



# Parents Association NEWSLETTER

April 2017 (8)

Citywest & Saggart Community National School

## A WELCOME NOTE by PA Committee Chairperson Allison Carter

Hi all,  
Well, we are now well into Spring, although with this crazy weather, who knew?!?! It's been a great start to 2017 for the Parents Association. Yet again our Valentines Disco was a roaring success and we are really looking forward to our Annual Big Quiz coming soon... read on for more details. The most exciting thing however has

been the fact that we have been able to put the wheels in motion to purchase the iPads which we raised funds for last year. It is amazing to be able to announce that we will be purchasing **FOURTEEN iPads** for our children. We are hugely proud of this and want to thank you all for your continued support. We hope that we will take delivery soon and our children

will have them in their classrooms without delay. We will keep you posted on progress, although I'm sure you will hear from your children when they get to use them in class!!!!

The Easter/Spring Break is upon us already so we hope you all enjoy the break and we look forward to lots of exciting events between now and the summer holidays. All the best!

## PARENTS ASSOCIATION SURVEY REVIEW by Bronagh Cheetham

**A BIG THANK YOU** to everyone who completed our recent PA Survey. In total we had **123 responses**. This data will be used going forward in helping us plan and organise our events.

Full details of results and suggestions can be found on the school website at [www.cscns.ie](http://www.cscns.ie).

At a glance, some interesting results are as follows:

- \* Approximately half of respondents did not realise that as a parent of a child attending our school, that you are automatically a member of the PA.
- \* The majority of respondents feel that our events are advertised adequately and confirmed that email is the most popular form of communication.
- \* Not surprising work commitments and childminding issues are main reasons for non attendance at events. We try to ensure that events happen at all times of the day i.e. mornings, evenings, weekdays and weekends, to try to accommodate most people.
- \* Our Survey confirmed that the preferred time for our PA AGM is an evening meeting so that will continue. We really would love to see more atten-

dance at our AGM where you can have your say. It is also attending by our school principal who always provides a very informative overview of school matters.

- \* Our Family Fun day held in Mid June each year tops the charts as most popular event - don't miss it this year!

- \* Lots of great suggestions came through for future events which we will carefully consider and discuss with our Principal. Please note though, we are limited with what we can do as a PA.

### Parents Association - Who are we?

We encourage everyone to familiarise themselves with the PA Constitution which provides a great overview of the role of the PA. This can be found on the school website at the following location

<http://www.cscns.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Parents-Association-Constitution-26th-November-2015.pdf>

Put simply however, we are parents just like you who either work full time at home or outside the home, all with busy full lives but with one thing in common - parents of children attending our school.

As we are a volunteering committee, we are limited in resources as to what we can do when it comes to running events. We'd love to organise trips to the mountains and helping out at rescue centres but this all takes time and effort and we would need a lot more volunteers to step forward to facilitate such events. There is also the issue of insurance and costs involved that need to be considered. But we do aim to provide a sufficient and range of events across the school year.

### Difference in Parent Association and School organised events

There can be some confusion around what PA events are and what school events are.

**PA events** are advertised as such with a letter or note from the PA included in a mail that's sent from the schools email address. (We are looking to have our own PA email address set up in the coming future).

Once agreed as a suitable event by the school principal, all events are completely looked after by the volunteering PA Committee and a team of helpers.

**Typically fundraisers are PA events** such as St Patrick's days shamrocks, school disco, family day, recycling collections, bingo night, table quiz and cake sales.



- © The Big Quiz Night—May 5
- © Recycling Collection—May 26
- © Sponsored Walk—June
- © Family Fun Day—June 25

Our Set-down service is also a PA organised activity and can always use more helpers. Teachers do not get involved in organising PA events, although they often kindly attend or take part!

**School events** are communicated to you by our school Principal via email and/or notes home in schoolbags and are looked after solely by the teachers e.g., world book day & dress up day, pancake Tuesday, sports day, Seachtain na Gaeilge, afterschool clubs and any other day to day school activity that the school wish to provide. The PA does not get involved in school events unless of specifically asked to by our Principal.

We are always willing to listen to new suggestions and welcome anyone who wishes to join the PA or help out at events to contact us at the following: [cscnspa@gmail.com](mailto:cscnspa@gmail.com) or send us a message through our Facebook page [Citywest & Saggart CNS Parents Association](https://www.facebook.com/Citywest-Saggart-CNS-Parents-Association).

Thank you!



We had to hit the ground running when our principal Mr Conboy temporarily left us to take up another role. So far so good. We are gaining new heights with our acting principal Mrs Orla Doherty.

### Your formative years before taking up a career in education?

I grew up in Dublin with my mum, dad, two brothers and two sisters. Growing up with a twin sister I was never far from family. Along with our friends, we attended the same scout troop for years. Scouts had a major influence on our lives and how we spent our time. When I was not hiking, camping or chatting with my friends, our family were off visiting cousins or family friends, driving around Wicklow, holidaying and having picnics and barbeques around Ireland with other families. I spent school holidays cycling to the beach with friends when Ireland had summers or going on the DART for days out. We were always outdoors! As a child I loved to read and always asked for art sets as gifts. My favourite subjects in school were art, maths and science. I spent summers in Germany, Edinburgh and the USA, working in hotels, factories and theme parks.

### What drew you to a career in education?

I always remember wanting to be a teacher from a very young age. I remember loving primary school. I loved the teachers. I loved the variety of subjects. I loved the buzz. I remember the great teachers who were passionate about their jobs and what they taught and how they made learning fun. But I also remember the not so good. They influenced my career choice as much as the good ones. I wanted to become a teacher and pass on my love of learning. I wanted to create learning experiences and a learning environment where children enjoyed learning as much as I did, where children believed in themselves and their abilities. My first real experience of teaching was on a work placement in transition year in Rutland Street primary school. The teacher let me take reading groups and teach a whole class art lesson. I was hooked.

### How do you evaluate your first seven months as an acting principal?

I have learned to become an accountant, a HR manager, a resource manager, etc.! I hope I have made the transition from

one principal to another as smooth as possible for everyone and I have supported staff in the transition of being taken over by the DDLETB. I have listened to the needs of the staff and a big focus for us this year is on developing useful curricular policies that reflect our approach to teaching and ensure continuity and progression in each year group. Being open 5 years now, it is important for us to confirm all our practises so future years are not about reinventing things or starting from scratch but about improving. Once all the different ETB systems are up and running in the school, I'll have extra time. I definitely have not managed to do everything I have aspired to. But there is time yet!

### What do you find is your biggest challenge as a principal?

As a newly appointed acting principal my challenges change regularly. I'm learning new things all the time. It has been a big year for the school with the DDLETB becoming patron and with that came a lot of new learning on top of other learning. It has been the fastest seven months of my career to date. As principal I get pulled in all directions and sometimes the admin side takes over. Even the smallest things take more time than you would expect. So it would be balancing the 'to dos' with the 'wants'!

### What are the most important characteristics of an effective school?

Creating a **positive school climate** for everybody to ensure happy children, happy staff members and happy parents. Here, everybody strives to be respectful and inclusive.

There should be a **focus on learning**—ensuring each child is learning to their ability through differentiation and appropriate methodologies. In our school I am proud to say that we try our best to make the curriculum as child-centred as possible. But also that we are constantly learning from our teaching: deciding what works for the child, what does not and always aspiring to do better. The staff here are always reading up on new/other ways to do things, attending courses, and willing to change things to make it better.

Obviously a **shared vision** for the school keeps us all focused. We work with each other, the children and the parents to reach our outcomes. Our vision definitely permeates throughout the school day

and the whole curriculum. When I think back to day one in 2012, our school has come so far. Our vision has evolved and changed over time, as have we.

### What are the three most important goals you would want to reach in our school?

- ♣ Ensure the teaching & learning in the school remains child focused and fun throughout the school as we move up towards 6<sup>th</sup> class.
- ♣ Ensure respect remains the focus of all our interactions and understanding of each other and our learning.
- ♣ The staff remains supported, motivated and proactive in their teaching and their own learning which will filter down to create happy children and happy parents!

### What is your passion outside of the school?



Mrs O. Doherty and her son Charlie kayaking off the coast of Maine last year.

I have lots of exciting memories from cycling across France, backpacking around South America, windsurfing in Tarifa, to hiking to Basecamp Everest. My generation of friends are all raising young families now so our days of adventure holidays are halted slightly. It is all about play dates and house visits now. When I am not working I try to spend as much time as possible with my husband and my four year old son Charlie. We spend a lot of time with family and friends. I still try to get out hiking with friends when I can, but backpacking holidays around Vietnam or caving in Iceland remain on my to do list. For the moment I will continue to enjoy hanging out with Charlie, chilling in the evenings with a box set and meeting friends for tasty food!





## HIGHLIGHTS OF OUR SPRING EVENTS



### VALENTINES DISCO

by Eliza Branning



We held our Annual Valentines Disco on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> February. It was yet again another great success and we raised **€811** for the school. It seems like all the kids that attended had a great time and really enjoyed dancing and hanging out with their friends before the school broke up for the mid term break. We would like to say a **big thank you** to Paul our DJ who kept the kids entertained throughout the afternoon and gave them a great giggle!!!

### RECYCLING COLLECTION

by Allison Carter

Our recycling event is fast becoming a firm favourite with our parents. Not only does it help our school but it also helps us all to declutter and get rid of unwanted clothes and textiles, so it is a winner no matter how you look at it! After some feedback at our AGM last November we decided to increase the number of collections this year and so we held a collection at the end of February. This collection raised over **€250**. There will be **another collection on May 26<sup>th</sup> next** so hang onto your bags of old clothes and textiles until then and help our school in the process. There will be posters and reminders on our Facebook page nearer to the time so you'll have plenty of time to get your stuff together. Again, thanks for your continued support!!!

### PILATES CLASSES FOR PARENTS!

by Melissa Harman

We are very fortunate in our school that one of our parents, **Teresa Laiseca**, is a fully qualified Pilates teacher in both Mat work and Reformer pilates. Teresa teaches classes throughout the week in Dublin. In February, she started a six week course of classes for parents in our school on **Wednesday mornings, 9-10am** in the PE hall. She really worked us hard! Pilates is a great way to improve flexibility, posture, all over

body strength and abdominal muscles. I think its fair to say that we discovered muscles we never knew existed!

The morning classes are ideal for those of us who work or study in the evenings and a lovely way to meet new parents in the school. Teresa is hoping to continue with the classes so if anyone would like to join us please contact **Teresa on 087 793 8948**. The cost of the six week course is €50.

### STUDENT AWARDS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

by Melissa Harman

The Parents Committee is delighted to recognise the following students who have had success in their chosen afterschool activities:



#### Dance:

**Ruby Breslin**, Room 11, attends dance classes at Dancity Ireland and was awarded a trophy at her end of year showcase.

**Abigail Quinn**, Room 2, danced in her very first Ballet Show, 'Cinderella' at the Civic Theatre in February.

### Swimming:



**Robbie Harman**, Room 3, attends swimming lessons at Tallaght Lesiure centre and has moved up to the Improvers level.

**Very well done everyone!!!**

If your child has an award or achievement that you would like recognised,

please email **Melissa Harman** at **melharman78@gmail.com**

### ST PATRICK'S DAY & SHAMROCK

by Alison Bannister

You probably saw lots of **Shamrock** around this St Patricks Day March 17<sup>th</sup>. This three leafed plant is everywhere at this time of year so once again we invited the pupils to sell lapels or skillets of Shamrock for St. Patrick's Day in aid of our school.

Shamrock is widely thought of as the official symbol of Ireland; however it is not, our official symbol is the Harp.

The word Shamrock is based on the Irish word "seamrog" which means small clover. Shamrock is associated with St Patrick as supposedly he used the plant to explain the three elements of the **Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit**.

The National Airline, **Aer Lingus**, has a Shamrock on its tail and all Aer Lingus pilots use Shamrock as their call sign to Air traffic Control.

This year just over **70 children** took part and we received orders for 99 little pots and 29 lapels. As a result of the poor response to this fundraiser, we have decided **not to run it again next year**.



**Looking forward to welcoming new parents!**



### QUIZ NIGHT

We won't see the time flying in before our **BIG QUIZ NIGHT** comes around again!

This event has been run for the last three years and has been a great fundraiser and fun night out for the parents and their families and friends! It is a fantastic night of fun and games, quiz based on all topics, general knowledge, sport, countries, movies and music and lots more so good for all families and nationalities!! We also have a very entertaining Arts and Crafts section which is always brings a lot of fun and comedy!! We are hoping to see as many families at the night as possible and looking forward to getting to know all the news faces to the school this year!!

### SPONSORED WALK

The Annual Parents Association **Sponsored Walk** will take place in June 2017. The date and the walk route yet to be confirmed. The whole school population will take part in the walk including teachers and a good number of parents as helpers. The walk will be during the school hours. Before the sponsored walk each child will be issued with a **sponsorship card**. The cards will have to be returned along with any money collected before the walk. If you have more than one child in the school, you may prefer to just complete one card for your family and this is fine. Sponsored Walk is one of our most successful fundraising events. We are looking forward to a great event!

### FAMILY FUN DAY

Join us on our annual action packed and laughter filled **Family Fun Day** for all the families at **St Mary's GAA club** on **25th June** from 2pm-5pm.

Our activities are suitable for all ages and are guaranteed to provide endless fun and create lasting memories. There will be pony rides, pet farm, games, sporting events and to top it off some good food from the barbeque. We hope to see as many families as possible on the day!

### COIN COLLECTION

We will be starting up the **COPPER COIN COLLECTION** again after Easter. There will be a collection jar in every classroom. All the children can bring in any spare copper coins to add the collection. This project will be held until the end of the school year (June 2017). The class who raises the most money at the end of the school year will be awarded a prize. The purpose of this collection is to raise funds for our school. Please, donate as much as possible—every coin counts. Thank you!

by Gillian Doyle

<b>BUSINESS</b>	<b>Electrician</b> Eddie Harman, ph: 087 936 7342	 <b>ALLWAYS TRAVEL</b> 28 Georges Street Arcade, Dublin 2 01-6728805
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	<b>Plastering contractors</b> Ben Griffin, <a href="mailto:bgplasterers@gmail.com">bgplasterers@gmail.com</a>	
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# Happy Easter!

EASTER HIDE FAMILY  
 BUNNY CHOCOLATE DECORATE  
 BONNET DYE COTTON TAIL  
 EGGS HOP EGG HUNT  
 CHICKS RABBIT  
 FUN FIND FLOWERS  
 COLOUR PARADE CELEBRATION

