week of April 11th

### May

1. Tuesday 17th May
2. Friday 20th May
3. Friday 27th May

## January to June 2011

Students' Council consultation week.  
2nd year Parents Night with Seamus Whitty, Kerry Life Education.  
Topic ~ 'Minding self, minding others'  
Gemma's uniform Sale.  
Parents' Council seminar on Positive Psychology.  
School Play 'Sive' in Siamsa Tire.  
Parent/ Teacher Meeting 2nd and 5th years. **No school for students.** (Please attend in alphabetical order.)

Parent/Teacher Meeting for 1st years  
Meeting for Parents of 3rd Years/ TY students. Senior Cycle options and subject choices  
TY School Tour.  
Mock Exams for 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> years.  
Midterm Break.

Meeting for Parents of 1st year students regarding 2nd Year subject choices.  
Admissions Day.  
Staff Day. **No school for students.**  
Parent/Teacher Meeting for TY's .  
5th year Retreats.

Irish Orals.

Modern Languages Orals.

Awards Night

TY end of year show in Siamsa Tire

Leaving Cert Graduation Mass in St. Brendan's Church

## 2010-2011



## Our Giving Spirit

Mounthawk students continue the tradition of showing concern for people in need by devoting their time and energy to raising money for charity.

### Sneakers Day:

The sum of €1,505 was raised by LCA 2 class to help send five students as helpers on the Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes. Aidan O'Sullivan, Marianne Costello, Brian Daly, Clare Moore and Caoimhe Marley were the volunteers who went.

### The Annual Christmas Staff

Raffle raised €1,445 which is being donated to Recovery Haven Charity.  
**Santa Bear Appeal.**  
The nationwide Santa Bear Appeal is the Central Remedial Clinic's biggest annual fundraising event. Transition year class (4.5) raised €835 selling Santa bears in town and in the school.

### Fashion Show

The proceeds of the Annual Fashion Show, €5000 was given to national Rehabilitation Centre, Dublin.

### Food Drive

The 2.5 class held a Food Drive before Christmas as part of the C.S.P.E. project. The students felt they wanted to help families in our school and in the locality. The Students' Council were a great help as they organised a 'Sneakers Day'. This allowed students to wear runners to school if they brought in a non-perishable food item. This proved a great success. A huge amount of food was collected and helped a lot of families who may have been struggling coming up to Christmas. Thanks to everyone who contributed.

### Students' Council

Spare change was collected for Africa and this amounted to €446.



## Mercy Mounthawk - A Caring community

**'we should want more from our educational efforts than academic achievement, and we will not achieve even that meagre success unless our children believe that they themselves are cared for and learn to care for others', (Nel Noddings)**

This year we have chosen the theme of a 'Caring Community' as a focus for self-evaluation and for our work in SPHE, CSPE and Health Promotion in the school. From the start of the year the colourful banner you see reproduced above has taken pride of place in the general purpose area to remind us of our focus. And indeed, that is a key issue. The intention that we be a 'caring community' in the school was enshrined in our Mission Statement 10 years ago and as with mission statements everywhere, the challenge is to embody them in the myriad of interactions that make up the daily life of the school. It is a challenge for students, teachers, management and parents alike. Hence our focus this year on this aspect of the Mission statement: – how can we be a 'caring community' in Mercy Mounthawk? Our approach is twofold; 'care for' which focuses on the quality of relationships between members of the school community, and 'care about' which focuses on the environment.

As part of this agenda for the year, we have undertaken a number of initiatives in the school. Prior to Christmas we ran a survey of 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> year students looking at the quality of their experience in school. Based on the results of this survey, we have identified a number of areas of school life around which we want to consult further with students, parents and staff – student experience of the discipline system, pastoral support and bullying, all of which centre on the quality of caring relationships between people. This consultation is currently underway during the week 17<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> January. We have just run an SPHE seminar for 2<sup>nd</sup> years 'Minding self – Minding others' focusing on friendships and the quality of those relationships and way in which relationships reflect the mental well-being of the individuals involved.

This was delivered by a psychologist from Kerry Life Education Project. As part of this programme there was also a talk for parents. Taking up the understanding that caring for one's own mental health is the basis on which good caring relationships are built, we are involved in a pilot initiative with Jigsaw Kerry and Headstrong to strengthen the structures in the school through which we promote positive mental attitude and health among the students and in the community, as you will see in the article on Jigsaw.

In conjunction with this, a Positive Psychology course for 5<sup>th</sup> years was developed with staff in the IT in Tralee and has been running since the start of the year with up-beat feedback from the teachers and participants. One of our parents, Tom Farrelly, who was instrumental in developing the course, will be delivering a course for parents on the topic starting on January 26<sup>th</sup>. In tandem, 18 teachers undertook an online positive psychology course from October to December and will be working to develop methods to promote this perspective in class. Perhaps most energy this term went into implementing the changes to the behaviour code. School rules have been restated as positive expectations focusing on a respectful and caring attitude to others. To reinforce and encourage this positive attitude in students we have introduced a merit stamp system through which students are acknowledged for their positive actions. A positive behaviour reinforcement team has been established, whose role it is to encourage and acknowledge students who act out of a positive and caring attitude in their interactions with each other and with staff. A number of families will already have received letters home congratulating students on their efforts. Strengthening the reality of a 'caring community' in the school must be an ongoing challenge, but the impact of a positive and caring atmosphere on the lives of our students can never be underestimated.

**John O'Roarke (Principal)**

## School Retirements

The School would like to wish Mr. Seán Geary, Mrs Joan Daly and Mrs Eileen Revenington well on their recent retirement. They were wonderful teachers, their dedication and commitment to their students was extraordinary. We thank them and wish them years of health and happiness in the future.

## Creative Writing

The creative writing group meets every Friday at lunch time in room 27. Our extremely talented, aspiring writers bring examples of their work to share with the group. Since we began meeting last year, we have heard students read a diverse range of work from poetry, to short stories and even extracts from novels and screen plays! Upon hearing each other's work, the other members of the group give feedback saying what they like and making suggestions as to how the work could be improved or in the case of an unfinished story, what might happen next. The students are always considerate, thoughtful and tactful in their responses.

I thoroughly enjoy attending the creative writing group every Friday and every week I am impressed with the quality of the writing talent of our members and the maturity of their responses to one another's work. We are always looking for new members and would invite any aspiring writers to join us **every Friday at lunchtime in Room 27.**

## Concern Debating

Congratulations to the Mercy Mounthawk debating team who have topped their league group after four debates and who now progress to the knock out phase of the competition. The team worked hard over the last term, debating four really difficult topics on world issues. A hearty congratulations to Cassie McElligott, Christine Mullins, Danielle Courtney, Sarah Guerin, Damien Sharpe and Mr Redican for getting this far and best of luck in the knock-out rounds!

# Comórtas Díospóireachta Ghael Linn

Tá comórtas díospóireachta Ghael Linn faoi lán tseoil arís i mbliana. Ghlac foireann díospóireachta na scoile, páirt i mbabhta a haon de Chomórtas an Phiarsaigh, ar an gcúigiú lá déag de Shamhain. Is iad Kelly Ní Bhrosnacháin (Captaein), Laura Ní Chearúil agus Cáit Ní Bhuide, baill na foirne a bhí páirteach sa díospóireacht i roinn na sóisir. Is ar Óstan Ghobnatan i mBaile Bhúirne bhí a dtrial, áit ina raibh an rún "Tá déagóirí na linne seo ina sclábhaithe ag an idirlíon" á phlé acu féin, an Scoil Idirmhéanach, Cill Orglan agus Coláiste Rossa as an Sciobairín, Co. Chorcaí. Chuir ár bhfoireann an argóint i láthair ag moladh an rúin, agus bhí an lá leo. Rachaidh siad ar aghaidh go dtí an dara babhta den chomórtas san athbhliain agus guimíd gach rath orthu.

## Parent's Council Report – January 2011

The Parents' Council has continued its initiatives in supporting the book scheme and the second chance school uniform scheme. It has also continued to liaise with the student council and to support Health Promotion Week and the Home School Liaison Committee which provides an invaluable service within the school.

Some parents assisted with outings and matches when they had time to do so. We also supported prizes for some school clubs. In the past year the issue of headshops arose and we brought our concerns to the National Parents' Council Post-Primary and local elected representatives.

The coming year will see fund-raising events focussed on a table quiz and bag-packing. It is becoming more challenging in the current climate to raise much needed funds. We have also developed a Parents Council Plan for the period 2009-2012 and have been working through some key objectives. In the last year we set up a dedicated e-mail address through which parents can now contact the council directly at [mmparentscouncil@gmail.com](mailto:mmparentscouncil@gmail.com). On January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2011 at 8pm we are having an introductory session on the area of Positive Psychology which will be delivered by Tom Farrelly from the Institute of Technology Tralee. The emerging field of Positive Psychology is intended to complement, not to replace traditional psychology. However, its aim is to move away from the focus that is often on the negatives, the 'what is wrong or different' aspects of studying the human condition. Positive psychology seeks to first identify character strengths. In turn, exercising these strengths regularly will lead to happier and more meaningful lives.

If there is sufficient interest the aim will be to run three one and a half hour sessions. Parents/guardians are all welcome to attend.

(Ray O'Connor-Desmond, Secretary)

## Mental Health Public Speaking

Mounthawk's mental health public speaking team are on their way to the county final after beating Pres Milltown and Pobalscoil Sliabh luachra Rathmore on the 16th November in Killorglin Community school. Well done to Cathal O'Donnell, Triona Clerkin, Danielle Courtney and Katie Foley on their well deserved win. They sacrificed a lot of spare time and this showed in their well researched and very well presented speeches. It was Triona's first time speaking publicly but she took the lead from veteran Danielle and did the school proud. Danielle's speech proved that 'We can't always build a future for our youth but we can build our youth for the future'. She was followed by Triona's argument that 'Children are more in need of models than critics'. Cathal is involved in a lot of drama both in and out of Mounthawk and this showed in his passionate and well delivered speech entitled 'The recession can't be all bad'. He certainly had us all smiling despite the recession. Katie was the team substitute on the night but worked very hard organising practice times and learning all three speeches just in case a team member got snowed in. It was a great night and thanks to Dan O'Connor from Kerry Mental Health for organising this event every year. Good luck to them on January 27th in the county final.

## Gemma's uniform - Second Chance

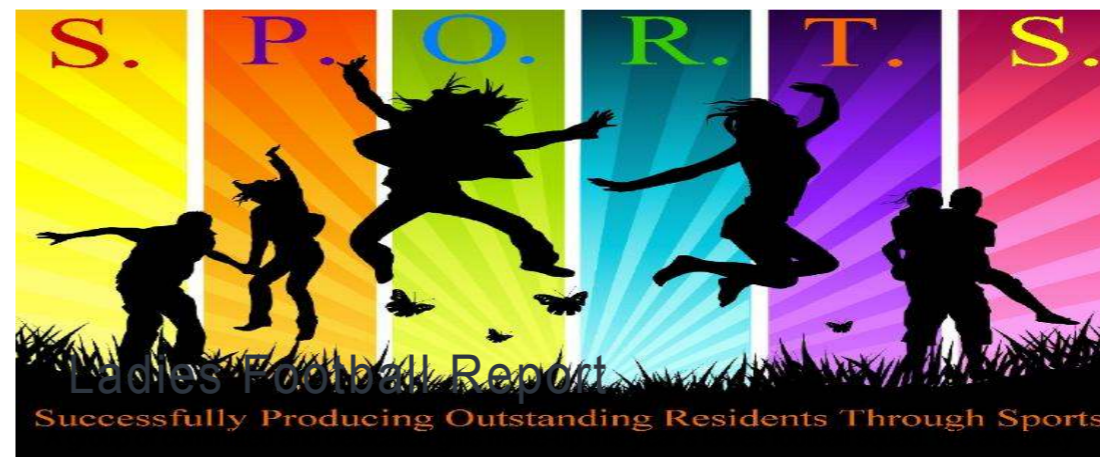
We have a small supply of our 2nd Chance Uniforms for sale. This has come about due to the large quantity of good quality uniforms handed into the school.

The bulk of the stock is mainly school jumpers and boys' trousers, with a much smaller stock of girls' pants, skirts, PE tops and ties.

If you would like to purchase any items, please complete the attached and return to the school office, in an envelope marked 2nd Chance Uniform Scheme. We will then check the stock room and text you back as to whether the item is available or not. All trousers, jumpers and skirts are priced €20 with p.e. tops and ties at €5.

This school initiative has been a great success and with continued support we hope to continue this scheme into the future.

| Name of Parent | Mobile no. | Date          |      |
|----------------|------------|---------------|------|
| Boy's pants    | Size       | P.E. top      | Size |
| Girl's pants   | Size       | School jumper | Size |
| Girl's skirt   | Size       | School tie    | Y/N  |



enough to have both a junior and senior team catering for first years right up to a few sixth years who, through much persuasion, managed to put down the books and get out onto the pitch. Our season began in late September when we overcame our counter-parts from Milltown here in Mounthawk. From there we travelled to Castlegregory, winning by an impressive margin that saw us in the semi-final of the Kerry County League. An outstanding display against Ballybunion led us to the final where we were to meet our familiar rivals from Milltown. A challenging game was fought for on this occasion, with both teams determined to come out on top. After a relatively sluggish first-half, Mounthawk, armed with newfound willpower courtesy of an animated pep talk from our trainer Mr. Lyne, came back fighting to secure a remarkable victory. Notable scores from Nicola Horan, Jen Locke, Shauna Moriarty and Rachael Browne pushed the Tralee girls ahead with last minute goals from Marianna Costello and Molly McGilton securing our victory. Our back-line acted as a rock of defence with huge performances from Naomi Reidy, Sarah O'Carroll and Grace Moynihan. Fantastic talent is visible amongst the younger girls ensuring that the future of ladies football in Mounthawk is safe for years to come. Many thanks to our trainers Mr Lyne, Ms Stokes and Ms Joy for their continuous support and encouragement. We look forward to further challenges in the New Year.

## Under 14 Football Report

This year saw Mounthawk compete at U-14 soccer for the first time. Training took place twice a week and a panel of 30 was chosen from a vast number of trialists.

An early season friendly game was played against Killarney Community College where Mounthawk were victorious 3-1 with Seán Ryan and Seán Dukes dominating.

A further challenge match against a 3<sup>rd</sup> year XI resulted in a 2-2 draw, which was an excellent result considering the age difference.

We then competed in the Munster Division of an All-Ireland tournament where we faced a very strong Tarbert side. Despite going down 3-0, Mounthawk has set a solid foundation for future endeavours and with player development continuing with the first years, we hope to lay a solid foundation for the future.

Some of those players who stood out this year were Rian O'Connor, Seán Ryan, Seán Dukes and Thomas Phelan.

## Under 15 Boys' Football

The Under 15 Boys have played a number of games so far this year and will be taking part in the Kerry Competition in the New Year. In preparation for the Munster U15 Competition which has been held since the start of the new term, they played a Challenge game against Gaelcholaiste Chiarraí on the school pitches. In a tough encounter, the team showed great heart and determination to come back from falling behind on a couple of occasions to win well by 7 points.

Following this challenge game, they played their first competitive game of the year against Kenmare at the Legion Pitches in Killarney.

The game was full of twists and turns, with excellent match ups all over the pitch. The Mounthawk team went in at half time with a narrow lead of 2 points after dominating the first half. On resumption of the second half, Kenmare began to come more and more into the game, scoring crucial goals early in the second half and critically with 5 minutes to go, putting them ahead by 2 points. However this did not deter Mercy Mounthawk as they battled their way back to within a point. Into extra time, they had the Kenmare team under severe pressure pushing for the equalizer, only for time to be called on the match. The final score 2-12 to 1-14. The belief and determination of the Mercy Mounthawk players has to be praised.

There are many excellent footballers who will no doubt be seen in the Kerry green and gold in years to come, while the discipline and fair play seen on the field of play has to be commended

## Soccer Report

After a good finish to last year's season, the U.18's won the Kerry Cup for the 2nd time in four years. Congratulations must go to leaving cert student Barry Galvin who, after a series of tough trials, became the Munster U.18 goalkeeper and competed against the other 3 provinces in a tournament in Athlone over an October weekend. Barry played well and was a credit to himself and the school. For the first time in the history of the school, Mounthawk provided an opportunity for the U.14's to take part in a national competition, thanks to a great effort by Mr Ciaran Costello, and this can only bode well for the future. Unfortunately they were beaten in the first round at the Cup, 3-1 to a very good Tarbert team.

The U.16 team played well in their cup competition and again were unlucky losing to Col. Chiarain Croom. The U.18 team won their first match with a comprehensive victory over Col. Chiarain Croom on a scoreline of 8-1.

Two more games and again they were unlucky with narrow defeats. However they are expected to do well in the Munster shield and should retain the Kerry Cup.

## Leaving Cert Scholarship Awards

The following students from the Leaving Certificate Class of 2010 were awarded scholarships.

1. Cionna Gannon : Law, NUI Maynooth.
2. Rosie O'Dowd: English Studies, TCD.
3. John O'Donnell: Engineering, UCD.
4. Maeve Counihan: Architecture UCD.
5. Michael Collins: Maths, NUI Maynooth.

## The Fashion Show

The Transition Year fashion show – **Just Dance** took place in the school gym on 14 December. Despite the cold weather the show was very well supported.

Sean Collins and Katie O'Riordan were admirable in their respective roles as chairpersons of the Fashion Show committee. They took responsibility for contacting the shops and overseeing the preparation for the show. Aine Daly and Sally Regan designed and painted the billboard and the backdrop for the catwalk. Treasurers Tara Griffin and Katie Keane organised sponsorship, spot prizes and ticket sales. Fiona O'Halloran and Kathy Stack took charge of the photo shoot, press release and advertising of the show. Secretaries Ciaran O'Rourke and Charlotte Higgins looked after all correspondence with shops and sponsors.

Daniel Browne and Ciara O'Mahony, Charity Liaison Officers, researched how the money raised from the show would be spent. In consultation with the T.Y. class, they decided to support the National Rehabilitation Centre in Dublin and also put some funding towards the T.Y. Programme. The fashion show raised over €5000 this year. All the T.Y. students modelled both casual and formal wear. Triona Clerkin, Charlotte Higgins, Eimear Leahy, Karen O'Dowd and Sinead Hill showed their creative side by remodelling some Mercy Mounthawk uniforms into new and funky designs.

We wish to thank Ger O'Riordan for his excellent work of video-recording the show. Thanks to David Raftery who once again took time out from his studies to do the lighting, Jamie Sugrue, fifth year, for doing an excellent job on sound and music and David Byrne, fifth year, for doing MC. Thanks to Ms. Veronica Hunt who gave up her time in the weeks before the show to help students 'strut their stuff' on the catwalk.

The business people of Tralee were very generous with their sponsorship, providing spot prizes for the raffle, including a debs dress from Jasmin Boutique. We also appreciate the co-operation and help given by the shops who gave clothes for students to model. We wish them all a prosperous 2011.



Regional Cadet Basketball Winners  
December, 2010

The School's production of Sive



The First Year Students of 2010 - 2011



Futsal Soccer Winners 2010



Niamh Godley – Winner of Garda Youth Award

## M Factor

To the rapturous applause of an attentive audience, a group of dedicated and talented first years burst onto the stage with their opening act for the M factor show. This popular ditty from the 60's set the theme for this year's show which was aptly called Blast from the Past. The students chose this theme as they wanted to evoke the optimism and promise of the 60's to offset the doom and gloom of this current recession. The show was hosted by the original and charismatic Jamie Sugrue and the gorgeous Conor Nolan. The judges for the night were Shane Kissane from Mercy Mounthawk, Mike Moriarty from the mental health charity Jigsaw and Rachel McKenzie from the VEC in Listowel.

Many acts followed including the talented Christopher Tearle who dazzled the audience with a Roy Orbison number "Pretty Woman". His pretty woman was the indomitable Shiniqua Purcell. Ellie Horgan a talented second year managed to give an original twist to the song "Let's hear it for the boys". Amy Lynch enthralled us all with her lovely version of Abba's song "I have a Dream". Kevin Mc Carthy from third year had the girls swooning with his song "Stand by me".

One of the highlights of the night was the 60's dance group who captured the imagination of the audience and transported them to the era of hot pants, minis and wacky moves. Conor Nolan, Tom O'Hara, Daniel Carmody and the talented Jim Mc Carthy were accompanied by Shiniqua Purcell, Clodagh Foley and Carolina Lesniak. Zigi Lelys, a first year Lithuanian boy sang a Chuck Berry number with great enthusiasm and passion.

The judges were blown away by Roza Karim who held the audience spellbound with her version of "One moment in time". Indeed their decision on the night was made easy by her very obvious talent. Thomas O'Carroll and Waleed Haroon entertained us all with their duet "Rocking around the Christmas tree" and evoked memories from Christmases past.

Another highlight for the night was Ebon Osonubi's group who sang "I will follow him from Sister Act". Their celestial adaptation of the song elevated our spirits.

The show also had two bands who played Beatles music and music from Meatloaf. Cassie Mc Elligott gave a very theatrical rendition of Queen's "Who wants to live forever" and managed to win the prize for the best individual act. Luke Stafford Lacey's band managed to win best band. The 60's dance group captured the prize for being the most talented dancers. The overall winner for the M Factor 2010 was Roza Karim. A special trophy was given to Amy Lynch as the judges felt that she captured the hearts of every member of the audience.

There would not be an M factor show were it not for the work and dedication of the production team, many of whom are students from the Leaving Cert Applied programme. Students such as Alison Howard and Emma Stitson worked very hard behind the scenes. Jamie Sugrue designed the set and tickets for the show. Jamie Sugrue and Peter Karim were the sound engineers for the night. The talented James Culloty and his dedicated film crew videoed the show and worked tirelessly during the auditions. Ebon Osonubi's input into the show was astounding as she voice coached many of the students every lunch time for weeks on end. Rebecca Bentley was an amazing choreographer whose dedication and hard work paid off as her group won the overall best dancers.

The students who took part in the show benefited enormously. They learned patience and perseverance as well as interpersonal skills. It also gave an opportunity for students who would normally have refrained from taking part in school productions a chance to experience the limelight. Afterwards one student told a teacher that when he saw the audience looking at him and waving their glow sticks he felt he was famous. The show was an astounding success. Once again it provided the students with a feel good factor and indelible memories from their schooldays.

## Home School Community Liaison – September to December 2010

### Parent Volunteer Committee

Under the guiding hand of Board of Management member Mrs. Roberta Kneeshaw this dedicated group of parents and past parents continue to invest of themselves to support a number of initiatives critical to the educational wellbeing of students in our school community.

The **Maths For Fun** programme sees a number of first year students work at Maths problems in a practical manner each week for one period. Particularly in the light of the Project Maths, this scheme is enthusiastically engaged with each Tuesday.

The **Paired Reading** programme is being organised to support a habit of reading, again targeting first years. This programme also involves Transition Years who read with first year students each week.

Through the HSCL committee, a **breakfast club** is coordinated for over seventy students this year, access to this programme is through parents making contact with the school.

Organised by Mrs. Elva Dempsey, and with the training support of the Kerry Diocesan Youth Service, the **Volunteer Community Mentoring** programme continues to offer advice and guidance to twenty students in Junior cycle. This support is given on a weekly basis throughout the year.

A number of volunteer parents, under the guidance of Sr. Maureen and Mrs Marie Cregan, organised a week of **coffee mornings** for parents of first years. This allowed parents an informal forum to discuss aspects of their child's education.

Furthermore an application is now with the Kerry Education Service to organise a **Parenting Course**. It is hoped to run this course in early Spring. A letter outlining the details of this course will be circulated shortly. If you wish to avail of any of these programmes, have any queries or would like to get involved with the committee, please contact Mr. Seán Coffey at the school number.

## Lions Club young Ambassador of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Awards

2010 saw the school represented once again in the Lions Club Young Ambassador of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Award which acknowledges young people's contributions to their communities.

We have had great success in this competition with our representative last year Jillian Carroll pipped at the post in the All Ireland, the winner of which subsequently went on to win the European section.

This year's Kerry competition was held in the Meadowlands Hotel and once again the school had excellent representation with 7 candidates going forward – Niamh Godley, Ciara Finnerty, PJ Galvin, Kynan Delaney, Orla Godley, Cassie Mc Elligott and Jillian Carroll. Runner up on the night was Jillian was the heat winner chosen from Presentation School going forward to the regional heat.

We wish her well. Once again, thanks to the Mercy Secondary School Mounthawk candidates who represented themselves and the school with honour.

## Rotary Club Youth Leadership Awards

This award acknowledges young people's leadership abilities and this year we had 5 students who represented the school: PJ Galvin, Ashling Shalvey, Christine Mullins, John Prendergast and Cassie Mc Elligott who were interviewed by a panel of judges from the Rotary Club.

Two were chosen to represent the school at regional level PJ Galvin and Ashling Shalvey. Further interviews were held in the Brandon Hotel and although the students did not progress any further they enjoyed the experience and believe that it will be of great benefit to them in the future.

## Christmas Carol Service 2010

This year's carol service was held in St. Brendan's Church on Dec 15<sup>th</sup>. The theme was 'The Stable – Our Hope'.

It was a magical evening beginning with readings and carols echoing themes of social justice from the Old Testament.

Transition Year students began the evening with a candlelight procession to a congregational carol.

The readings reminded us of our school theme for the year, that we are part of 'A Caring Community'.

Transition Year students performed a comic extract from Shirley Valentine called 'The Nativity' and finalists from this year's M Factor performed a rousing rendition of 'I Will Follow Him' from Sister Act.

The night was a resounding success, which was really due to the very talented singers in the school choir and the hard work of their teacher Ms. Sharon Glancy and conductor Martina Egan. The night ended with a medley of popular Christmas carols full of Christmas cheer which left all present in the festive spirit.

## Circuit Training

**Circuit training** is an excellent way to simultaneously improve mobility, cardiovascular fitness and muscle endurance. It provides a whole body workout. It's the most scientifically proven exercise system. It's time efficient and incorporates strength, flexibility and cardio in the same workout. Circuit training helps women to achieve their goals and maintain them longer than other forms of exercise or diet. **Circuit training** is ideal for athletes and general fitness. If you are interested in Circuit training, please contact Mr. Seán Casey for more information.

## Career Guidance & Counselling

The first term in the area of Career Guidance delivery has been a very busy period. Early in September the sixth year students sat the Career Interest Inventory and received an individual student profile. Together with the Aptitude Test (DAT's) both profiles, in general, indicate a high correlation between student choice of third level course and general suitability for same. Students in sixth year have had the opportunity of individual appointments with the Guidance Counsellors to discuss their career interest and ascertain appropriate engagement with their academic and extra-curricular programmes

On October 9<sup>th</sup>, fifty eight sixth year students attended UCC open day and eighty seven students visited the third level colleges in Limerick on October 12<sup>th</sup>. They found the experience both useful and informative with regard to third level colleges and courses in Ireland. Students attended the ITT open day on Nov. 12<sup>th</sup>. Over one hundred students and parents attended the CAO information talk at the school. A Careers Exhibition was organised by the Kerry Branch of the Institute of Guidance

Counsellors on November 24<sup>th</sup> for all Leaving Cert students in the county.

Many visiting speakers from various colleges and representing different disciplines have spoken to the students since last September. Leaving Certificate Vocational Students availed of a presentation given by Irish Entrepreneurs linked to the Enterprise Module of their Programme.

Some students have submitted applications to UCAS – Universities in Great Britain - The deadline for applications is January 15<sup>th</sup> 2011

All Leaving Cert students have received a CAO Application package and are encouraged to avail of the on line facility to complete Application Form. In addition, students who are eligible for DARE – Disability Access Route -and HEAR – Higher Education Access Route- indicate same as part of their Application. The process has been clearly explained to all students

LCA students attended an information morning in ITT on November 4<sup>th</sup> which focused on possible career paths open to them. Further opportunities

will be provided during the course of the year to explore FETAC pathways.

All fifth year students participated in the 'Student Learning Styles' seminar on September 21<sup>st</sup>. which is an initiative rolled out by the Institute of Technology, Tralee, under the Shannon Consortium. Students received their individual Learning Styles and feed back from the students was very positive.

Transition Year and fifth year students who did not do TY will sit the DAT's – The Differential Aptitude Test - toward the end of January. For the Guidance Counsellors to prepare a profile report on individual students it is imperative that all sit the test.

Several activities are planned for the other students in the coming weeks. On a daily basis, the guidance counsellors continue to meet students – individually and in class groups and are available to meet with parents by appointment

( Sr. Bernadette, Ms. Farrell)

## The Work of the Student Council

The Student Council of Mercy Mounthawk plays an integral role in the day to day school community. It not only acts as a link between students teachers and management it is a forum from which which students can voice their opinions and ideas. It allows students to take on an active role and to challenge matters that affect them.

There are 2 Student Councils here in Mounthawk. The Executive Council, consisting of 2 representatives from each year. This council meets more regularly. Then we have the Full Student Council, this consists of 2 representatives from each class. Both Councils are equally important. We meet at lunch times to discuss various matters. The members are elected democratically, by vote' to the council by their classmates. It not only allows us to take on an active role in the school but it also teaches us how to work in groups, the importance of communication and organisation but, most of all it shows us that "two heads are better than one!"

The Student Council is heavily involved in the organisation and running of events in the school. This year alone we have held a games tournament, had a runners day, led the Saint Vincent De Paul food drive at Christmas and also collected a generous amount of spare change from the students to send to Gorta.

These events have proved to be very successful and really showed how charitable and willing people are especially in these challenging times.

We are hoping to organise more events for the coming year, some of these ideas include a Science Quiz for students and also a book drive to raise much needed funds for local charities.

The Council get involved in important matters and, trust me, we have a loud voice. For example we have representatives on the Health Promotion Committee which meets every few weeks to talk about issues in the school ranging from bullying, mental health, physical well-being and litter. We have also been involved in helping management to update the anti-bullying policy and creating a new behaviour code, where we aim to promote positivity rather than negativity. We have adopted the motto "A caring community" as the main theme for this year.

Overall the Student Council plays a major role in the school. Without it, student's voices wouldn't be heard. I would like to thank Management, Ms. Enright, Staff and Students for all their help and support so far this school year and we look forward to an exciting year ahead!!

Darragh Creagh

## Garda Youth Awards

Niamh Godley and PJ Galvin , fifth year students and sixth year student Jillian Carroll in our school were nominated for Garda Youth Achievement Award by teacher Ms. Cora Mc Elligott. These prestigious awards acknowledge young people who, through hard work, volunteerism and commitment, make a difference to society. Nominations are from schools, community groups and other groups from all over Kerry. Following a tough adjudication process over Christmas, Niamh was selected as one of the four main award winners. This award recognises Niamh's involvement in the many communities she is part of, through First Aid, mentoring, Car Safety Awareness, fundraising, acting in the local pantomime, disability awareness training and many other activities. Our school is very proud of Niamh and look forward to her receiving her award on Friday February 4<sup>th</sup> at Ballyroe Heights Hotel.

## The Chess Club

Chess Club is co-ordinated by the Parents' Council and it is run every Wednesday at lunch time by Ms. Linda Burke and Ms. Emma Wall.

There are approximately twenty students attending. New members are always welcome. There is a great camaraderie amongst the students.

The older members who have been in the club teach the younger members new skills and this forms long lasting friendships. In the club there is also the opportunity to play draughts. This is very popular amongst the students and less competitive than a game of chess.

At Christmas and summer there are tournaments where the club members get the opportunity to play against students of the same level in the club. There are medals and trophies for the winners of each group. These are sponsored by the Parents' Council.

Chess Club is a club that requires a lot of skill, which can be developed but it is also a lot of fun. The club members become good friends and usually continue to be friends throughout their time in Mercy Mounthawk.

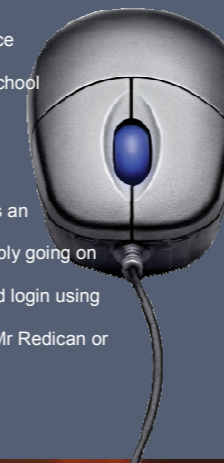
## Learning Schools Project

Mercy Mounthawk are currently involved in a learning schools project to incorporate ICT into the school curriculum. Led By Ronan Redican & John Dowling, teachers are up skilling their knowledge and expertise of ICT.

## Mercy Mounthawk's School Website – New Ventures

### An exciting, new Virtual Learning Environment in Mercy Mounthawk!

Mercy Mounthawk is delighted to announce a new way for students to learn in our school. Set up by Mr Redican, Moodle is a new way for students to access school work via the school website. Each student has an opportunity to log onto to moodle by simply going on the school website, selecting moodle and login using your username and password. Contact Mr Redican or Mr Dowling about this service.



### Mercy Mounthawk's new Alumni Website for past pupils.

Now that we are in our 10<sup>th</sup> Year in Mounthawk, Mercy Mounthawk will be launching a new Alumni Website for our past pupils. This is an exciting new venture and we hope it will be a great way for old friends to be re-united and share fond memories of our school. This website will be open to past pupils from Baloonagh and Moyderwell, as well as students from Mercy Mounthawk.