

National Educational Achievement Award Recipient numbers double in 2009

Minister for Children & Youth Affairs, Barry Andrews TD with some of the recipients of the Exchange House National Educational Achievement Awards. [from left to right] ???, Hughie Maughan, John Ward, Michael McDonnell, Tomas Stokes, Jim Jim Maughan, Melissa Maughan, Minister Andrews, Stephen O'Reilly, Eileen McDonagh, Roseanne McDonagh, Michael McDonagh, Rosemary O'Driscoll, Tina Delaney, Helen Joyce and Sabrina Maughan

The Exchange House National Educational Achievement Award ceremony was held on Friday the 6th of November in the Dublin City Council Offices at Wood Quay. The Awards were presented to members of the Traveller community who had recently completed Junior and Leaving Certificates and GCSE and A-Level examinations. The awards were open to nominations from all over the island of Ireland. There were 101 recipients of the award in 2009 and many of them were present to collect their certificates and medals in person. Plus there were great prizes, including a laptop computer. The medals and certificates were presented by the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Mr Barry Andrews, TD. Prizes were awarded by Kieran Cunningham from Dublin City Council and Brother Michael Reynolds from the Christian Brothers. Dublin City

Council co-sponsored the awards and are fully supportive of the work Exchange House has done in developing these Educational Achievement Awards. "Today's awards are a wonderful opportunity to highlight the benefits of formal education and to celebrate the significance of what you have all achieved both individually and collectively for the Traveller community. Your studies will greatly enhance and positively impact on your future endeavours and open new horizons and possibilities for each and every one of the recipients here today. I congratulate you for your diligence, commitment and dedication to your studies" said Minister Barry Andrews, TD.

Heydi Foster, Director of Exchange House Travellers Service added, "The Award was created with the intention of highlighting the success of Travellers and to create a



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[Photo on front page]
 Heydi Foster, Exchange House Director with the Minister for Children & Youth Affairs, Barry Andrews, TD
 [Photos on this page]
 The Exchange House National Educational Achievement Award Medal; Minister Andrews presenting Helen Joyce with her certificate; Jason Maughan, CE Staff member and a Educational Achievement Award recipient in 2008

Education Service

positive impact in the wider community. “ One purpose of the Award is to highlight positive role-models within the Traveller community “The award has been established to acknowledge the significant achievements of the many Travellers who are now fully accessing and participating in education. Education is the key to our future and each and every one of you present here tonight has a key in your hands. Continue to use it wisely because



it will open many doors. Stereotypes don’t need to be broken – we’ve already broken them”, said Cathleen McDonagh, Exchange House Team Leader, Education Service.

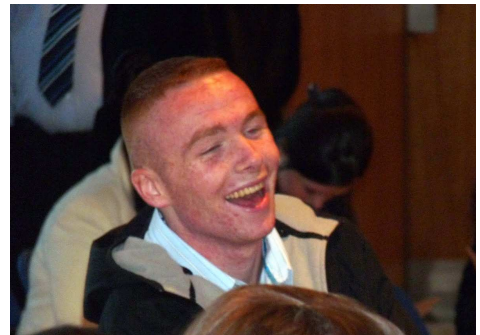
Another purpose of the Award is to show nominees how formal education is highly valued by Exchange House. “At Exchange House we believe strongly that access to education and participation by Travellers is the single greatest measure that can break the cycle of disadvantage and social exclusion experienced by Travellers. Today’s award recipients are role models for the wider community. As well as giving great pride to their families and communities, their example shows what can be achieved on a wider scale with sufficient support and encouragement.” said Carmel Terry, Board Member of Exchange House National Travellers Service.

Exchange House National Travellers Service has plans to honour members of



the Traveller community from all over the country who achieve third level qualifications at future events, building on the success of the awards ceremonies to date.

The recipients of this years awards and their proud families took part in the event



which would not have been possible without the generosity of the sponsors; Dublin City Council, FAS, City of Dublin VEC, Hugh McDermott, Dave O’Donovan from RAPID; The Katherine Howard Foundation, Health Services Executive, City of Dublin Youth Service Board, Christian Brothers and Lena O’Donovan Florist.





December 2009

Local Training Initiative



Caoimhe Kerins,
LTI Co-ordinator

The Local Training Initiative (LTI) started back again in September 2009 with sixteen learners. The original group, made up of men and women, are all working hard towards their goals.

The group are doing many different courses, most of which are certified. There is a lot of variety in the courses offered, from literacy, maths and computers to art, craft and interior design. The group completed their FETAC Level 1 computers course at the end of October and are now working towards completing the Level 2 certificates.

The LTI programme runs according to the needs of each person, providing both one to one and group learning settings. Each person is working towards getting a major FETAC award, at levels 1, 2, 3 or 4 depending on their previous education levels. Ten members of the group undertook the FETAC Level 5 certificate in Occupational First Aid in September and each achieved certification.

Some of the LTI group are working towards completing a craft certificate on Friday mornings. They chose to each do a sewing project for this, and many are now making beautiful cushions, curtains and other soft furnishings for their homes. They are also making fabulous Christmas stockings for their children and nieces and nephews.

The learners hand - pick the materials to make their designs, and each make their own individual pieces according to their own style and taste. The course follows the entire process from research and design through all of the stages to the finished items. The craft class, while accredited, gives the learners space to relax and be creative at the end of a week packed with academic work.

The Local Training Initiative will run until the end of June 2010. All of the places are filled until we start again in September 2010.

A few words from our Director

Welcome to our Christmas edition. This edition reflects the very lively and exciting year we have just had.

Exchange House was thrilled to have the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs Mr Barry Andrews TD officiate at our 2nd National Educational Achievement Awards ceremony. It sent an important signal to the Traveller community that, as a member of Government, he took time out to celebrate the educational achievements of young Travellers. It was an honour to have him with us. We know that, like us, everyday Minister Andrews deals with crises and problems that demand an urgent response. In contrast our National Education Awards evening was a very happy occasion, one where we celebrated achievement and great hope for the future.

Hard to believe it but this is our second year doing the award which, by the way, is co-sponsored with Dublin City Council who have graciously provided the space to make the National Education Achievement Award possible. Exchange House is proud to be leading the way in recognising and acknowledging the Educational Achievements of Travellers in Ireland. This year 101 students were awarded Medals and Certificates of achievement plus great prizes, including a laptop computer. We strongly believe that false and negative perceptions can be changed through positive role models and wider acceptance of the importance of every individual being supported to realise their full potential. We were delighted to learn that other Traveller organisations have followed our lead and are also promoting other achievement awards to acknowledge the many contributions of Travellers.

I am extremely proud to announce that recently Exchange House has expanded to provide a national service through training, provision of expertise and partnerships with other organisations providing services to Travellers. Exchange House has 30 years experience in providing face to face front line services to some of the most marginalised members of the Traveller community. Modest as we are (!), we believe we have much to offer and are

happy to assist any organisation which is committed to improving the lives of Travellers. Please feel free to contact Exchange House if you believe we may be able to help you better serve Travellers or if you require a service. Our new name is now Exchange House National Travellers Service.

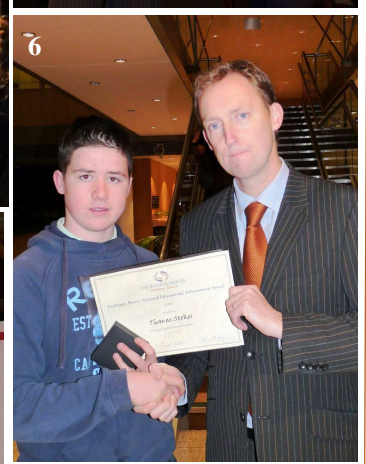
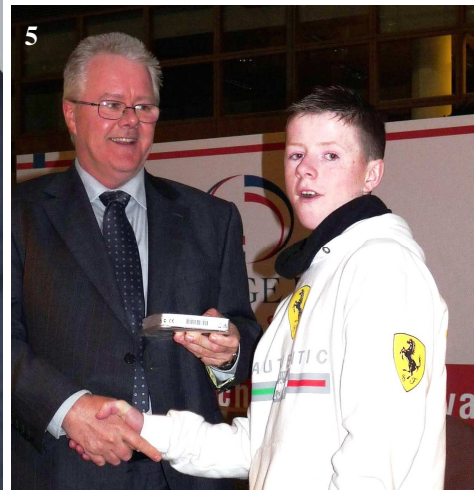
As usual this Christmas edition should give you a glimpse of the great face to face work going on in Exchange House. The Family Support Service continues to be engaged in the "Out of Homelessness" Life Skills Group; we also hope to give you an insight into our prison work through our Domestic Violence Project and our Parent Plus Programme. Youth Services continues to provide outstanding work with the Men's "History Project" and through our Stay in School Initiative and our Educational Away Programmes targeting young Travellers to stay in school. Lastly, this edition is dedicated to the Education Department and our National Traveller Educational Achievement Awards. Best wishes and every success for 2010!!!

Heydi Foster
Director



Heydi Foster
Director

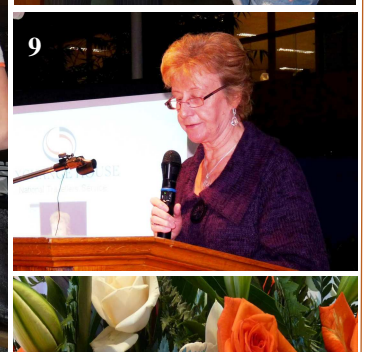
News Travels



Images from the Educational Achievement Awards



[1] Minister for Children & Youth Affairs, Barry Andrews, TD. [2] Sabrina Maughan, Ballymun, recipient of the Exchange House National Educational Achievement Award. [3] Minister Andrews presents Roseanne McDonagh, Finglas, with her certificate. [4] Brother Denis Gleeson, Christian Brother, presents Stephen O'Reilly, Clondalkin, with the top raffle prize of a laptop (laptop sponsored by the City of Dublin VEC). [5] Kieran Cunningham, Senior Executive Officer, Travelling People Section, Dublin City Council, presents Michael McDonagh, Ballymun, with an iPod in the raffle. [6] Minister Andrews presents Thomas Stokes, Ballymun, with his certificate. [7] Minister Andrews is presented with a crystal vase by Tony Collins of Exchange House. [8] Minister Andrews presents Philomena Quilligan, Tralee, with her certificate. [9] Carmel Terry, Board Member of Exchange House.





December 2009

Family Support Service

Life Skills Group

In May 2009 the Family Support Department introduced a Lifeskills group for Travellers who have become homeless due to addiction related issues and are in the South Inner City area. This group is part of our "Out of Homelessness" initiative where participants are supported in a holistic way to improve their life skills in order to access and sustain accommodation for the future.

This group is run every Tuesday afternoon from 2.30 – 4.30 pm at Exchange House and is facilitated by a Social Worker and an Addiction Worker.

Every one wants to live life to its full potential but sometimes people do not know where to begin. One thing, however, is certain, if we want to accomplish anything in life and realise our full potential, we must have some skills; in this case life skills. The group

was formed to address and to enhance participants' personal development and equip them with life skills. The life skills refer to a skill set that accommodates more specific needs of modern industrialised life. Most of them are estranged from their families and have given up on having a place they can proudly call home. With the help of the social worker the

participants can be helped to access accommodation and sustain it. Through this group some participants are helped to re-establish relationships and links with their families.

Food preparation and cookery is very



Caroline O'Reilly
Addiction Worker

popular with participants. Some of the participants have been caught in the trap of addiction and homelessness for a long time that they do not know how to prepare meals. These are some of the things that seem small and may be taken for granted but for someone who has never had the opportunity to do it or has not done it in a long time, it is a major achievement to learn. During these sessions participants voiced their awareness and appreciation of the skills gained during the cookery

really pleased with what I am learning here in this group'. The group sessions serve to motivate participants and increase their self esteem and the 'I can do attitude'. These sessions also offer an opportunity to be away from the street. This is like offering 'respite' where they have the space to address these two main issues as well as their personal development. The group members are also involved in outdoor activities. This element of the group is crucial because participants also learn to work within a team and this enhances their interpersonal as well as decision making skills.

Exchange House offers a Holistic approach where participants can be referred to the Education Department for LTI or CE Scheme and in most cases they get assigned to a Social Worker, a Family Support Worker, an Addiction Worker or all three.



Some participants of the Life Skills Group onboard the Poolbeg Boat Trip [from left to right] Helen Green, Christina McDonagh, Winnie Lynch, Patrick O'Rourke, Michael Maughan

Participants have also shown great interest in Arts and Crafts. For the run up to Christmas the group will be run twice weekly, Tuesday and Thursday afternoons 2.30 – 4.30 pm. The group will be making Christmas decorations such as Christmas stockings, wreaths, Christmas logs and other decorations.

In order to participate group members must be service users of Exchange House.

sessions. One participant stated that 'I want to learn more about cooking and baking and be the best I can be in it. Another participant said 'I did not know there was so much for me to discover and learn and that I could actually do it. I am

If you know anybody who might be interested and fits the criteria they may gain access to the group by meeting with members from the Family Support Department. Please call us to make an appointment or for more information.

News Travels

My Experience as a Student Social Worker



Tara Murphy
Student Social Worker

I started my third year social work placement on the 14th of September 2009 in the Family Support Department at Exchange House. When I walked into the building on my first day I thought “oh my God I’m back at school”. The layout and design of the building reminded me so much of my old secondary school. My first day was

very busy being introduced to everyone in the building. I met so many different people that I could barely remember anyone’s name. Everyone at Exchange House made me feel very welcome and I knew then that it was going to be ok and that I would enjoy this placement. My first experience of this building was that it’s very busy; it is always full of activity. I knew with this placement I

would always be kept on my toes with lots to learn. My first week was an induction week; I shadowed members of the family support team and got real hands on experience of what Exchange House does.

Social work is one of the most exciting professions as it is so diverse therefore it is essential that student social workers are equipped with skills and knowledge needed for them to become better workers and carry out the job effectively. The fieldwork placement is recognised as one of the major components of social work education. Being placed at Exchange House has been valuable in that I have gained hands on professional work experience and also

learning about a community I was previously not exposed to.

During my placement I have been exposed to various areas of social work. I have had the opportunity to be involved in group work in diverse areas. I was engaged in the *Parents Plus Programme* which was run every week in the Dochas Centre. Every Tuesday I took part in the Out of Homelessness Life Skills group which takes place in Exchange House. I was also involved with the Domestic Violence support group (pilot project) ran in Rathmines Women’s Refuge every Tuesday morning.

During my placement I was supervised by a Practice Teacher, Penelope More, who guided and helped me integrate theory into practice. This placement brought me a unique learning experience whereby I can now confidently say I am able to juggle various roles with ease. The opportunity to do Duty (Exchange House) and the Dochas Clinic (Renew Project), to doing outreach in the wider community to running groups to giving presentations has afforded me a rich placement experience.

Every day at Exchange House during my placement period was a different, exciting and a completely new experience altogether. The Family Support Team provided me with resources to help me face this placement throughout my time in the organisation. I am leaving Exchange House as a confident and better informed student social worker than when I first came in on the 14th of September. I feel that this experience has opened my eyes much wider than they were before. At this stage I am confident to say that the experience I have gained have equipped me with the necessary skills to enable me to join the Social Work profession in the very near future.



Xmas Stocking made by one of the participants of the Life Skills Programme

Letter to My Mother

Dear Mary,

The doctor has told me I have a chemical imbalance in my brain. I don’t know what that means but I am writing to you for help, as I always do.

It is a while since I gave up drinking. My hands are as clean as they have ever been, but there’s nothing for them to do. Except from rolling tobacco and shaking hands of professionals who will end up telling me what I am supposed to do.

For the first time in thirty years I have asked my doctor what is wrong with me. I don’t think he knows. He has asked me if I talk to you and I have said yes. I have told him how I close my eyes and see you when I am in despair. So beautiful and bright. So gentle and caring. I love you so. I need you and I need John too. He is not with me now, but I keep him in my heart. Together with you and the stars. John is in care with his mum and I miss him every hour of every day. I miss you John. Life has taken you away from me. Please Mary, will you look after him? He is not far and yet he is gone. I don’t know how I’ve lost him. I don’t know if he will ever come back. I don’t know...

Please Mary, will you tell God who I am. I don’t know what to tell him. I don’t know if he will understand. He is the father. You are my mum. Growing up was hard. In fact I don’t think I ever did. I never grew up. I’m still a boy. A child longing for a father and grieving for his son. A son with whom to replay the old game of growing up and get the rules right.

Sorry John. I needed a father as much as you do. I wanted to be held as much as you do. I hurt you so.

I needed you to be on my side and I couldn’t see no wrong. It was a symbiotic relationship. I couldn’t make any distinction and so I couldn’t guide you. I lost you. Just as I was never found. Except for you Mary. You saw me and cared for me. Will you look after John now? He needs you more than I do.

Perhaps he will also be a father one day. And I hope by then I will be a man.

Happy Christmas John. May Virgin Mary give you the blessing that I did not? And for you Mary, all my faith on the day your son was born.

Amen, Martin





December 2009

Amy Connolly - Transition Year Student on Work Experience



that she had a glimpse of what Youth Work involved and she loved it. On one occasion, Amy, together with the Family Support Worker visited an elderly Traveller woman in a nursing home and stories were swapped – they were both fascinated by each other.

Amy spent some time with the Life Skills “Out of Homelessness Group” where she was involved in baking and making Christmas cards. She helped with filing and organising the office. Amy had the privilege of attending the Family Support Team Meeting. It was a pleasure having Amy for the week as she brought a breath of fresh air in the office, was interested, eager to learn and very helpful. Who knows maybe in a few years she might be coming to Exchange House to join the staff as a social worker, a youth worker, a family support worker or...?

The Family Support Team had the pleasure of offering Amy Connolly her work experience. Amy is a Transition Year Student of St Vincent’s Secondary

School in Dundalk. She spent a week at Exchange House shadowing different workers. She spent one afternoon with the Youth Workers in Ballymun and she stated

We wish Amy all the best in her future.

New Family Support Service Team Leader

After two very exciting years of working as the Family Support Service Team Leader Joanne Ryan has decided to move on to pastures new. Joanne did a fabulous job and is going to be greatly missed. We are pleased for her that she has been successful in achieving her new position - the HSE in Waterford are very fortunate to have her.

We are delighted to let you all know that,

after an extremely competitive process, Penelope More has been successfully selected as the new Family Support Service Team Leader.

The Board of Directors and Exchange House management feel very comfortable that Penny will bring a lot of dynamism, creativity and experience to the Family Support Service and Exchange House in general. Not only does Penny have her

recent experience working in Exchange House as a social worker, but she comes with a wealth of other experience in social work, family support, domestic violence, HIV and AIDS, substance misuse and team management.

She has graciously accepted the position and we would like to officially congratulate and welcome Penny on her new role.



Some members of the Family Support Team: [from left to right] Ronnie O'Donnell, Addiction Worker; Laura Rigney, Family Support Worker; Tara Murphy, Student Social Worker; Penelope More, Family Support Team Leader; Caroline O'Reilly, Addiction Worker; Jules McDonagh, Family Support Worker. (Missing for the picture are Rebecca Dunne, Family Support Worker; Patricia Sagasta, Family Support Worker; & Aoife O'Brien, Social Worker.)

News Travels

Have you ever asked “What else does Exchange House do?”

News Travels can only give a glimpse into what Exchange House does. So here is a comprehensive list of all the various services we offer to the Traveller community and other service providers nationwide.

The list is broken down by our three departments and the training courses we offer.

Education Service

- ✓ FÁS Local Training Initiative
- ✓ FÁS Community Employment
- ✓ National Education Achievement Award
- ✓ Adult Basic Education
 - FETAC Levels 1 –5
- ✓ Develop Learner-Centred Education Modules
- ✓ Third Level Support
- ✓ Career and Further Education Planning
- ✓ EU Projects
 - New Pathways to Learning for Adults
 - Senior Citizen Learning

Family Support Services

- ✓ Social Work
 - Crisis Intervention
 - Prisoner Support
 - Advocacy & Facilitation of

Access to Other Services Nationally

- ✓ Family Support
- ✓ Housing & Accommodation Advice
- ✓ Addiction service:
 - Individual Counselling
 - Crisis Intervention
 - Referral to Appropriate Services
 - Prison Work
 - Harm Reduction
- ✓ Out of Homelessness Project
- ✓ Domestic Violence Support
- ✓ Research & Development

Youth Service

- ✓ Stay-In-School Programme
 - Work with Individual Young People
 - Work with Families & Teachers
- ✓ After-School Projects
 - Providing quiet space for Homework
 - Assistance in completing Homework
 - Engaging Parents in children’s Education
 - Library
 - Computers
- ✓ Education Away Programme
- ✓ On-Site Youth Services
 - Anti-Bullying Training
 - Personal Effectiveness Training

- Leadership Training
- Dance, Music & Drama
- Computers
- Arts & Craft
- Cookery
- ✓ Outreach Services
 - Youth Arts
 - Outdoor Pursuits
 - Sports
 - Addiction Awareness
 - Social & Political Education
- ✓ Comhairle na nÓg
- ✓ Dáil na nÓg
- ✓ Detached Youth Work
- ✓ Summer Projects

Training Courses

- ✓ Introduction to the Traveller Community
- ✓ Anti-Discrimination Workshops
- ✓ Best Practice in Traveller Youth Work
- ✓ Domestic Violence Training
- ✓ Parenting Programmes
- ✓ Addiction Training
- ✓ Best Practice in Service Provision to Travellers

National Traveller MABS hails a new type of credit card for everyone...

Imagine a credit card that you can use just like a normal credit card. But you won’t get any bills, you won’t pay any interest charges and you won’t be subject to a credit check. A card that will not allow you to incur any debt.

This credit card is now available in Ireland. Irish company Smart Transfer have launched the pay as you go credit card. It is ideal for those who need to use a credit card occasionally and particularly those who need to strictly budget their spending. Credit card debt in this country has gone through the roof and many credit cards have been ‘maxed out’ to their limit and cannot be used. This

is where Smart Transfer’s pay as you go credit card can help to bring spending under control.

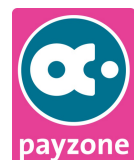
Nuala NiGhabhann from National Traveller MABS says the prepaid Mastercard is ideal for those who don’t want the hassles of a bank credit card, yet still need to shop online, travel or take money abroad. Ryanair now accept the card with no credit card booking fees.

But perhaps most importantly of all, it serves as a useful budgeting tool during these more frugal times.

“The credit card is a normal card except that you cannot incur any debt, interest charges or late payment fees when you use

it,” says Nuala.

A full list of the stores selling the pre-paid MasterCard, as well as further information on the product is available at www.payzomoney.ie or contact National Traveller MABS on 01 864 8510 and www.natratravellermabs.org





December 2009

Youth Service

Stay-In-School Programme

Our stay in school Programme was piloted in 2006 in St Margaret's Park and Carton Estate Ballymun. The aim of the stay in school Programme is to:

- Encourage and maintain high attendance in school
- The transition from primary to secondary level
- Completion of Junior and Leaving Certificate.

Our young people are rewarded and praised according to attendance and are recognised and awarded for Educational Achievements through our yearly National Education Achievements Awards.

Our programme is run by the youth workers in conjunction with the schools, parents and our after schools programme. It is monitored quite closely and regular meetings and informal discussions are held between the youth workers and appropriate people in the schools. Since its huge success in 2006 our programme has spread to Labre Park and Kylemore Grove Ballyfermot and St Oliver's Park and Bridgeview in Clondalkin. We hope to continue this programme, encourage and support the young people we work with and deliver results year after year.

To Whom It May Concern,

The Exchange House Travellers Youth Service Schools Initiative has been very successful in promoting good attendance in St. Joseph's S.N.S. The children are rewarded for good attendance by being brought on an outing every two months. We have noticed a marked improvement in the attendance of pupils since the initiative began.

Yours sincerely,

Maura Doyle Principal S.N.S

Letter from an impressed Principal

Exchange House Men's Group History Project

Exchange House men's group is researching the roles that Traveller men played in the First World War.

We are looking for names, photos, and stories or any other information that you might have. We are mainly focusing on Traveller men who died in the war, where they might be buried and what campaigns they took part in.

Any information would be very welcome

Please contact:

William McDonagh

Or

James Maughan

at Exchange House's offices



John McDonagh [more info]

Educational Away Programme



The Exchange House Youth Service Team [from left to right] Jimmy Maughan, Youth Worker; Patrick Stokes, Youth Worker; Emma Parsons, Youth Worker; Sarah Byrne, Youth Worker; William McDonagh, Youth Service Team Leader; John Paul Collins, Youth Worker

In September the Youth Service chose ten young people from three different sites around Dublin to join us on a trip to London, England. These ten young people have been selected for this trip because of both their ongoing commitment to their own education in the past year and their enthusiastic involvement in our youth programmes. The aim of this trip is to visit historical sites and landmarks and to explore other peoples' culture.

In preparation for this trip the group is currently participating in a research project about various sites in London,

their background and their history.

This trip will include visits to Buckingham Palace, Westminster Abbey and other important landmarks. We also hope to visit the *Irish Traveller Movement in Britain*, based in London, and meet other young Travellers to compare and contrast issues they each face.

On the 16th of February 2010 the Youth team and these ten young people will board a plane for London, England. Be sure to check out our next edition of *News Travels* to find out the young peoples' educational experiences of London.



News Travels

KIDS KORNER



Why wasn't the turkey hungry at Christmas time?
He was stuffed!

What do elves learn in school?
The Elf-abet!

What's white and goes up?
A confused snowflake!

What do snowmen wear on their heads?
Ice caps!

Why did they let the turkey join the band?
Because he had the drum sticks!

How do snowmen greet each other?
"Ice to meet you"!

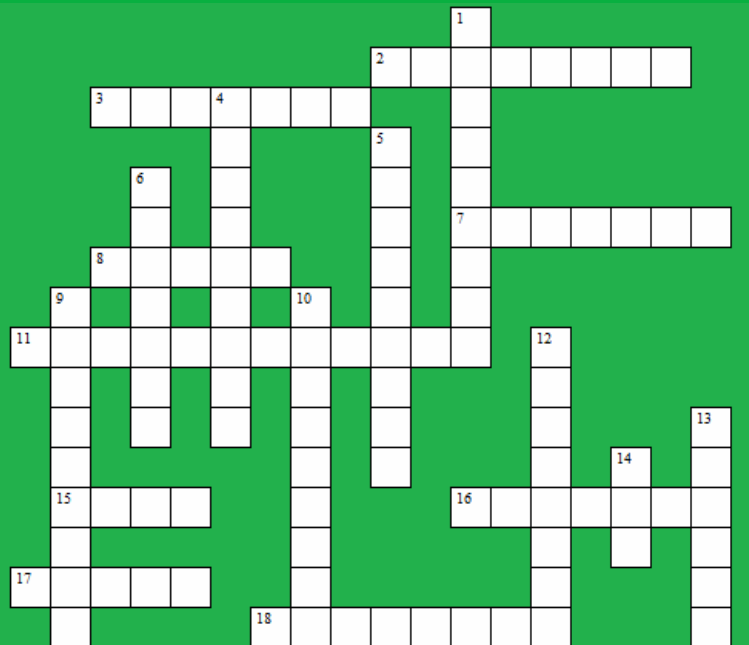
Christmas Crossword

ACROSS

- 2 Giant socks that might get filled with presents
- 3 Santa gets in your house through this
- 7 The only reindeer whose name begins with the letter P
- 8 Deck the halls with boughs of this
- 11 The night before Christmas
- 15 What's in Santa's bag?
- 16 Reindeer with the red nose
- 17 Person who brings gifts to good children
- 18 Christmas falls in this month

DOWN

- 1 Where Santa lives
- 4 If you stand under this, you might get kissed.
- 5 Things you hang on a Christmas tree
- 6 A snack you leave out for Santa
- 9 December 25th
- 10 Yummy red and white candy
- 12 Eight of these pull Santa's sleigh
- 13 Santa says this
- 14 A helper who makes toys





December 2009



Stephen O'Reilly - Junior Cert

Stephen attended Deansrath Community College in Clondalkin and his friends at Clondalkin Traveller Development Group say "He did 7 subjects and got honours in all 7 subjects. He got an 'A' in Art and studied very hard during the two years. Stephen did exceptionally well in his exams and completed his Junior Certificate."

[Right] Stephen receives his Exchange House National Educational Achievement Award certificate from the Minister for Children & Youth Affairs, Barry Andrews, TD

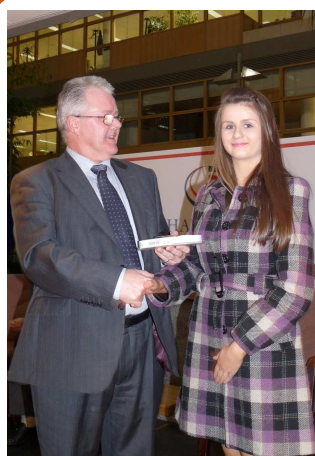
Anthony Ward - Leaving Cert

Anthony attended St. Enda's College in Galway for 5 years. He was an exemplary student. Throughout the 5 years he managed to have regular attendance and punctuality. He always applied himself diligently to his studies and enjoyed excellent relationships with his peers and his teachers. He intends progressing to Galway Mayo Institute of Technology to further his studies.

Mary Anna Doran - Leaving Cert

Mary was nominated by St. Aidan's Community College in Tallaght, who are very proud of the fact that in 25 years Mary is only the 2nd Traveller to have completed her Leaving Certificate.

They expect her achievement to offer a great example to other Travellers in the future



Eileen McDonagh - G.C.S.E.

Eileen attended Loreto Grammar School in Omagh, Co. Tyrone. Her Vice-Principal, Ms. Turbitt, says "Eileen achieved 9 GCSE's in June 2009, including 1 grade 'A' in Business Studies and 8 grade 'B's. Eileen is a courteous, respectful student who is hardworking and enthusiastic about her work." Eileen is now studying for her A-Levels in Music, Biology, Physics and Religious Studies.

[Right] Eileen receives an iPod as her prize in the raffle from Kieran Cunningham, Senior Executive Officer, Travelling People Section, Dublin City Council



Paddy McDonagh - Leaving Cert

Paddy was nominated both by his school, St. Flannan's College, Ennis, Co. Clare and the Traveller Enterprise & Employment Office, Ennis, Co. Clare. Paddy completed his Leaving Certificate this year and achieved 380 points. He is now in his 1st year at the Limerick Institute of Technology studying Business & Finance. He is the 1st Traveller in Co. Clare to proceed to third level education immediately after completing his Leaving Cert.

[Right] Paddy receives his certificate from Minister Barry Andrews

Mary Keenan - Junior Cert

Mary went to school at Mater Christi in Finglas. Her mother nominated her for the Exchange House National Educational Achievement Award saying: "Mary is my young daughter and out of 7 girl my first to sit her Junior cert. I am so proud of her."



News Travels

STOP PRESS...STOP PRESS...STOP PRESS...

November FETAC Awards

Seven of the Community Employment learners successfully completed their FETAC Level 3 certificates in Food and Nutrition in November under the guidance of their tutor Patsy Kane. This component certificate can be added to other certificates to build up a major FETAC award.

Patsy has worked at Exchange House for ten years and delivers a variety of courses including Adult Basic Education, Maths and Communications at FETAC levels 1, 2 and 3. Patsy's innovative course plan allowed all learners to participate successfully in the Food and Nutrition certificate.

The learners really enjoyed the course and felt that they had learned a lot. Congratulations to Phyllis Connors, Anne Marie Connors, Elizabeth McDonagh, Maggie Collins, Lilyanne Power, Bernadette Collins and Nellie Collins.



Merry Xmas designed by **Holly Harper**, aged 11, from Bridgeview in Clondalkin

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