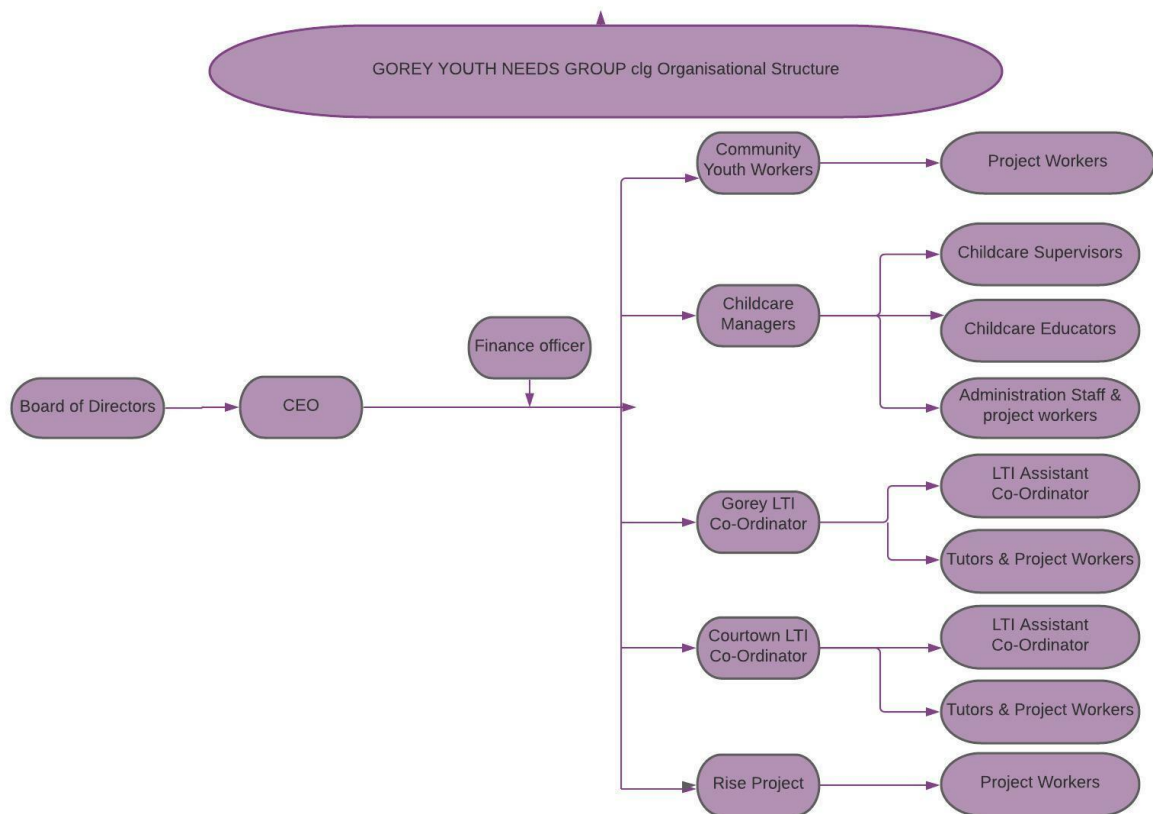


2020

Gorey Youth Needs Group clg



Annual Report



2020 Board of Directors

Chairperson	Annette Gibson
Treasurer	Noreen Traynor
Secretary	Helen Blake
	Margaret Sherriff
	Lisa Gibney
	Fionntan O'Suilleabhain
	Fran Stedman Dunbar
	Ann-Julia Canty
	Aoife Brack Byrne
	Mick Molloy
	Lisa Rapple
	Sarah Gibson

Chairpersons Report – Annette Gibson

The year 2020 was a very difficult and stressful year for us all. We got through it and will continue to do so. I would like to thank all staff members, funders, committee members for all you have done for this center and hope you will continue to give support and help.

Doreen retired from the BOD and finance group to help look after her mum. We would like to wish her mum great health. Malcolm was under a lot of pressure with his campaign and we wish him continued success. We appreciate all the work you have done for us.

I would like to welcome our new members Sarah, Noreen, Mick, Frances and Lisa. We look forward to all your input. Welcome to John Fortune who started with us in March 2020 working with the Rise project funded by Tusla

Peter our LTI manager was offered a post with VTOS in Wexford. We wish him the very best of luck in his career there. Chris has now taken over this role and doing a great job. Welcome to Mathew who is now tutoring the Lti alongside Chris. Trish our finance officer who has since retired, has been keeping our books and payments going and sorting out wages to the staff. It was not an easy task with the year we had. Mairead has joined the team this year in place of Trish, Welcome Mairead. Clive who looks after our books and keep us in order with our accounts and Karen sending us reminders of meetings and keeping notes of them all. You all do a lot more for us than we know. Gordon who keeps health and safety in check. The Board really appreciate what all of you are doing for Gyng. Thank you

Thank you to Mandi our CEO, Brenda and Louise our Child Care Managers who worked tirelessly during the pandemic to assure the safe reopening for our staff and the kids return in June last year. All staff members have pulled together to help each other In these stressful times. The Youth group and Rise Project continued on with outdoor activities when restrictions lifted and all went well. There is a confidential counselling service in place for all to avail of to help us through these stressful times

Courtown LTI has been up and running now for the last couple of years and have expanded. Yvonne has been keeping us up to date with all there. The ongoing courses and projects the groups are brilliant. Well done Courtown LTI.

Also many thanks to all our funders Pobal, Tusla, WWETB for the support and funding/grants we have received. Without you we could not run GYNG and the grants have been put to great use.

We held our BOD and Finance meetings via zoom and they all went well but we look forward to been back to normal and meeting up in person for these meetings.

Annette

CEO's Report – Mandi Tighe

Since opening its door in 1995 GYNG has seen significant changes, overcome many obstacles and has on occasions faced challenges, but never more so than 2020.

The start of the year began like every other, busy and bursting with enthusiasm for the year ahead. All of GYNG's projects, Little Daisies, Gorey Youth Group, Gorey LTI and Courtown LTI were all full to capacity and operating as they should be, providing excellent services to children, young people and families in Gorey and North Wexford.

Tusla had awarded funding to GYNG to launch a new service in 2020, The RISE project. This was a very exciting development to our existing youth services as it would allow for the employment of a Social Care Worker to our team to work with 12-17 year olds deemed at risk of entering into care or transitioning out of care. The main aim of the project is to work with those referred by Social Workers, mainly on a 1-1 and help them find solutions that work for them, in order to make positive changes to their lives. A big focus of the RISE is using outdoor adventure therapy as a way of engaging with young people. John Fortune was employed as the Lead worker for the RISE and Youth Worker Patricia Salleys hours were extended to assist. The project began on Monday 24th of February and two weeks later a Global Pandemic was announced. Regardless of a very slow start the RISE project was established and continues to grow and improve providing vital supports to those in need.

In early January we set dates for staff to participate in the Rainbows training after our organisation officially became a Rainbows Registered centre. This was something we were very interested in pursuing as it would allow us to offer another service to help support some of our most vulnerable children and teens that had experienced loss or separation. Little did we know that as we sat and participated in our training on the 12th of March a Global Pandemic was announced and our training was cut short as we entered into the first of many lockdowns.

The first lockdown brought a lot of uncertainty mainly regarding how long it would last. As the weeks went on we realised that we were in this for a longer period than we first anticipated. With this realisation came a new burst of energy and all of GYNG's staff worked hard to explore alternative ways in which our services could be delivered. Once again our staff showed a willingness to always go above and beyond what was expected of them in order to support those we work with.

We are grateful to our members, learners, families and funders who were patient with us and allowed us time to readjust, think on our feet and get creative with how we delivered our services in a new way, mainly online. At times it was challenging but also innovative and imaginative. All the staff worked hard to ensure that children were kept busy with activities, Teens were kept engaged on their platforms, food hampers were delivered; laptops delivered directly to their front doors, printing services, phone credit etc. There were certain days that made it all worthwhile like the reopening of the crèche, welcoming back the children, opening up the youth services indoors, opening up of the classrooms, filling our centres with the noise and energy, LTI Graduations etc. Once again our staff showed a great deal of resilience, compassion and determination to support all those we work with.

We would like to thank our Childcare Management & Staff team, Youth Team, Gorey LTI, Courtown Lti, RISE Staff, Reception Staff and Sharon & Jim for all their hard work throughout 2020. We would

also like to thank two staff members who left us last year also deserves a special mention. Peter Hayden LTI manager who left us for a new role as VTOS co-ordinator with WWETB and Wendy Kearney who left us to pursue her dream of being a social worker and is now studying in Trinity college. I personally am very proud of how we responded to the challenges presented by COVID-19 and how we pulled together as a team.

A special thank you must be given to a lady who we all love and respect, Tricia O'Cuinneaghean. Our Finance Officer was certainly tested throughout 2020 with all the changes made to Childcare Salaries and payroll. Forced into remote working Tricia grasped the Temporary COVID-19 Wage Subsidy Scheme which was announced on 24 March 2020. It replaced the Revenue Employer COVID-19 Refund Scheme. This funding allowed us to continue paying childcare employees during COVID-19. The funding aimed to keep employees registered with their employers, so that they could get back to work quickly after the pandemic. Thankfully it was a success for our organisation in the sense we experienced no job losses and we were delighted to welcome back all our childcare staff.

Working collaboratively is embedded in the culture at GYNG and we do this with ease. We have a good understanding of the importance of forming good networks, meaningful professional relationships and building partnerships. From everyone we work with from our funders, Tusla, Pobal, WWETB we see you as our colleagues and without you we cannot continue the work we do. Thank you must be given to those who we collaborate with on CYPSC, PPFS, WWETB, The Gorey Youth Support Network, CFSN, WCCC, WLD, Barnardos, School Completion Programme, WCC and many others.

One example of interagency work that had a huge impact throughout these challenging times was the coordinated effort to support all those living in Courtown IPAS centre. This required all of us to think outside the box and work efficiently to ensure that all practical, emotional and financial supports were given to help residents in any way we could. Tusla provided funding which GYNG administered to help children and teenagers have the same opportunities as their peers. We are very proud of this collaborative work and we have met children and families who have made a lasting impression on us. No matter where they settle in Ireland we hope they receive the same welcome as they did in Wexford. A special thank you to John, Tony, Sinead, Linda and Tiffy in particular.

We would like to thank our Voluntary Board of Directors, who are constantly on hand to offer guidance and support and who truly believe and implement good governance of the organisation. They have accepted a legal obligation to ensure this good governance, they go above what is expected from them and they work hard behind the scenes. In 2020 we welcomed three new members to our Board, Noreen Traynor, Lisa Rapple and Michael Molloy. We can't thank you enough and we look forward to the fresh ideas and skills that you will bring to our current Board.

Annette, our Chairperson as always has been a rock throughout 2020. Thank you for everything.

There are too many staff to thank but a special thanks must be given to Karen from the Youths for all her work getting our reports and pulling the AGM together (nagging us!) our Childcare Managers Brenda & Louise, I will have good memories of us in the centre on our own throughout Lockdowns, Chris & Yvonne, Gordon & Matt for always being so supportive to your learners and to John & Patricia from the RISE project. To all of our staff, thank you. Thank you to Clive our Auditor for all your hard work too.

Even in Lockdowns our doors have remained open. That's what we do! Thank you to all the children, young people and families who make our jobs enjoyable. We will continue to do our best to offer supports in any way we can no matter what the future holds. We will continue to strive and build a better organisation for children, young people and families.

Thank you to everyone.

Mandi Tighe

CEO

Additional Work Carried out in 2020

- GYNG receive funding through the School Meals Programme. The Department gave permission for this funding to be redistributed during the early days of lockdown. GYNG members agreed that they wanted to help the elderly in our community and a donation of €300 was made to Meals on Wheels in Gorey, providing meals at home to the most vulnerable.
- GYNG used their own funds to provide weekly food hampers to families using our services who were deemed to be socially disadvantaged, single parent families and families who were hit financially in the early days of lockdown before their payments came into effect. Staff volunteered to shop every week and deliver hampers straight to the families most in need.
- GYNG distributed over 25 hampers to families over the Easter period. This was paid for through funds we had and from donations. Gorey Municipal District provided Easter eggs for children and butchers meal deals were also included. These families were known to us from our own work and others were referred by other agencies such as Tusla, PPFS, WLD.
- Food Hampers in Collaboration with Gorey FRC
- GYNG worked with Gorey FRC and provided 19 hampers a week for 6 weeks. GYNG purchased the food and distributed the hampers and the FRC reimbursed GYNG. Staff volunteered to shop and drop off hampers to those most in need.
- Mobile Library -Karen our Youth Worker set up a mobile library in Gorey Community School carpark for the weeks of lockdown when book shops were closed. A huge donation of books were given and Karen facilitated it that people could come and collect or if not she dropped books off to their homes.
- Leaving Cert/Activity Packs. Throughout periods of lockdown when a decision had not yet been made in relation to the leaving cert GYNG provided a printing service to six leaving cert students who did not have a printer or good connectivity at home. Art and activity packs were also distributed to children and to those living in Courtown IPAS centre.
- Christmas GYNG has a very successful gift donation service that has been running for several years. People donate to GYNG and GYNG will distribute to those most in need. Christmas 2020 was a very difficult time for families.
- We donated 15 hampers to the Women's Refuge, New clothes, baby and children's clothes, toiletries etc.
- GYNG also distributed 52 food and toy hampers to families living in the Gorey and surrounding areas. Some of these families were known to us from our own services, others were referred by other agencies we work with. All the families who received a hamper were extremely grateful.
- A local business donated a tablet and it hamper, this was given to a young Father of four children who had recently tragically lost his wife.
- GYNG staff raised over €700 in lieu of a Kris Kindle and this money was spent ensuring that all children living in Courtown IPAS had new clothes for Christmas day.

Little Daisies Childcare



Managers Report

2020 was an eventful year in Little Daisies Childcare. Louise and Brenda would like to thank all the Childcare Educators on their continued support and dedication during a very difficult year. Little Daisies experienced a lot of change during the pandemic, both children and parents who attend Little Daisies have been extremely supportive of all the changes and guidelines, while these were challenging at times with the team work of all involved, we managed to continue to provide a safe and secure environment for the children to enjoy their time in Creche. This could not have been achieved without our excellent staff team for their dedication to change while at times they experienced worries and fears of returning to creche they overcome this to ensure the safety of the children and colleagues was paramount for which we are very thankful for all their support.

Staffing Structure

Brenda O' Connor - Childcare Manager

Louise Cahill - Childcare Manager

Supervisors - Aine Hennessey & Trish Derwin

Childcare Practitioners

1. Sarah Adams- Baby Room/ Morning room leader
2. Emma Dunne – Baby Room/ Afternoon room leader
3. Bernie Ivory - Baby Room
4. Sue Byrne- Baby Room
5. Tanya Cullen - Toddler Room/ room leader
6. Mary Dunbar – Baby Room
7. Bronwyn Murphy – Pre-school Room
8. Nicole Costigan- Preschool Room
9. Áine Hennessey - Pre School Room/room leader
10. Martina Byrne – Preschool Room
11. Lily Gethings- Toddler Room
12. Martha Kehoe- Preschool Room(aims)
13. Cliona Grace – ECCE Room/ room leader
14. Helen Cooper - Ecce/ afterschool room
15. Tina Mordaunt- Ecce Room
16. Trish Derwin – Afterschool/room leader
17. Pauline Price- Afterschool
18. Sarah Carry- CE scheme (room Support)
19. Margaret Earle – Reception
20. Michelle Tierney- Reception
21. Galina - Reception

We also have a relief panel of fully qualified childcare practitioners: Judit Olah, Vanessa Byrne, Adele Rapple, Nicole Brauner and Janette O Sullivan



Staff Fire Safety Training January 2020



During the years the staff take part in a variety of training events.

Here are a few photos of staff in action during the training



National Childcare Staff protest

Feb 2020

Childcare staff from across the country gathered in Dublin to express their concerns regarding funding, wages and professional recognition from the Government. Some of our Childcare assistants attending the protest while others kept the service open to still support parents while they were working.





Rainbow Training

On the 11th March Louise Cahill, Brenda O' Connor, Trish Derwin, Áine Hennessey, Martina Byrne completed their Rainbow Training Supporting Children with Bereavement and Parental Separation, we are looking forward to implementing the training learned in the two days in the future in Little Daisies Childcare.

Covid 19

Closed March 2020 – June 2020

- Multi Agency Family Support collaboration between GYNG, FRC, Tusla supporting families who may be feeling isolated during Covid 19 lockdowns and struggling. Food Hampers were delivered weekly including Easter Eggs on the Easter weekend. Tallaght hospital made an appeal to the public for PPE equipment as Little Daisies was closed for the foreseeable future at the time we stepped up and delivered all our supply of gloves, aprons etc to support the health care staff who were working so hard to save so many lives during the pandemic.



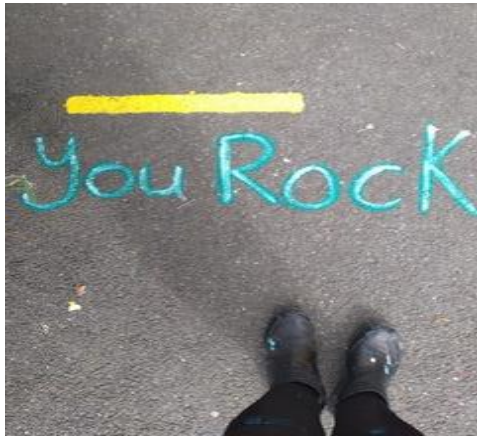
- Childcare staff continued to support children and families through Activity Packs, through online communication between childcare staff and parents they were able to complete the children's learning journals which in years to come will reflect their experience of Covid 19 lockdowns and the achieved in the home environment. Childcare assistance continued professional development with online training throughout the months Little Daisies was closed

Sue Byrne - creations

During 2020 our staff member Sue Byrne transformed some of our play areas with her amazing murals and paintings. Sue did a fantastic job in the front of the building providing social distancing markers for each of our Childcare Pods. The children and families absolutely love them. Well, done Sue.

Welcome back 29th June 2020





Out Door Play Areas



Graduation

Our graduation of 2020 was not like any other graduation in previous year's. Covid 19 had taken a lot from the children during this year but with the support of the Ecce teachers both managers ensured the children would still enjoy their graduation in a safe manner.

The weather was on our side this year so we held the event out in the sunshine. A big thank you to all the Pre-school and ECCE teachers for all their hard work preparing the children for their graduation. They were little stars on the day.





Our Annual school tour to Kia Ora farm was postponed this year.



Christmas



Christmas in Little Daisies was a little different this year we still enjoyed the festivities within the centre for the children we had pod Christmas concerts in reception and a fun filled last day with the arrival of Santa. We would like to thank Aidan Haskins and Jade Doyle who where a great support in organising Santa's visit to the centre. The children really enjoyed the morning.

For the childcare assistants while we could not have our annual Christmas dinner Louise and Brenda cooked a full breakfast for all the staff to enjoy within their pod break times to mark the Christmas holidays.

Our childcare Rooms updates

Baby Room

We have had lots of fun during the year in the baby/Wobbler room.

We did lots of different activities such as painting, coloring, sensory play and song.

We were very creative during the year and did lots of different artwork, we made autumn trees, decorated our Christmas Chimney and made lovely art to bring home for Mother's Day and Father's Day.

We did lots of sensory play during the year including playdough & tasting some different fruits & vegetables. We made lots of different sensory boxes which included rice, pasta, soil & other fun materials.

We spent a lot of time outside and loved playing with our climbing frame & bubble machine.

We read lots of books, sang lots of songs & did lots of laughing & dancing.

Due to covid we were apart at times but we always came back to together & continued to have fun.



Toddler Room

The Toddlers adjusted well to the new routines when returning to the childcare centre in June. There was a lot of changes but the Toddlers adjusted to them all. Parents now have to leave the children to the reception door and a member of staff will collect the child and bring them in.

Our Toddler room enjoyed a lot of outdoor play to get as much fresh air as possible. We spent a lot of the summer outside to prevent covid spreading within the indoors which was very successful.

The children enjoyed sensory play, art & craft, water play and all the new equipment provided.



Red Room – ECCE

Preschool had a good year in 2020, Covid did give us a few challenges along the way but we all worked together to overcome these.

The children were all so happy to return in June after the first lockdown. It was clear to see that the children had missed Little Daisies and their friends.

We had to change our entering to the centre policy when we returned to creche, we all had different pod entry points. This worked brilliant for both the children, parents and staff and made the handover times run much more smoothly.

We also improved our outdoor area last year and the children loved all the new equipment and games painted on the ground to enjoy during outdoor time.

John O Connor also made us amazing outdoor messy kitchens for the children to enjoy which they love playing with their friends.



Green Room - ECCE

Our ECCE room returned with great ease in September for the first month. We enjoyed the first month taking our time to get to know each other, build relationships and bonds with both children and staff members. The children really enjoy group time and music we enjoy working with their emerging interests of each child.

Covid restrictions gave the children the tool to support independence of lining up at the front door at reception in the mornings and coming into school alone which promoted self confidence.

The children really enjoyed our social distance Graduation in the summer before they progressed to primary school.



After-school Room

Our summer in afterschool was very different during 2020, we enjoyed a lot of time playing and planting in the gardens. It was nice to see all our friends again after the lockdowns we really missed our fun activities of cinema trips , days out at the end of summer but hopefully we will enjoy them again soon in 2021 and get back to normal.



Louise & Brenda

Youth Services

Staff Members

- Wendy Kearney
- Karen McCann
- Patricia Salley
- Paul O'Toole
- Aidan Haskins
- Jade Doyle
- Joe Smith
- Laura Savage – Student
- James Kavanagh - Student
- Dano Kenny- Volunteer

Youth Room

The lockdowns in 2021 gave the youth team an opportunity to redesigned the youth space, getting new furniture and giving the place an upgrade. It was ready and waiting for the groups when they arrived back into the centre.



Gorey Primary School Groups

2020 was a challenging year for all our groups especially our primary after school groups as they had to get to grips with the new way of engaging online.

They met as normal in September 2019 but by march 2020 we were forced to close for the first lockdown. After a few weeks we consulted with parents and members and we trialed a weekly zoom session as a way of providing guidance and support and weekly fun activities during periods of lockdowns.

After restrictions eased we switched to weekly sessions outdoors following guidance from the youth sector limiting the groups to 12 members and two staff. The groups engaged with lots of different activities that encouraged them to explore their emotions and coping skills throughout the pandemic. They also engaged with activities that helped develop their social skills, problem solving skills, IT/Digital skills etc. Overall the members responded very well to online delivery of services but they were very happy to get back to face to face meetings and we were more than happy to welcome them back into the centre.



Openmix

Our openmix group continued to go from strength to strenght despite Covid and enjoyed meeting up each week for a variety of activites from zoom trips around the farm to quizzes and even online movies and popcorn! Pride was a different one of the group this year with a small celebration instead of our annual trip to Dublin, but the group enjoyed it as much. We were allowed back in the building for a short while during restrictions and we got back to work on our film project which is funded by the Ireland Fund. The movie will be released in 2021! Stand up week was during restrictions so we promoted the group with a display in the local library. We even got a local politican to pose for us! Halloween celebrations had to take place on line and involved dressing up and scary movies!



Courtown Primary

The year was split between being on zoom during lockdown and being outdoors when restriction eased during the warmer months. The group was operating within guidelines, with 12 people per group when in person. For online zoom our primary school knew more online activity based games, then we the youth workers would follow their lead. We also delivered activity packs to this group during school mid-term, while they were still in lockdown. Once we returned to outdoor activities, the group was excited to meet people in the group again and enjoy their outdoor space, including the park, beach, woods, cricket pitch and complex.



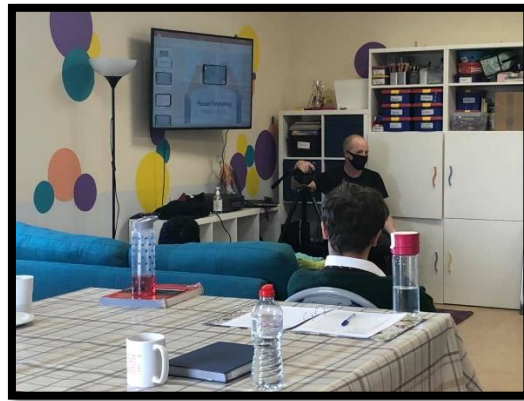
Courtown Secondary

This group also did a split year on zoom during lockdown and outdoors when the restrictions eased during the summer months. Both being online with zoom and being outdoors had their high and lows. As some teens did not have the technology, wifi access or data to partake in all the groups but used text or whatsapp to maintain contact with the group and youth workers. If one of the young persons needed a chat there was always a youth worker available. This group really enjoyed online games, bingo and quizzes which were often led or designed by the young people in the group. This group also loved being in the outdoor space in Riverchapel and Courtown, especially the woods as they loved playing manhunt. The only issue was the weather but this group did not care as they just brought coats and umbrellas just so they could be outside of the house doing something with friends.



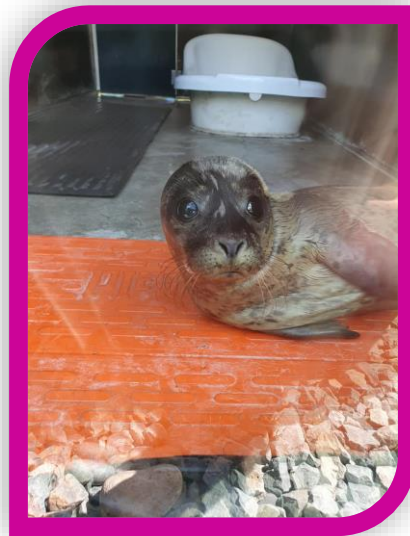
Illuminate Workshops

This years' project with the illuminate workshop involved making a number of short films and learning how to make and edit these on mobile phones. Local film maker Terence White joined up with the group to work on this project. Like all groups this project was impacted by Covid, but continued to meet up on zoom and kept going as best we could. While the workshop and the films had to be adjusted to keep within guidelines it was great to get the young people back to the centre and filming in person. We look forward to seeing the final product in 2021. During the fine weather we managed to relocate our group to the local park just so we could meet up in person and make the most of the our lcoal amenities!



Summer Programmes

Despite Covid we managed to get some summer programmes out and about. The groups enjoyed plenty of activities from Arts & Crafts to tie-dyeing to our annual trip to the Seal Sanctuary. We even managed to squeeze in a cinema trip in between restrictions.



Gorey Gaming Group

Gorey Gaming Group began in October 2019 with the main goal being to provide services and activities to a group that was not catered for in Gorey; those whose main interests are playing video games & technology. The group concentrated on “gaming culture” and used this to motivate engagement while being able to provide information on the gaming & digital creation industries.

Due to the global pandemic this past year, the group was unable to meet in person. As this group is technology based, we were able to easily transition to using our online Discord server. This enabled the group members to have a direct and secure platform to talk to the Youth workers.

Learning from the Gorey Gaming Group enabled Gorey Youth Needs to redesign how we operate in delivering an effective and supportive online service.

Through our discord server we were able to set up a Dungeons and Dragons game which one of the group members organised and coordinated. We also organised other online games and activities.

As 90% of our group were in 6th year, we were able to offer support relating to 3rd level education options and level cert support.

We also had some of the members help in the development and retrofitting of our new in-house multi-purpose technology hub.



Parent & Toddler

Unfortunately, this year has been a tough one for Parent and Toddler, due to Covid and restrictions we have been unable to have them back into the building. We have however been keeping in touch with them via social media and text messages, keeping them busy with lots of online crafts and activities that they can do at home or in the local parks. We look forward to seeing them back when restrictions ease.



Book Drive

Our youth team had to be creative during covid to engage with both our young people and the community, so after some phone calls from Parents we decided to set up a book drive once a week. This worked by people bringing books they had at home and swapping them with ones that other people had dropped off. Everything of course was covid friendly! Lots of children and families from the area became regulars over the course of lockdown.



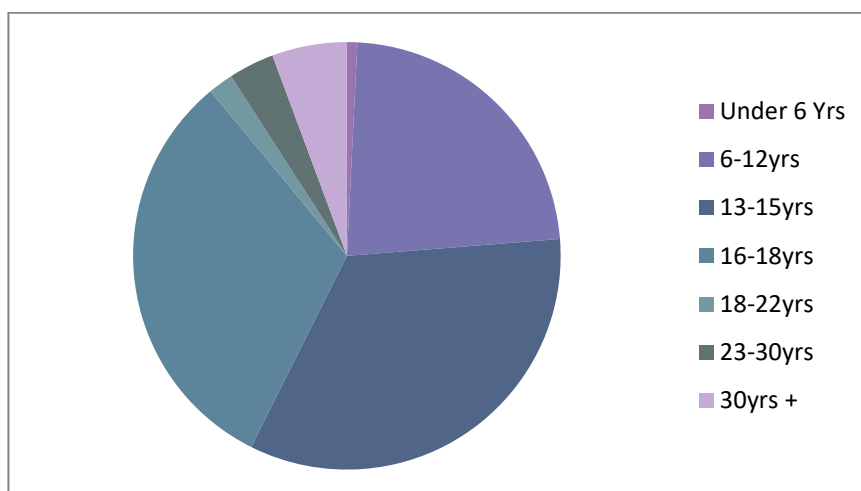
Christmas Appeal

Every year we do a Christmas Appeal however this year it was more important than ever and the people of Gorey stepped up to enable us to help some local families who were struggling. Thanks to everyone who dropped off food, toys and vouchers.



Youth & Community Services Statistics Jan - Dec 2020

Service	No.s Attending	Under 6 Yrs	6-12yrs	13-15yrs	16-18yrs	18-22yrs	23-30yrs	30yrs +
Gorey Youth Group	98			56	42			
Illuminate Workshop	18			8	10			
Gorey Gaming Group	16				16			
Openmix Jnr	7			7				
Openmix Snr	12				12			
Gorey Primary Group 3rd & 4th Class	28		28					
Gorey Primary Group 5th & 6th Class	39		39					
Summer Programmes	87		24	28	35			
Gaming Group Cinema Event	41			23	18			
Drumming Workshops	36		12	12	12			
Parental Support	41					8	16	17
Parent & Toddler Group	Connected through Facebook and Messenger Groups							
Courtown Primary Group	19		19					
Courtown Youth Group	22			22				
Covid Free Library	101	5	20	26	21	4	6	19
1-1 Work	53			18	35			
Ipas Centre	18		4	14				
	636	5	146	214	201	12	22	36



Rise Project

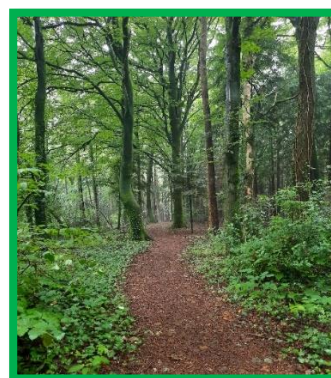


RISE is the new project being delivered by Gorey Youth Needs Group since March 2020. This project has been solely funded by Tusla Child and Family Agency to work with young people aged 12 to 17, who might be deemed 'at risk' and are living in the North Wexford area. The main aim of the project is to work with young people and help them find solutions that work for them, in order to make positive changes to their lives.

The most popular activities for the RISE project are walks on local woods, beaches and hills. This often involves hammocks and hot chocolates! Combined with some bush craft or outdoor art, this makes for some very adventurous and engaging experiences and provides a good setting for young people to discuss the issues they are working through.

Occasionally, we can visit outdoor adventure companies for activities like kayaking, SUP, high ropes and obstacle courses, etc. but we hope to have our own fleet of kayaks and SUP equipment soon. Our staff are kayaking and SUP instructors, and are also working towards becoming instructors in indoor rock-climbing, mountain biking and field archery.

Sometimes going outside is not a good option, so we can use the GYNG building for arts and crafts, a game of pool or just a cup of tea and a chat.



Gorey Training Initiative 2020 – Covidicus Interruptus

What can we say about 2020, a year when a province in China that most had previously never heard of became ever present in everybody's mind. Nobody could have predicted the global turmoil that would result from the pandemic and we are still living with the restrictions to this day (October 24th 2021).

The year started like most others with the learners back after their Xmas break and straight back into module work leading towards their Level 5 major awards in eBusiness and Sports, Recreation and Exercise and then on March 13th Covid 19 struck and the learners were sent home to continue their study in an online setting. We all initially thought that this would be for a couple of months at most, but sadly the class of 2019-2020 were never to meet again as one whole group.

Luckily for us we had already secured G-Suite for Education for our learners and tutors and had already been using its online classroom, docs, drive and assignment facilities. We had a head start and the learners work was stored online anyway. They were sent home with the laptops and we had to quickly establish a new timetable based around online delivery. Congratulations must go to the learners and tutors alike for coping with this 'new' normal. For tutors this meant learning new skills like creating tutorial videos and managing an online class via Google Meet. It also meant a significant increase in workload as any support sessions could not be done as a group and involved one-to-one online sessions (you can imagine how often material was thus repeated).

We had one learner who had applied for third level through the CAO and therefore had strict deadlines. Thanks to the hard work and dedication of the learner (and staff) she passed every module with distinctions and has since gone on to pass her first year studies in Carlow IT. The other learners, in line with other institutions, were given extensions meaning that the academic year was extended by a further month.

Of the ten learners on the Level 5 eBusiness course, eight completed with major awards and two did not complete (one due to childbirth and one health reasons), but came out with minor awards. On the Level 5 Sports course six came out with major awards and four with minor awards. All in all, given the way the year panned out it is exceptional that the learners achieved fourteen major awards across both courses.

A total of seven of those learners went on to do further study elsewhere, five have secured full time employment and three others part time employment.

We went straight from the class of 2019-20 into the class of 2020-2021. Whereas there would normally be a break of a month in-between, it was not possible this time. We went back to Level 4 in both ICT and Sports and took part in a WWETB pilot programme of locally devised assessments whereby the tutors had to devise their own assignments, projects and exams. Recruitment for the Sports course did not go so well and in part this was due to the lack of 'normal' sporting activity possible on the course. Only five were recruited to the Sports course and we took a decision to take on an extra five

learners on the ICT course to make up the numbers (this included four learners from our sister establishment in Courtown).

It was a year where we said goodbye to our Coordinator, Peter Hayden, at the start of November. I, Chris Furlong, took over the coordinator role and we had to seek a replacement assistant coordinator. It was a tough competition for the role and a former learner here, Matt Dunbar, was eventually the successful candidate starting in his new role in December 2020 with primary responsibility for the Sports course.

I think we have continued to achieve an amazing level of success even with the restrictions imposed by the pandemic. Obviously online learning is no substitute for being in the classroom, but we have all adapted and continue to go forward with blended learning.

I would like to thank Mandi our CEO and Trish our finance officer for all of their invaluable help throughout the year. I would like to thank Susan Sheahan, our Community Training Officer in WWETB, Catherine Cleary WWETB Literacy support and WWETB in general for funding the programmes. Great thanks in difficult circumstances must go to former Coordinator Peter Hayden, new assistant Matt Dunbar, tutors Jennie Frizelle and Celina Hayden and last, but definitely not least Yvonne O'Connor, coordinator of our sister project in Courtown for all of her help and advice.



Courtown LTI

2020 started with the learners leading the 2020 Operational Transformation Wexford walk in Courtown woods. The learners had started the program in August 2019 and had settled in very well by the start of 2020, the program is 'Pathway to Employment' QQI Level Four. The learners did Barista training in February in which they were certified.

March 2020 changed normality as we all know, and the centre moved to 'online learning'. With the physical centre shut indefinitely. Staff and learners continued with classes on 'google classroom'. An extremely challenging and tough time for all.

In July we got a window to return to the centre for support and practical small group classes.

Six learners finished the program in June 2020, three had left early, two to employment and one to an apprenticeship. The other three completed with their full major awards. Two of these students continued to BIFE in September 2020 where they started Hairdressing.

In December 2020, thirteen learners completed the program, with twelve of these learners achieving Full Major Level 4 awards. Four learners continued into Gorey Training Initiative. A high number of the other learners moved into employment.

Due to the public health restrictions, at times 2020 felt like death by zoom and paperwork. Unfortunately for the learners they missed out on all the social interactions, starting the hair beauty section and anything unessential. However, these learners must be commended for completing the course in December under the toughest of circumstances and achieving what they set out to do.

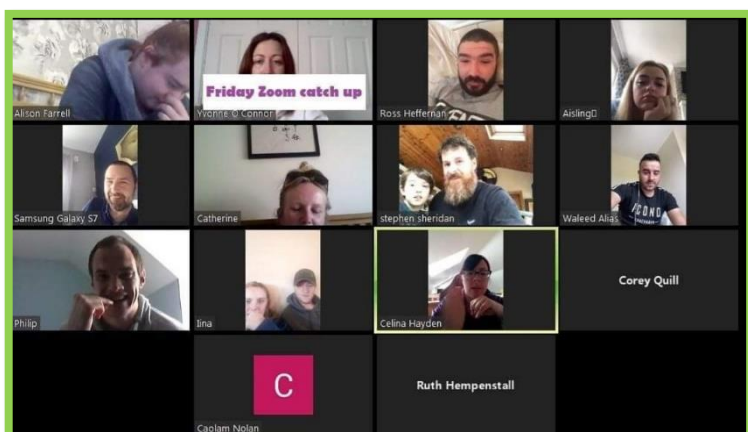
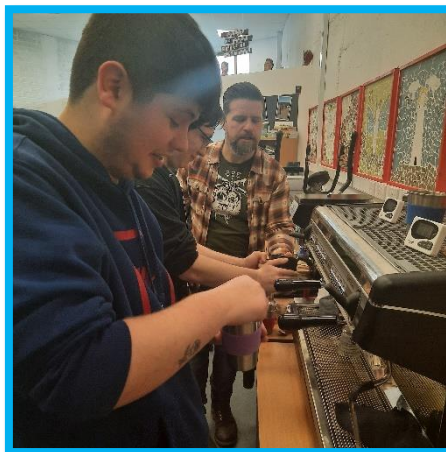
In December the staff proudly watched as previous learner Daniel Kenny, now a member of the board of management with national group AONTAS, interviewed Minister Simon Harris.

I would like to thank the board and staff of Gorey Youth Needs for all their support, with special mention for the invaluable support of Mandi Tighe. Huge thanks to the dedicated staff team in Courtown, working under serious pressure in 2020, running their classes, home-schooling, caring for their own families and ensuring the learners were not disadvantaged. Gordon O'Shea, (Assistant Coordinator), tutor team: Celina Hayden, Philip Maher, Stephen Sheridan & Vivienne Perry. A special mention for Catherine Cleary of WWETB, our adult literacy tutor who provides invaluable support to our students.

I look forward to continue working with Courtown Training Initiative, and opening the centre again in 2021, starting a new Level three 'Employability Skills' course in January 2021.

Yvonne O'Connor

Coordinator



Acknowledgements:

During 2020 Gorey Youth Needs Group received support from a number of agencies and individuals, whom we now wish to express our sincere thanks and appreciation to:

- Tusla
- Wexford Municipal District
- Gorey Municipal District
- WWETB
- Pobal
- Pobal Better Start Mentoring & support Program
- Gorey School Completion Program
- County Wexford Childcare Committee
- IT Carlow Wexford Campus
- Warren Hill Construction
- Gorey Guardian & Gorey Echo
- FAI Local Development Officer
- Paul Buckley, JLO
- Pat Cody & Evelyn Redden, Gorey Garda Station
- Gaelscoil, Gorey
- VTOS Gorey
- Sports Active Wexford
- Tesco Gorey
- WLD
- Gorey School of Art
- Gorey Youth Support Network (GCFSN)
- Clive Curran Accountants
- Gorey Rangers CE Scheme
- Gorey Community School
- St. Kevins CBS
- St. Aidan's NS, Ferns
- Educate Together, Gorey
- Club Techies, Gorey
- Bunscoil Loreto
- Leinster Rugby
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- St. Josephs CBS
- Camolin NS
- St. Edan's NS, Ferns