



Parents Association Newsletter

A Holiday Note from the acting principal Mrs. Orla Doherty

I'm back! Although I was sad to leave baby Sam, my first week back has been full of smiles as I discover everything the children, staff and parents have been up to over the last seven months. It is amazing how grown up the children have become in such a short space of time.

I have had the pleasure of seeing the great work they have been doing including story writing, spelling, maths, art, etc. It's wonderful to see some of the 3rd and 4th class increasing their fitness with a daily run. The school choir are sounding fabulous and getting ready to perform in the TLC nursing home. Leona and Grace, the president and secretary of the school council paid me a visit and let me know the great work the council have been doing and their new ideas ranging from tidy classroom competitions to suggestion boxes. Many children have been excited to tell me how great Playworks is at lunchtime. The SNAs and Learning Support teachers are finding the sensory room to be such a great asset to the school. That's just to name a few things! None of this would have been possible without the hard work that all our teachers, our SNAs, and

Karen and Mick put in everyday at school and outside of school hours. They have all put in yet another great year of hard work and commitment to the school's development.

Well done and thank you.

A special thank you to Amy Daly and Megan Whyte for their amazing work leading the school and ensuring its smooth running over the last seven months. They have both proven to be capable and inspiring in their ability to undertake their new roles. As the news spreads, I'm sure you are all saddened to hear that Amy will be leaving us this year to return to her home county of Cork. Amy has been with us since 2013 and she has been an unmeasurable asset to our school, leaving her mark in so many developments. She will be sorely missed by me, the children and the staff. **We wish her all the happiness in the world and we know there is a school in Cork that is about to get very lucky!**

Our Board of Management have just finished their first academic year with us. They have all been a great asset to the management of the school and I look forward to continuing to work with them next year. **Thank you for your time and efforts.** I know Conor, our chairperson has also committed a huge amount of

time, skill and commitment to the school outside of board meetings. Thank you!

A big thank you to all our parents who have volunteered this year, from going on trips, to covering library books, to setting up our library system, to helping with the drop off, etc. I won't name everybody for fear I'll forget someone. Thank you to you all. **A special thanks** however to those on **the Parents Association Committee**, who work selflessly each year to raise money for our children. I have heard of the marvellous events you have completed yet again this year. Your hard work in fundraising and community development is much appreciated by us all.

The children! Boys and girls, stand tall and proud. Think about all the great things you have learned to do in the last year. Think about all the nice things you have done for others in the last year. We, the teachers and school staff are very proud of the wonderful people you are growing up to be and we thank you for giving us another great year! **Have a wonderful summer of fun and creativity.**

Summer Greetings from the PAC Chairperson Eliza-Jane Branning

Well everyone its hard to believe that another school year has almost come to the end. I don't know if it's just me, and maybe due to being a parent and getting older, but the years seem to be going so quickly! It was another very successful and fun year for the PA. We had most of the usual events - cake sale, recycling event, design a card, our BIG Table Quiz and most recently our sponsored walk and family fun day. We also

introduced some new events this year - valentines raffle and our very successful Book Fair! I want to thank everyone who got involved and came to our events and big thank you to all our volunteers who have helped us out with running events throughout the year! I want to personally **thank** all the members of the **PA Committee** and **Ms Daly** and **Ms Whyte** for all the support they have given me my 1st year as Chairperson.

I want to wish everyone a safe and fun summer and looking forward to seeing you all with all our new families in September!



Treasurers Highlights by Paula Moyles

The Parents Association Committee, Parents & Students have been working hard together in raising funds.

The latest events we have held in last few months are:

- * February 22, 2018 - **RECYCLING - €350.00**
- * March 23, 2018 - **BAKE SALE - €624.15**
- * April 20, 2018 - **TABLE QUIZ - €762.68**

- * APRIL 25, 2018 - **BOOK FAIR - €2748.25** (School gets 60%, which is € 1648.95 to spend on purchasing books).

This is amazing Fund raising so far. There are two more events to raise some more funds for the school - another **RECYCLING & THE SPONSORED WALK**.

Great work to all that have helped/volunteered to get this far. Let's give these last two

events a big push before the end of the school year and see if we can raise more funds this year and break last year's record.

Hope you all have a great summer and the weather is good to us. Looking forward to sharing the Final figure for the Funds Raised at the Annual General Meeting in November.

Interview with the chairperson of Board of the Management by Māra Prah

Our readers will like to know a bit more about you. Could you briefly tell us where you have come from, your family, your educational formation and working experiences over the years?

I come from South Derry and have been living in Citywest for about 16 years. My wife, Karen, is from this area and we met at University in Derry. More specifically, Karen was the person that I sat beside on the first morning at University! We became great friends and it was not until after college that we got together as a couple.

We have 2 boys - Eunan and Ethan. Eunan will be going into first class this September and Ethan will be starting Junior Infants. I guess, like many families, we find it incredible and fascinating watching them grow and develop.

In terms of education, I guess it would be fair to say that I took the somewhat scenic route to education. I left school at 16 with 2 O'Levels (junior cert level) at Grade C in Maths and English Language. I then went to the local technical college and repeated some of the examinations that I had failed. I managed another 1 or 2 Grade C's.

Whilst I had enjoyed primary school, my transfer to the "big school" wasn't a happy experience. I didn't like it at all. I was very unsettled and just couldn't get myself applied to the work.

Through my teenage years I had a very keen interest in the society that we lived in and watched all of the current affairs programmes on TV and read the analyses in the newspapers. It was an interesting time to grow up in Northern Ireland. Between the "troubles", the politics, the hunger strikes, the Falklands war, the UK miners' strike, etc. there was a lot for a young person to think about. Not unlike the children in our school, there were lots of issues related to identity, religion, diversity, acceptance, and trying to figure out how to live in a society wildly different from that experienced by our parents.

My parents were, and still are, my heroes. How they were able to steer us through the complexities of life in Northern Ireland is something that was simply monumental. They gave me the character, personality, and skills to be still alive and "educated" about the basics of humanity.

When I was about 20 years old, I went to an open evening for the Open University. Surrounded by people of all ages and abilities, I felt that I could at least try a bit of "distance education". The OU are a fantastic university and I ended up tutoring for them on different courses - including many enjoyable Summer Schools.

I went to the University of Ulster as a mature student - aged 26 - to study psychology. I stayed there to complete my PhD and moved to Dublin after finishing.

At the moment, I am employed as a Professor of Educational Psychology at Trinity College Dublin. I get to work with many students who are teachers, principals, policy makers, etc. I convene the Inclusion in Education and Society Research Grouping and work intensely with my colleagues to make the Trinity Centre for People With Intellectual Disabilities an (inter)national centre of knowledge and excellence.

Being an academic means that life is never dull or boring. No two days are ever the same. No two students are ever the same. I have research

students who keep me busy - one who is in her 70's!

I am a Board Member of 22q11 Ireland and a Board Member of the European 22q Alliance Group - the national and European support groups for individuals and their families.

With our research in TCD, we are widening the approach and knowledge that we have regarding special educational needs to include all children and young people - those with disabilities, intellectual disabilities, complex needs, and rare diseases.

22q is an example of what we call "the most common rare disease that you've never heard about". Whilst some rare diseases are indeed rare, collectively they are very common and we need to ensure that our education system and society are fully inclusive of all of these children and young people.

I'm still learning. All of us are still growing and learning. One thing that I know for sure is that education is a wonderful thing - and that it is never too late to start a new course or plan for a new career. If you've been thinking of doing a new course or changing direction in your life - go for it. If you don't, you'll just spend all of your time thinking of excuses not to!

What were the circumstances that encouraged you to take up the role as the chairperson of the Board of Management of Citywest & Saggart Community National School?

This was a very easy decision in so many ways. I had many conversations with Seamus (school principal) and Orla (acting principal) about the school and the CNS model. I've also been very fortunate through my work at TCD to have been involved in many aspects of national and international educational policy and practice initiatives.

Being from the local community and having young children, I felt that if I could be of any use to our community, then it was something that I'd be happy to do. Everything that gets me up in the morning to the work that I do in TCD is evident in our school. Having a role on the school Board is just as much a privilege as getting to do the work that I do.

Having grown up in Northern Ireland throughout "the Troubles", I have experienced firsthand the many aspects and interpretations of different religions, cultures, and traditions - and their influence on people and communities. I was impressed by the ethos and contemporary thinking of the CNS model - that it is pointless trying to believe that religion doesn't exist across our many families - that it is much better to be accepting of each other and to learn from our children as we build the community.

We live in a beautiful country, a land steeped in a rich history of education and literature. Ireland has changed so much in recent years and our school community is a great representation of this new society - it makes me so excited to see this new Ireland in our community.

As the old saying goes, "What's rare is beautiful". Who would have thought a few years ago that this type of school would exist in Ireland? It is a beautiful development. We should cherish this - we wanted it. We can

build our aspirations for our children and the society they will develop for us. This is our chance to do something that our own parents didn't have a chance to do. Our children need us to do this right for them.

What is the role of the Board of Management concerning our school? How can the parents access information on what the Board plans? Does the school need the Board?

Hearing. Listening. Supporting. I think these are the words that come to mind as we support all of those in the school who care for our children. I think that we are very fortunate to be a new school in a growing community. We aren't hampered by any history and can plan for the school community that each and every one of us desires for our children and families.

This is what the Board can do - be a conduit by which we can all have a voice in the education and development of our children. I have no intentions of leaving the area. I'd like to grow old here - feeling safe and happy in my community, perhaps with our children being the next generation to make Citywest and Saggart even better. The Board are there for everyone in the community. We want to do that. Help us to help you.

This year has been a busy one for the new Board, with lots of new and existing policies to review and ratify, new child protection measures, GDPR, and . . . the car park!

We will be working extra hard from September to ensure that everything we do is transparent and communicated as soon as practically possible with a renewed communication policy.

The Board is an important aspect of the school community. A school is a very complex thing - with lots more happening inside than most of us realise. I think that it is dreadfully unfair how teachers and the teaching profession are treated by the media and many in society. Ireland is really fortunate to have the calibre of teachers that we do. I really don't think that people fully realise just how special our teachers are. I can say that from work that I do in other education systems and countries.

We also have many super parents and guardians who give so freely of their time to help the school. One of the greatest developments in education of the last number of years is how there is a better link between the classroom and home. This really helps increase the value that families put on education.

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Highlights of our spring/summer events

BAKE SALE by Maggie Buterfield

Parents Association hosted a phenomenal cake sale on **23 March**. It was a fantastic turn out and proved again this year to be an amazing success. **€534** was raised during the event and thank you to all who participated. **We look forward to having this on again next year!**



BOOK FAIR by Linda Morton

We had our **first bookfair** in the school Thursday 26th April - 2nd May and it was a great success. There was a great buzz and air of excitement around the school.

We had a visit from a very special guest, **Clifford the big red dog**. He came to meet the children in the school yard on the morning of the bookfair. There was so much excitement from the children, teachers and parents with lots of cheers, high fives and hugs for Clifford. Clifford also paid a visit to every classroom. We also held a colouring competition where one child from each year won a voucher to spend in the book shop. All the entries were amazing so it was a hard job for the teachers to decide the winners.

The bookfair made **€1,600.00** which was 60% of the profit made and this will be given to the school in credit to purchase books and resources for the library.

We will be having our next bookfair **21st - 23rd November** and we are looking forward to another huge success. **We also want to thank everyone involved and those who helped to sell the books. Well done!**



BIG QUIZ by Melissa Harman

We had an absolutely brilliant night at our annual school Table Quiz on 20th April. Held every year at St Mary's GAA club, the Big Quiz is a night for us parents to get together with friends, family and neighbours and have some fun. We laughed from start to finish!

One of the highlights every year is the Arts and Crafts round organised by **Ilze Vaitkus** and **Mara Prah** where our creative talents are put to the test. We had some very generous donations of Raffle prizes from businesses in our local community who are always so supportive of our school.

Thank you very much to the teachers who attended on the night who marked the answer sheets and acted as judges for the 'Citywest's Got Talent' section. After the Quiz, we danced the night away to the St Mary's GAA Club resident DJ. Most importantly of course, we raised €1,000 for our school.

Looking forward to next year already!



RECYCLING CAMPAIGN by Allison Carter

After another hugely successful event in **February** of this year and further to feedback from parents we have another recycle event taking place on **June 14th** of this year. This will be a great opportunity for all of us to clear out any clothes that are no longer needed before the summer. We are sure that this event will be just as successful as previous ones. Don't forget to spread the word when these events are on and collect recyclable clothes etc. from family and friends too!! **When we return in September** we will likely run an autumn recycle so watch our Facebook page for more information and dates. **Have a great summer!**

Business Directory

Cleaning services (houses, windows, gutters and everything around the house)

Gabor Lapos

Ph: 085 858 5704

Cocoon Childcare

Ph: 01 419 9999

www.cocoonchildcare.ie

Opening hours 7:30am—18:30pm from Mon to Fri

Counsellor/Psychotherapist

Avril Byrne

Based in Clondalkin

Ph: 087 114 2532

abyrnecounselling@gmail.com

Cute as a Button Photography, Citywest, Dublin

Ph: 087 662 3654

olivia@cuteasabuttonphotography.ie

www.cuteasabuttonphotography.ie

KB Painting & Decorating Service

Karl Breslin, ph: 086 898 9179

kbpaintingdecoratingservice@gmail.com or Facebook

 **ALLWAYS TRAVEL**
28 Georges Street Arcade, Dublin 2
01-6728805

Orla Ridgeway Childcare

Ph: 0877983067, email: ocorb@yahoo.co.uk

Garda vetted, fully insured and member of Childcare Ireland. Trustworthy, experienced, honest, caring & available to mind children in her own home in Saggart

Plastering contractors

Ben Griffin,

Ph: 087 616 5382, bgplasterers@gmail.com

Shake It Off (New Shake Plan)

Elaine Curley — Distributor for Juice Plus

Ph: 086 106 7425, more info on Facebook

Interview

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Has the Board of Management got any plans when it comes to the question of the time plan for the new school campus?

This is an ongoing concern for us all. We now have to consider how all of this looks with the recent news of a new post-primary school for the area.

Our latest update is that the site purchase for the new primary school is very near completion.

We are frustrated by the delay - as everyone is. We are in a building that is not designed to be a school, with all of the attendant issues that brings.

The Board and the staff of the school have all been working relentlessly to resolve the issues that frustrate us about being stuck where we are.

I think we have been so busy trying to resolve the car park issue and other building / campus related issues that we haven't had the time to communicate all of this to you - the families.

Each and every member of the Board are working incredibly hard to ensure that our children can get to enjoy their learning. We hope to see eve-

ryone at the start of the new academic year so that you can "pit faces to the names".

We are all approachable and happy to hear from parents about the issues that make them happy - or concerned - about our school. Please do talk to us. I always remind people that whilst I'm a psychologist, I'm not a mind reader!

Collectively, we need to work hard to ensure that the new post-primary school will be the same model that we have. Nothing is definite - many people in our community have dedicated themselves to securing this new school for us. It is our turn to help them make it a reality.

What is your passion or pastime outside of the work?

Many people ask me what my job is. I always reply that I don't have a job - I have a lifestyle! By this I mean that I am so very fortunate to be doing something every day that makes me happy and content. It is a real privilege getting to do what I do in terms of teaching and research.

When I have the time - sometimes sitting in

the car - sometimes in a coffee shop, I enjoy the time to write a few lines for a paper or book that I'm writing. If I could write 50 good words a day, I would be the happiest person alive! A central part of my work is to "get the message out" and writing is key to this. Writing is something that enables me to be happy.

Apart from that, I'm delighted that we have a growing community that I'm getting to know. The park in Carrigmore is great now and the sense of community there is fantastic. I simply love being there with Karen, the boys, and our dog. Everyone is so different and has their own stories - it's wonderful that we have so many families of different traditions, cultures, and faiths - all happy playing and sharing with each other to build a good strong community in Citywest and Saggart.

On a small note to finish, thank you for being patient with us as we get to understand our role as a new Board. This is your school.

It is a real privilege to be able to serve on the Board, but I really must point out how much support we get from Mick, Karen, the SNA's, the teachers, the principal, the Parents' Association, the volunteers, the parents - and, most importantly, the children.

Sport News

Exciting Times in CSCNS by Ashling Bates

It is a very exciting time in Citywest & Saggart C.N.S. (CSCNS). Since our school opened in 2012 we have been eagerly anticipating the establishment of school sports teams. As our school is a growing school this year is the first year that our children are old enough to compete. To mark this milestone, the school have received their first ever set of jerseys. The colour of our jerseys reflect the colour of the uniform. Hopefully this will mark the start of many of our students' sporting career! **GO CSCNS!**



First Communion by Gillian Doyle

On Saturday **26th May** 36 children from 2nd class made their First Holy Communion in St Mary's church. Fr Gilligan celebrated the service.

The service was lovely with all the children having a special role to do saying prayers, bringing up gifts and singing songs. The children all returned to the school then where there was a party for all the children. A big thank you to the parents of 1st class for organizing the party and having room 1 looking well.

Also **a huge thank you to Ms Whyte** who prepared the children so well for their first confession and first holy communion.



Update on Campaign for Citywest & Saggart Post Primary School

I'm sure you have all heard the good news by now that the secondary school has been awarded for our area. Perspective opening date Sept 2020.

Now that we have successfully lobbied the Department of Education for the school itself it is now time to put the campaign in place to win the patronage of the school.

There will be other perspective bodies also in the running for the patronage of the school so it is vitally important that we start to build the support from our communities now so that when the official campaign is launched which is expected to be in November that our ETB patronage is well known and the primary choice for our communities.

Over the next few months we will need

some extra assistance with the campaign and while we do have a small list of additional volunteers that are willing help out (thank you to those already volunteered - we will be in touch shortly) we would appreciate any time that you might spare over the coming months to help with strengthening our visibility to the wider community.

Did you know that a lot of our community do not know that our school exists? Anyone who is not looking to put a child into school believes that there are 2 schools in Saggart and Citywest - St Marys & Educate Together. We need to work very hard over the next few months to change this perspective.

Even if you can't give time to our campaign

please talk about our school to others in your community. Talk to your friends & neighbours about the wonderful things that an ETB school brings to an area for example our inclusive education strategy - multi denominational rather than one denomination as with the catholic schools or non-denominational as with the educate together. Surely embracing all our faiths is something to be shared and shouted about and that is just one of the wonderful things that an ETB community college will bring to the area.

Adele Curran
on behalf of Parents Action Campaign4CSCC



Campaign4CSCC