



Gorey Youth
Services



Little Daisies
Crèche



Gorey Training
Initiative

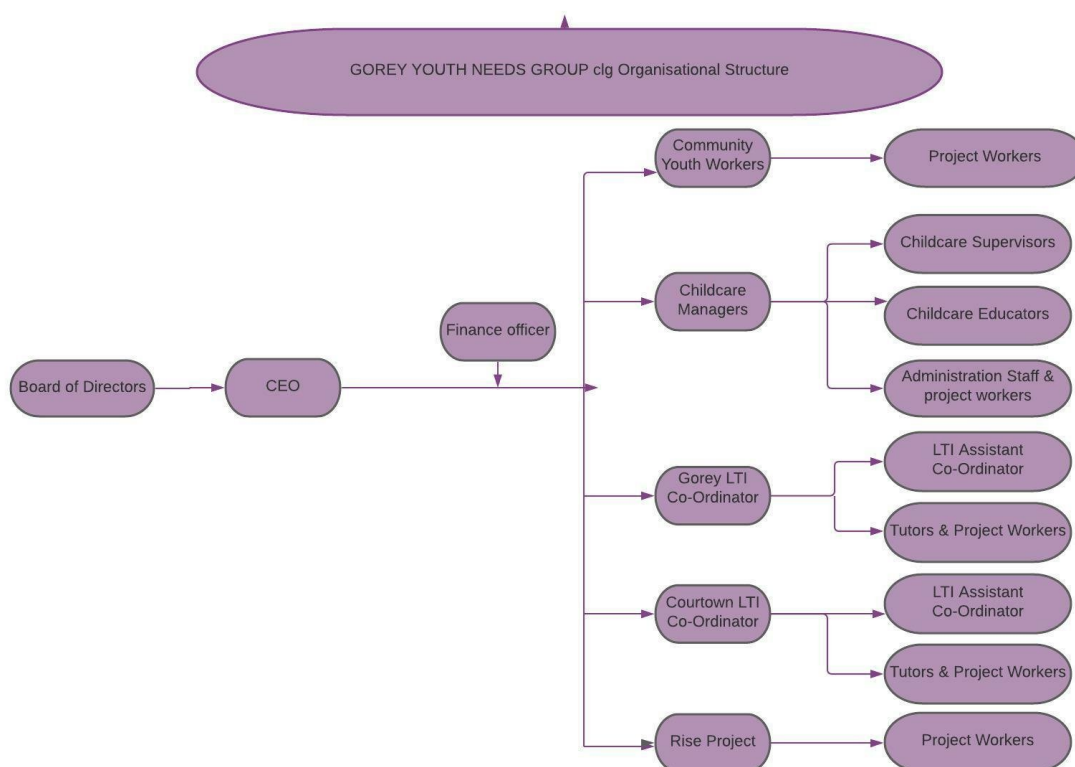


Courtown
Training Initiative



RISE
PROJECT

Annual Report 2021



2021 Board of Directors

Chairperson	Annette Gibson
Treasurer	Noreen Traynor
Secretary	Helen Blake
	Lisa Gibney
	Fionntan O’Sulleabhain
	Fran Stedman Dunbar
	Ann-Julia Canty
	Mick Molloy
	Lisa Rapple
	Sarah Gibson

Chairpersons Report – Annette Gibson

Welcome everyone.

Another year has gone by so quickly. We got through it and will continue to do so. Thank you all staffmembers, funders, committee members for everything you have done for us and we hope you will continue to give support and help.

Chris took to his new role and has done a fantastic job. He has shown true leadership in his role. Mathew has done tremendous work with group also on the LTI. Trish stayed in touch with Mairead to help her out with a smooth transition of roles. It was not an easy task with the year we had. Cliveas always looking after our books and keep us in order with our accounts.

Karen sending us reminders of meetings and keeping notes of them all. Gordon who keeps healthand safety in check.

Thank you, Mandi our CEO, Brenda and Louise our Child Care Managers.

With The Youth groups and Rise Project, after school groups, LGBT groups still ongoing which is great. Let's keep it all going for years to come.

Courtown LTI has been up and running now for the last couple of years and have expanded. Yvonnehas 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 Peninsula, Pobal, Tusla, WWETB for the support and funding/grants we have received. We appreciate all the support and all grants are put have been putto great use.

We are slowly getting back to normal so let's keep going and give the best service we can to all who require it.

Thank you all

Annette, Chairperson

CEO's Report – Mandi Tighe

In 2021 GYNG continued with their efforts to operate services as best we could while entering another year living and working with COVID-19.

GYNG as a whole organisation implemented our shared Values throughout these challenging times; by putting children and families, members and learners first, taking care of each other, fostering an attitude of inclusion, consideration and respect, collaborations with other agencies and organisations to get better outcomes, all while continuing to reinvent ourselves by effective delivery of services virtually.

Our staff team exceeded any expectations in their work commitment throughout 2021. Again showing a service user first approach in supporting the most vulnerable by offering practical supports, food hampers, vouchers, or putting them in touch with other relevant professional services. GYNG managers applied their problem-solving expertise in finding solutions to support the individuals using our services who were hit the hardest by the pandemic. We increased our efforts during the worst of times to soften any blows felt by families.

Schools remained closed in early January, as did our LTI classrooms and workshops. They did not reopen until March the 1st. This was challenging time for Youth and LTI staff continuing services virtually. The Government allowed for crèches remaining open for essential workers and our childcare staff did this without complaint at a time when reported cases exceeded 175,000 cases. It is evident that all of GYNG's projects play a vital role in our communities. We have shown that we are a trustworthy organisation that people can turn to when times are difficult. Our role as a community organisation helping children, young people and their families is taken seriously by all our staff, Volunteers and Board. GYNG's ability to work collaboratively and network shows the impact for those we work with can be greater when people come together.

Working collaboratively is embedded in the culture at GYNG and we do this with authenticity and ease. We understand the value and 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 such collaborative piece of work which GYNG are immensely proud of from 2021 is that of supporting children and families living in Direct Provision. GYNG received funding from Tusla to ensure that the resources were available to make this easier. It was a pleasure working with and getting to know these children and their families, but always difficult to say goodbyes. A special thank you to John Kelly whom we have an excellent working relationship with and is always a constant support.

At a time when there was so many cancellations, missed events and closed doors we did our best to remain compliant with guidelines and still get the work done, graduations went ahead, milestones were met, spaces were made available to others working with children and young people and our doors remained as open as they possibly could be.

A lot of work was done last year in making the centres appealing to those who use our services, from general maintenance, painting, new floors etc. Sue Byrne needs a special mention for continuing to help the crèche look and feel child friendly and welcoming. A big thank you to LEADER for funding SPACE and to Joe Smith on all his hard work with the application and to Aidan for his help. As a team we pulled together to complete SPACE literally adding finishing touches as the LEADER Inspector walked up the stairs- a new digital hub, music room a creative space for children and young to enjoy, further enhancing the youth setting. Thank you to Mary Dunphy for all her support on the Leader.

Last year our much loved and respected Finance Officer Tricia O Cuinneaghean was finally allowed to retire. Tricia finished at the end of June but thankfully committed to coming on our Board, which she is now a valued member of. Her input continues to be of great importance. We then welcomed our incoming Finance Officer Mairead Fitzpatrick, who fitted in from day one and has shown nothing but patience and a willingness to work as part of our team. We would be lost without her now. Trish Derwin our Childcare Supervisor also retired and we'd like to wish her all the best and thank her for your hard work.

Our LTI staff continued to go above and beyond for their learners in both Gorey & Courtown. Their efforts and compassion for their learners far exceeds what is expected of them in their role and this shows in individuals progression and improved wellbeing. Yvonne and Chris,

Gordon and Matt and all the tutors have worked incredibly hard throughout the second year of the pandemic. Courtown LTI continues to grow from strength to strength under Yvonne's guidance and we look forward to what the future holds for this programme. A lot of work and communications were had in relation to the Astro Turf project throughout 2021 and we know that this project will eventually come to life and we can see our Sports and Recreation course thrive with this addition. All of us at GYNG would like to thank you for your work, commitment and dedication to our learners and organisation. Also a huge thank you to Fran Kennedy, Susan Sheehan and Maria Lindell of the WWETB for their continued support of our LTI programmes.

Our Youth Staff and RISE workers must also be thanked. Karen, Patricia, Jade, Aidan, Paul and Volunteer Joe have really evolved as a team over this time. Coming together and working in new ways, showing innovation and proving that they are never afraid of change. Thank you to Wayne Russell, CE Scheme Supervisor for helping to fund Jade and Aidan's Youth & Community degree, we are very proud of both of them for their achievements. Thank you to John and Patricia on the RISE project for all the work done mentoring, supporting and facilitating opportunities for very vulnerable children and teens.

After a long period of not working directly with young people I was very grateful for the opportunity to do so when asked by Tusla to carry out a group work programme with young males living in IPAS in Courtown Hotel. A six week programme was devised with the RISE project and it was six weeks I thoroughly enjoyed as it gave me a good reminder of what is important and why we do this work. I will forever be grateful to four young boys for giving me the opportunity to get back to what I enjoyed, direct work with youth. Thank you to John for a memorable six weeks.

We would like to thank our funders from Tusla for their continued support and believing in the work we do, especially Tony Kennedy, Claire McNamara, Sinead Cronin Daly, Linda McCann. Also to Miriam Grace for offering Coaching hours at a busy time, this was much appreciated. In July of 2021 we wished Vincent Daly a happy Retirement from his role as Area Manager, Vincent was a constant supporter of GYNG and we will forever be grateful to him. We welcomed our new Area Manager Greg Mullen.

Little Daisies Childcare Managers Brenda & Louise, it is so important that all our Childcare staff and families know what you both do behind the scenes in operating one of Gorey's largest Creche facility. Again you far exceed what is on your job description in supporting children and families and always advocating for better opportunities for the staff. Thank you for all your work and efforts throughout 2021 and also to the Childcare staff team. Putting the children first is what we must continue to do and what we are good at.

We would like to thank our Voluntary Board of Directors, who are always 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 and they have really taken ownership of their roles throughout 2021. We can't thank you enough and we look forward to the fresh ideas and skills that you will bring to our current Board. I am very grateful for the Board agreeing for me to do a Professional Diploma with UCD last year. I hope I can continue to develop my skills in management and leadership in the future for the benefit of the organisation.

Annette, our Chairperson as always has been a rock throughout 2021. Thank you for everything and for all your commitment.

We would like to thank our Auditor Clive for all his hard work and patience with all our projects during 2021 in getting our accounts presented here today.

A very sincere thank you must go to the Trustees of the Badminton Hall. They gave a very generous donation to GYNG for the purpose of the Astro Turf. A particular thank you to Mr. Kevin Doyle his son William and to Senator Malcolm Byrne in recommending GYNG as a beneficiary of this donation.

To the businesses in the local area who donate to our causes , thank you, particularly to Tesco Gorey, Lidl Gorey and a special mention to Kevin & Dan at Smith Byrne Solutions, for always thinking of those kids in need at Christmas.

A big thank you once again for Karen for putting together and putting the pressure on everyone to get there reports in for the AGM. You do such a great job. Thank you.

The biggest thank you

To all the children, young people, Learners and your families who make our jobs so enjoyable and rewarding. We will continue to challenge ourselves and be creative so that we can offer all of you a better service. GYNG strives to progress and grow with you throughout your years. We will tailor our services, make the adjustments needed, and listen to your voice in order to be the service you all want. We look forward to change and we embrace it and we look forward to seeing where your life takes you.

Mandi Tighe, CEO

Work of CEO outside of Internal Work;

- Wexford CYPSC - Wexford CYPSC (Children & Young People's Services Committee) is a county-wide committee that includes representatives of all the main statutory, community and voluntary agencies and organisations working on behalf of children and young people (aged 0-24 years) in County Wexford.
- PPFS Sub Group - This is a comprehensive suite of early intervention and preventative services being undertaken by Tusla and its partner agencies.
The aim of the PPFS is to prevent risks to children and young people arising or escalating through early intervention and family support.
- Parent Support Champion - The Parenting Support Champions Project is an opportunity to participate in a new national initiative to develop system-wide approaches and practices to working with parents so that together services can support all children and young people in being safe and achieving their full potential.
- Gorey Youth Support Network (CFSN) –GYNG chair the Child and Family Support Networks (CFSN) or in the Gorey area it has been historically known as The Gorey Youth Support Network. It helps families experience services as easily as possible in their own area. Every area in the country is different, some have more people living there and some have different needs so different types of services will be needed in each area. Local and emerging needs are discussed.

- Health & Diversity Sub Group, CYPSC Subgroup- responsible for management of Healthy Ireland Initiatives and looking at other Health Promotion and health related initiatives and emerging needs.
- Courtown Riverchapel Policing Forum- A local Policing Forum is to be established in Courtown in a bid to address local issues and highlight needs for the area.
- Courtown Riverchapel Steering Committee – GYNG are represented on this committee, which stemmed from the Community Hub Consultation. A special Thank you to Craig Lang and his fellow committee members it has been a pleasure working with you.
- Gorey School Completion Programme- Local Management Committee
- Cornmarket Project – Steering group
- Slaney Youth Diversion Project
- IPAS steering group – Multi Agency approaches to new communities

Additional work outside of Primary Duties:

- Astro Turf Project- Still ongoing, some challenges and difficulties regarding Examinership and changes to personnel dealing with project from Trinity Homes. Some progress made with the first draft of the contract being drawn up. Thank you to Michael Molloy for volunteering to help with this project and sharing his expertise to it.
- IPAS- Interagency work with Tusla, WLD, and Places of Sanctuary ensuring that families living in our community seeking refuge were supported. GYNG played a positive role in securing and administering funding which allowed children and teens to access the same opportunities as their peers.
- Riverchapel Community Complex- GYNG are represented on this committee, participated in the consultation for the Hub and administered the funding for the purchase of the temporary community hub (portakabin)
- CCA- Louise o Byrne approached GYNG and asked if we would have staff that could commit to ad hoc hours in supporting young people on a 1-1 for the Creative Community Alternatives work under Tusla.

- Tusla and GYNG commenced a Tenancy Agreement to allow for Tusla Staff, Social Workers, Community Childcare Workers, Tusla Play Therapist, Educational Assessments, Supervised access etc are now using spaces in GYNG on a very regular basis.
- Outreach work in Courtown/Riverchapel continued, with afterschool's moving from the LTI centre to the new Community Hub. The establishment of Youth Services in Ballyfad/Coolgreany in October was a very welcomed initiative by both staff and the community.
- Family support work- all GYNG staff have noted an increase in family support and need for additional assistance, which we will continue to do and ensure that they are also referred to the relevant services and supports of other agencies.

Finance Officers Retirement

I will always remember GYNG as the most friendly experience in my working time. Always staff at work or home available to get info I needed to add those figures etc Although I was the only person in finance my connection with Management, especially Mandi, and all other staff made me feel very included in the organisation. Over the years in GYNG I realised the fabulous work GYNG was doing across all the projects and loved to be part of these. Although I worked from home during the pandemic for almost 17 months I always knew GYNG staff were on the other end of the phone and supported me to keep safe during this difficult time we all had. My time came to retire but Although I wanted to leave work I miss the atmosphere and friendless in GYNG. I am delighted to still be part of the organisation as a member of the Board.

Patricia O Cuinneaghain

Little Daisies Childcare

Managers' Report

2021 was another eventful year in Little Daisies Childcare. Little Daisies has worked tirelessly to support children, staff & parents within the continuing changing Covid 19 restrictions. Louise and Brenda Little Daisies managers would like to thank all the Childcare Educators on their continued support and dedication during a very difficult year we would like to acknowledge their appreciation of all our childcare educators who are a credit to themselves & Little Daisies for all their time, motivation and dedication to the children who attend our childcare service. It is evident the health, safety and happiness of the children is paramount. We could not have achieved the positive learning outcomes of this year without our excellent Childcare team who even on days that have been a struggle & challenging still smiled and ensured the happy family friendly environment that the children thrive in within Little Daisies.

In Little Daisies we are renowned for our quality childcare providing a positive family friendly learning environment to the children of our Gorey community. Through our strong partnership with parents' ethos, it was vital in 2021 that we also continued to provide supports to the family as a whole. During the covid 19 pandemic this has become even more evident in the wrap around parental supports requested and provided to parents who avail of our service inclusive of practical family supports involving food parcels, uniform supports, childcare fees, emotional support, engaging with multi agency's to gain access to services for children with additional needs, domestic abuse supports, housing concerns of homelessness, advocating on behalf of the child/parents with local schools when English is not the first language or the child may require additional supports when transferring to primary school, public health nurses, social work department, Barnardo's, speech therapy to name a few. Little Daisies will go above and beyond to ensure every child's/parent's voice has been heard and their needs met as best we can within our role of providing a safe, quality childcare service.

We would like to wish Patricia Derwin all the best in her retirement from Little Daisies, Patrice gave so many valuable years to our afterschool room, Patricia started in 2009 in Little Daisies, she will be greatly missed and is always welcome to pop in and say Hi to everyone.

Louise Cahill & Brenda O Connor, Childcare Managers

Staffing Structure

Brenda O' Connor - Childcare Manager

Louise Cahill - Childcare Manager

Supervisors –

January - October Aine Hennessey & Trish Derwin,

November – December Emma Dunne, Gail Molloy

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 (Sick Leave)
5. Tanya Cullen - Toddler Room/ room leader
6. Mary Dunbar – Baby Room
7. Bronwyn Murphy – Ecce Room
8. Nicole Costigan- Preschool Room
9. Áine Hennessy - Pre School-Room/After school room leader
10. Martina Byrne – Ecce Room
11. Lily Gethings- Toddler Room
12. Martha Kehoe- Preschool Room(aims)
13. Cliona Grace – Ecce Room/ room leader
14. Helen Cooper - Ecce room
15. Tina Mordaunt- Pre -School Room (Aims)
16. Trish Derwin – Afterschool/room leader (Retired February)
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

St Patricks Day 2021

While Covid 19 put a hold on the Gorey annual St Patricks day parade we here in Little Daisies had our own in house parade. The children made hats, badges, flags to enjoy the festivities. The excitement and proud look on all the little faces.



Graduation

Another year of covid restrictions for our graduation of 2021. Covid 19 had taken a lot from the children during this year but with the support of the Ecce teachers and both managers ensured the children would still enjoy their graduation in a safe manner.

The weather was on our side this year again 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.



Ecce 2021 Graduation



Graduating from the Toddler Room to Pre School in June 2021



Our Annual school tour to Kia Ora farm was postponed this year,
we will look forward to a return for 2022



Christmas 2021

Christmas in Little Daisies was a little different again this year but one step closer to our normal we still enjoyed the festivities within the centre for the children and childcare educators.

Great excitement and fun was had with the return of operation Ho Ho for all the children.

We would like to thank all the staff and students of the LTI for all their hard work and dedication to make the day so enjoyable.



We held our Christmas concerts in reception and a fun filled last day was had with the arrival of Santa. The children really enjoyed the morning.

A big thank you to Jimmy Hall for his help with Santa 2021



Childcare Educators Staff Training/Achievements

During covid restrictions our childcare staff team enjoyed many wellness challenges. To start we had two Teams captained by Tanya & Áine. All staff had to achieve 5k walking per day per person. The team with the most kms achieved over the two weeks won the challenge and the losing teams captain was given the task do a lap of Gorey dressed as a Leprechaun. All in good spirits Áine had the privilege.



Our next staff team event was a night in The Stables in Gorey. Everyone who attended had an amazing time, this was an individual challenge to enjoy & participate at their own level. While it was an individual challenge there was a lot of healthy competition on the night making a very enjoyable team building event.





While we could not have our annual Christmas social dinner event Lily, Tanya & Áine planned a full week of Christmas activities for all the staff to enjoy including room decoration competitions, best Christmas dress up, Brenda and Billy Molloy did a pancake morning, lucky dip kris kindle. Louise and Brenda cooked a full breakfast for all the staff to enjoy. All the children and staff enjoyed having Box Coffee on site for the week as a treat with coffee, hot chocolates to mark the Christmas holidays.



Individual achievements

- Tina Mordaunt achieved her Level 7 in Childcare and education throughout a very difficult year of Covid 19 all classes were held online during this academic year. Well done Tina on your achievement very well deserved.
- Brenda O Connor completed her Link Leadership for inclusion programme. Brenda has now taken over the role of Inclusion Coordinator. Well done on your achievement and the children in our service are very lucky to have you caring for all their inclusion needs.

Childcare room Projects developments

Little Daisies has continued to grow and develop over 2021, with the wide range of activities each childcare room have enjoyed during the year we have selected a few to show you all below

Afterschool



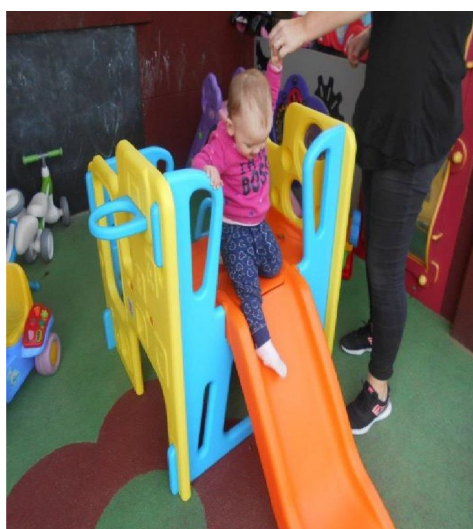
Red Preschool & Green ECCE Rooms enjoying the Owls and Eagles visiting



Our children in the toddler room enjoying some of their Aistear activities



Baby Room activities



Youth Section

Unfortunately 2021 opened with the country in yet another lock-down, however by this point the youth team was well versed in working with the groups through a variety of ways. Our groups continued to meet on zoom or teams and the weekly drive and envelope drop continued to houses within the km restrictions. This was a good way for our staff to safely see our young people, have a quick chat and maintain contact.

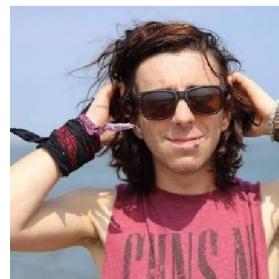
Every year our youth team would do their best to be creative with our groups and this year was no different. We achieved country wide success with our “Tell it like it is” writing competition, an extension of our book swap incentive from the previous year. This saw over 80 young people submit entries about their experiences during covid. Local Author Carmel Harrington, alongside the Gorey Guardians’ Cathy Lee and published Gorey Community School Author Amy Cahill agreed to take on the very difficult task of judging this. After much deliberation 2 young people were chosen as winners. Harry as the winner of the U12 section and Senuri in the over 12 one.



Restrictions continued into March meaning that the St. Patricks Day parade was cancelled, our staff were not to be deterred and had an online completion with the young people to send in their photographs of how they had spent the day. This led to some very funny entries from dressing up dogs, parties at home and even some computer designed graphics. Our winner was Hannah Chambers who spent her day designing a poster in Irish Sign language saying “Happy St Patricks day”, she even managed to get the GYNG building into background of her photo.



There was light at the end of the tunnel and restrictions were starting to lift, this meant we could start to get back into the centre. During the first lockdown we had taken the opportunity to do up the youth room. Thanks to funding from LEADER we were able to restart the work on our SPACE digital hub. The gaming group along with Joe and Aidan were working on what equipment would be in it and how it would be set up. So we got to work organising artist James Kirwan to come in and do a Graffiti wall with some of our young people. This wall also pays homage to a very special young man Seanie O'Keeffe Hempenstall, who played many gigs in our building during his short life and meant a lot to the staff and members here in GYNG.



The work on this room continued through the year and finally in October this room was fully equipped and ready to welcome groups into it.



The summer months saw lots more opportunities for our groups to meet up and make the most of the local amenities. Our summer project normally means us getting the chance to go further afield but with covid still hovering in the background and many places still not able to offer full services, or having to close at last minute. We had to tailor our summer project to suit this, also giving us the opportunity to visit some business we had never been to before.

Once September came along we were able to have restricted numbers back into the centre. It was a new experience for us all, having to wear masks, ensuring everyone socially distanced and was certainly a challenge both for staff and young people but this was the trade off with being back inside so everyone was happy to comply.

The months leading up to Christmas saw all the groups getting back to pre-covid normality with a lot of the regular Youth Section activities recommencing from the Annual Primary Halloween walk to the Stand Up Gig.

The youth section finished up the year the way they have for the last number of years, packing up and delivering hampers for local families and individuals in need. This could not be done without the help of both the people and the business's in Gorey and for that we are eternally grateful.



We would like to take this opportunity to thank all the staff in GYNG, the Board of Management and particularly our CEO Mandi for all their support over the course of the year.

Karen McCann, Youth Co-Ordinator

Primary School Groups

Starting off the year in another lockdown was a challenge for our primary groups as groups had to remain online, many families struggled with the logistics of working from home, home schooling as well as everyday life. In many cases it was either families had used all their data allowance or did not have the necessary equipment (tablets, laptops) to access online groups. We maintained contact through text messages and phone calls with the parents and young people.

As these groups were done during lockdown, one of the main challenges was getting young people to join the group and to keep them engaged with the planned activities. Because this group is aged between 10yrs – 13yrs of age we found that as they were online for school all day, we needed to limit our screen time as the members were tired of the constant screen time.

As the weather was warm at the start of the year, we encouraged the members to bring their devices outside. This seemed to help the general humour and wellbeing of the group. This also helped in the planned activities as we were able to incorporate more nature-based activities.

As the end of April, start of May came along it meant we were able to meet up outside the Youth Centre. This meant a lot more of the group were able to meet and some members that we had not seen in a few months were able to come back.

One of the issues we faced during this was the unpredictable nature of the Irish weather. We invested in 2 gazebos to help in sheltering us from the weather.

Once September came along, we were able to meet indoors once again. As this was the start of a new school year it meant that some of our members moved up to the secondary group and the primary group got new members. We were limited in the number of members we were able to accept and there was some nervousness in some of the member meeting indoors due to the pandemic. To combat these fears, we made sure to adhere to the recommended safety guidelines. After a few weeks this became less of a concern, and we were able to focus primarily on the integration and overall enjoyment of the group.





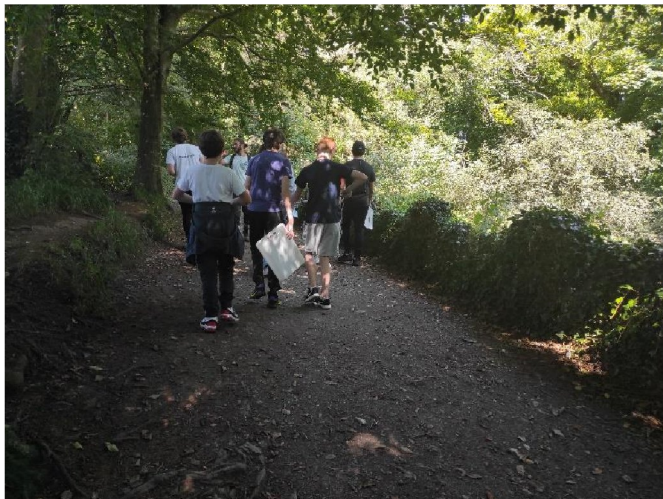


Courtown

2021 was a year of two halves due to covid. At the beginning of the year we worked online before moving to outdoor only activities at the end of April. Finally, at the end of the year we were allowed to return to indoor groups. Due to these restrictions we had many challenges, the biggest issue for the Courtown groups was internet and technology issues. Most of our young people found it difficult during the strict lockdowns with internet connectivity and lack of devices due to numerous people in their household needing the internet and tablets/computers at the same time to complete school, college and to work. As a youth service some of our young people sacrificed some of their engagement time with us so that their mam and dad could work from home without losing internet connection. In our teenage group it became apparent that some of the young people were very tired of screens as their entire school days were online, in some cases the young people were spending 13/14 hours in front of a screen a day. To compact this the online zoom session became slightly shorter than an in person group but more impactful with regards to activities to engage. Some of the more successful activities included online gaming as a group, quizzes and a farm tour. Activity packs were also delivered to our primary members so they could be still involved in the group whether they had internet or not.

From end of April we were allowed to meet outdoors, both primary and the teen group came back to capacity numbers within the first day. Our young people were excited to socialize among their peer group again and have some fun without computers involved. During this outdoor only period the Courtown group utilized the outdoor space that Courtown/Riverchapel area provided especially the woods and the beach. In September we were allowed to conduct groups indoor but spent much of September outdoors as the weather was nice, we adopted four seals from Seal Rescue Ireland, King Rat, Sunda Pangolin, Kiwi, and Dugong. Eventually the Irish weather became an issue so we moved to mainly indoor activities. In October the Courtown youth services moved from Ocean point in Courtown to the Riverchapel Community Hub in the Riverchapel Complex. This move has provided more opportunity to use the complex and its facilities, we look forward to a bright future in the Riverchapel Hub.





Summer Activities





Gaming Group

Due to Covid the start of the year started off slowly but as we already had an online discord channel we were able to continue to meet virtually. During this time the group had been involved in Dungeons and Dragon from earlier the previous year so this was continued and we continued this up in May when we started to wind down as many of the members were completing their leaving certificate.

The main challenge was keeping the members engaged and that they enjoyed the group online. We achieved this by introducing some music writing, photography projects and learning new types of software (3D design, computer coding). Once we were able to meet outside the centre we were able to use some of the music equipment from upstairs.

During the summer months Aidan and Joe (through Leader funding) had ordered a whole range of new equipment for Gorey youth Needs. This included music equipment (electric drum kit, DJ desk, microphones), 2 x 3D printers and 4 x PCs. The room also got a brand new furniture and new LED lighting. Once the equipment arrived Aidan and Joe were able to set up the room.

With most of the previous members now finished school, we focused on getting new members to join the group. Promoting this became our main focus and encouraging new young people to attend workshops, initially the group had been for seniors but there was a need shown for a group for the younger age group so it was opened up to accommodate them.



Illuminate Workshop

The Illuminate workshops have continued to go from strength to strength continuing with their film making project which had been stalled a number of times due to covid. The group made 8 shorts films on a variety of topics, all of which are available to view on our Facebook page. Having the opportunity to see these films on big screen at the premier of this was a fantastic experience for the young people and their families.

A number of this group have progressed on to college or training courses leaving spaces for the next group of young people to start in September. Covid meant we had to tailor our activities and the group picked a variety of topics to cover from cooking to art that we could do in the centre as many local amenities still had their restrictions in place.

The group had a very successful year being awarded both an Investing in Children award and a Garda Youth award, and finished up the year with a meal out to celebrate these successes.



Openmix

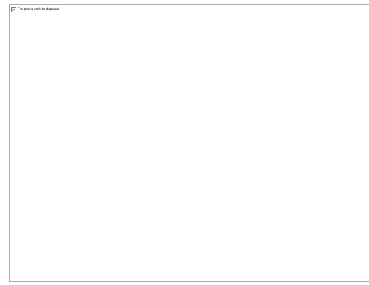
As with all our groups the Openmix had their initial sessions online and the members were craving some social activities so were delighted when we were able to start meeting in person. One of the first things the group completed when restrictions lifted was completing the film "The Good fight" with director Luke Spellacy Shaw, with the group spending the weekend at GYNG filming. Unfortunately, due to covid we had to postpone the premier of this a number of times but finally got to hold it this year. This project was funded by the Ireland Fund.



For Pride month the group contact the local council asking for them to fly the Pride flag outside the council buildings, to which they agreed and had a local ceremony to raise the flag.



As the Dublin pride was a virtual event, we gathered the group outdoors and had our own Pride celebrations with live streaming of the main events in Dublin.



The group enjoyed the summer project with the rest of the GYNG young people getting to try out a lot of new activities. The new term saw Openmix reopen with a whole new group of young people who had just started in secondary school. This brought a fresh feel to the group and they were eager to get involved in local projects.

Educate Together secondary school opened its doors to the youth workers Karen and Jade, who did a presentation for Stand Up week. 2021 saw restrictions ease enough to allow us to have our annual Stand up gig, however we did have this outdoors as numbers were still limited in doors. A number of local young bands and artists took part in this and then the young people took over for Karoke.

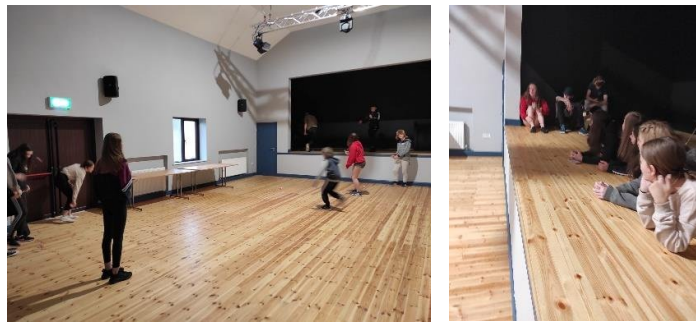


For part of stand up week GYNG, Gorey School of Art and Gorey Community School were lit up into Pride Flags, in support of the LGBTQi community.



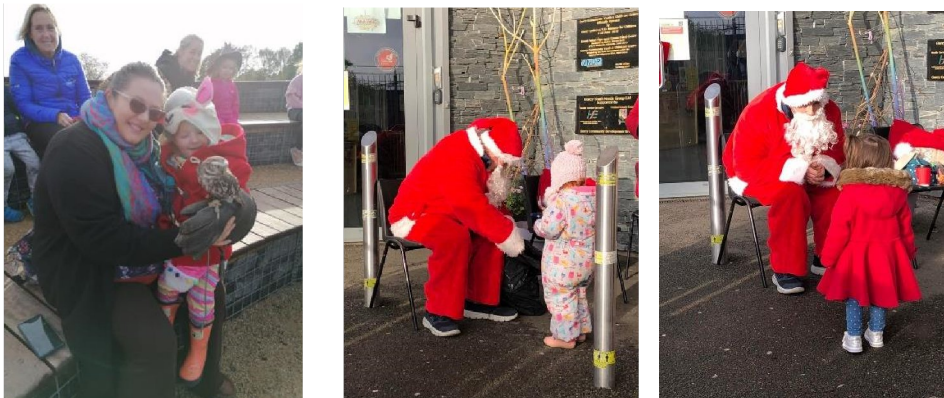
New Initiatives/ Groups

The idea setting up of the Ballyfad/Coolgraney teens group in October '21 was sparked after a local parent came to GYNG to talk about lack of opportunities and activities for young people in Ballyfad and Coolgraney. An activity day over the October midterm eventually accumulated into the new Ballyfad/Coolgraney youth group being established. A primary group soon followed after a consultation with local parents.



Parent & Toddler

As with our main stream groups our parent and toddler were one of the worst hit during covid and had to remain online the longest. We maintained contact with the members through messenger and text message. A special thank you to Ann Canty for all her hard work during this period making sure that these were maintained and for organising local meet ups with the restrictions allowed in local parks and hotels. One tradition that we couldn't miss was Santas visit to Parent and Toddler and arranged for him to visit the group outside the centre.



Staff training

Every year the youth staff thrive to take part in as much upskilling as possible, which due to time constraints can be a challenge. However due to covid there was more opportunities to do so and they completed the following courses between them.

QQI Training Delivery and Evaluation – Karen & Tricia

Decider Training – Karen & Tricia

Youth and Community Work level 7 – Jade & Aidan

Strong not tough Adult Resilience – Karen & Tricia

Eco Unesco- Youth for Sustainable Development - Tricia

Mental Health First Aid – Karen & Tricia

Supporting LGBTQI young people – all youth staff

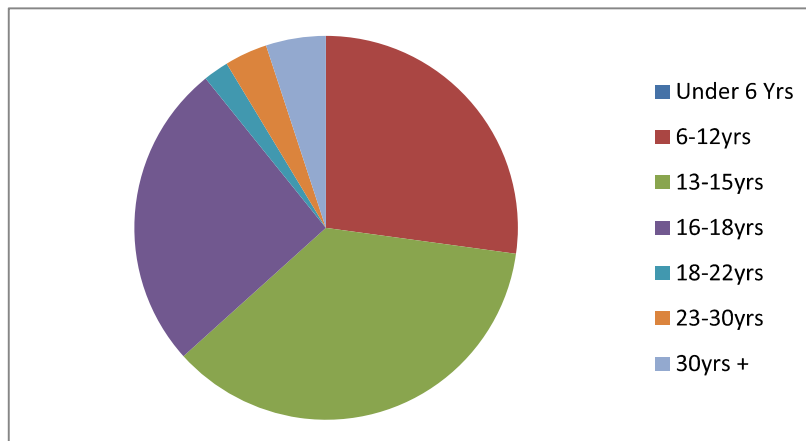
Restorative Practice – Karen & Tricia

In the know Program - Karen

Rainbows Program – Karen & Tricia

Youth & Community Services Statistics Jan - Dec 2021

Service	No.s Attending	Under 6 Yrs	6-12yrs	13-15yrs	16-18yrs	18-22yrs	23-30yrs	30yrs +
Gorey Primary Group 3rd & 4th Class	25		25					
Gorey Primary Group 5th & 6th Class	28		28					
Illuminate	20			8	12			
Openmix	28			13	15			
Gorey Gaming Group	20			3	13			
Courtown Primary Group	39		39					
Courtown Teens	30			23	7			
Ballyfad Workshop	16			11	5			
Summer Programmes	87		24	28	35			
Creative Writing Course	10						2	8
Drumming Workshops	36		12	12	12			
Parental Support	48					10	18	20
Parent & Toddler Group	Connected through Facebook and Messenger Groups							
Pride Event	23			15	8			
Tell it like it is Essay Competition	83		34	49				
Stand Up Gig	38			19	11	3	2	3
1-1 Work	53			18	35			
Ipas Centre	18		4	14				
Film making Workshop	13			8	5			
	615	0	166	221	158	13	22	31





Annual Report

2021





“I love when a family I am working with is suitable to refer to the RISE Project. I know they will not only receive prompt intervention, but will also be supported by professional, caring and sensitive key workers who are able to instantly ensure that the young person, and often their families, feel comfortable engaging and also feel respected and listened to. The RISE project have frequently responded to young people and families who are experiencing a crisis with minimal delay and their ability to quickly understand the needs and strengths of the individuals astounds me. I have referred families to the RISE project and other services many times. In situations where the safety and welfare of young people is at risk, I am most confident when an application is accepted by RISE.”

- Social Worker, Intake & Assessment Team

2021 - Numbers at a glance :

No. of VIPs accepted from Tusla referrals:	11
No. of VIPs who engaged in weekly sessions:	12
No. of successful Brief Interventions	8
No. of refusals to engage:	0
No. of VIP cases closed successfully	3
No. of referrals on waiting list:	3

‘Likes’ on the ‘RiseProjectGorey’ Facebook page: 169

‘Followers’ on the ‘RiseProjectGorey’ Instagram profile: 198



Timeline of the RISE project 2021:

- 1st January Expansion to 4-day week
- 11th January Five current VIPs re-engage under Level 5 government Covid 19 restrictions
- 18th January Start of emergency 10-week brief intervention & referral to play therapy
- April - Sept - 5 weekly VIPs continue to engage
- 5-week Brief Intervention with four boys from Courtown Hotel direct provision centre – hillwalks, kayaking and birds of prey display
 - 2-week brief intervention for sister of a VIP – School refusal/education
 - 4-week emergency brief intervention for homeless VIP
 - 3 VIPs successfully released and cases closed
- November 4 new VIPs started, including 2:1 crisis case
- December Equipment purchased (Mountain bike, safety equipment, Stand-Up Paddleboards, storage shed)



Covid 19 – Challenges and Achievements:

Since the RISE project began operating under tight government restrictions in 2020, our creative and innovative ways of working with and around the restrictions were carried forward into 2021 'lockdown' periods. Examples include asking parents to provide transport, meeting the VIPs at outdoor venues only, and providing VIPs with their own travel mugs so they could still have hot drinks and snacks together in the outdoors.

RISE project staff carried letters from Tusla confirming their status as essential workers and, once travel restrictions were lifted, Tusla's policy on safely transporting young people was reinstated for VIPs.

Digital delivery was not an issue for the RISE project during restrictions as all VIPs who wanted to meet were able to meet outdoors.

Additional work in 2021:

RISE project workers were well placed to occasionally provide some casual assistance to siblings and parents of VIPs in areas such as educational support, referrals to parenting support, etc.

This was regarded by all as a worthwhile relationship-building exercise with VIPs and their families.

Staff training & achievements:

Climbing Wall Instructor training course – 2 days

SUP Instructor assimilation course and assessment (passed) – 4 days total

Ride Leader training and assessment (passed) – 1 day

Trail Cycle Leader training course – 2 days (Assessment passed Feb. 2022)



Information on the 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.

Referrals are made to GYNG management from Tusla Social Workers only. GYNG and RISE staff can work closely with Social Workers to ensure the best possible level of care and outcomes for young people.

RISE employs both male and female Social Care Workers, experienced in Residential Care, Youth Work and Adventure Therapy. Evidence-based, client-centred practice from a combination of disciplines is at the heart of what we do. RISE staff can begin work with either male or female young people at ratios of 1:1, 2:1 or 2:2 and this can be changed as relationships develop and/or needs change.

RISE staff are happy to take questions and enquiries or give further explanations on work practices or our model of care. If you have a young person who might enjoy the RISE project, contact John Fortune for more information: john.fortune@gyng.ie or 085 8545 255.

- Excerpts from information document supplied to Social Workers



Feedback for the RISE project in 2021:

“My time with the project has been enjoyable. All the workers have helped me and given me guidance on how to continue in the next part of my life. I’m happy to have worked with them and seen a few familiar faces.”

- Brief Intervention VIP, age 17, after 4 weeks’ work

After 22 weeks (28 sessions), the scaling scores for both ‘Personal well-being’ and ‘General sense of well-being’ increased from 3 out of 10 to 8 out of 10

- VIP, age 17, case closed successfully

“You are the best! Thank you for changing our lives.”

- Parent of a ‘case-closed’ VIP, age 16

Gorey Training Initiative 2021 – The Covid Year

Having become accustomed to living and working with Covid from March 2020, this continued right through 2021 with a mix of totally remote and blending learning depending upon the level of the restrictions at the time. One thing we were unable to do was to return to full size classes in either the Sports programme or the IT/eBusiness programme. This of course led to an increased workload for all tutors and staff as course material had to be delivered more than once to each small group of learners who attended in person. Once again, we were well prepared for this continued approach of blended learning with our continued use of Google Workspace with both learners and tutors alike being familiar with the online platform. Nevertheless, huge credit must go to the staff and the learners for continuing to carry out their work in these less-than-ideal circumstances. There is never any real substitute for face-to-face learning in a full class environment.

The classes of 2020-2021 graduated whilst still under Covid restrictions and later than would normally have occurred as we were given an extension due to the circumstances. We had originally started out with fifteen learners on the eBusiness course and of that fifteen, twelve came out with major awards and two with minor awards. We only had one learner who left the programme early having completed no modules. Of the other two that did not achieve a major award, one had gained full time employment and the other had become a mother and transferred onto a Youthreach programme in Laois. On the sports programme we started out with five learners and two achieved major awards and three minor awards. Of the three not achieving major awards, one had secured full time employment, another had secured part time employment and the other was not contactable at the time of writing. Here is a summary of the outcomes for all learners graduating Gorey Training initiative in 2021:

Sports and recreation (originally 5 learners)

- 2 progressed onto our Level 5 Sports Course
- 1 is in full time employment
- 1 in part time employment
- 1 could not be contacted.

ICT (originally fifteen learners)

- 8 progressed onto our level 5 courses (7 to eBusiness and 1 to Sports)
- 5 into full time employment
- 1 transferred onto a Youth Reach programme in Laois
- 1 Unemployed

The outcomes speak for themselves and show the benefit of Local Training Initiative programmes. The fact that we had ten learners who graduated our Level 4 programmes in 2021 and stayed with us to start the Level 5 programmes in September 2021 shows the bond that builds up between staff, tutors and learners. This cannot be underestimated and outcomes from our programmes are not just in

terms of academic achievement, but also in terms of building confidence, friendships, increased social awareness and a sense of belonging and pride in the local community.

We still continue to maintain relationships with previous learners and it is a joy to see how they have progressed. We have many now in full time employment and a few still in third level education. Our doors remain open to all.

Covid obviously curtailed what was possible in terms of extra-curricular activity, but it did not stop us. We took part jointly with Courtown LTI in a 5km a day challenge between the Courtown learners, the Gorey Learners and the staff across both projects. This turned out to be a huge success (even though the February weather is not always conducive to outside activity) and it was eventually won by the Courtown learners. This is now to become an annual event (spoiler it was won this year by the Gorey learners). Following on from this and in conjunction with the Wexford Sanctuary runners (a group set up by one of our learners from the direct provision centre in Courtown) we set out to take part in the virtual Cork City marathon in June. An excellent response and effort from staff and learners across both projects once again. One learner did the full marathon, several learners and staff completed half marathons and many more learners took part in relay groups of five.



A selection of, but not all those who took part in the marathon

As 2021 progressed and the new programme started in September, we filled both Level 5 programmes with 10 learners on each course. Thankfully, due to an easing of restrictions more classroom-based activity could take place, as indeed could group activities and the year started out with a team building event at The Stables.



This easing of restrictions also saw a welcome return to our Operation Ho-Ho-Ho where both classes decorate the classrooms and corridors and invite the children from childcare up to meet Santa.

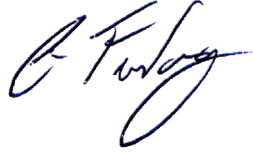


On a personal note, this is my last submission for the AGM annual report and I would like to thank all of the staff within GYNG and the learners for making my time so enjoyable. I have never, and likely never will, worked in such an amazing environment with such an amazing group of people.

I would like to thank Mandi our amazing CEO and Trish and her replacement Mairead our finance officer(s) for all of their invaluable help throughout the year. I would like to thank Susan Sheahan and her replacement Maria Lindell, our Community Training Officer(s) in WWETB, Catherine Cleary and her replacement Edel Finan, WWETB Literacy support and WWETB in general for funding the programmes. Great thanks in difficult circumstances must go to assistant coordinator Matt Dunbar, tutors Jennie Frizelle, Philip Maher and Celina Hayden (my more than able replacement) and last, but definitely not least Yvonne O'Connor, coordinator of our sister project in Courtown for all of her help, advice and cooperation. Thanks to WLD for all of their assistance in providing extracurricular courses

for our learners and to Wexford County Council for providing additional funding to help with equipment to enhance the learning experience.

A final word for our voluntary management committee who work behind the scenes to make everything within GYNG possible. The future is bright and here's to continued success in 2022.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'P. Furlong', with a stylized, cursive script.

Former Coordinator of Gorey Training Initiative.

Courtown LTI

In January 2021 a new group of learners started in Courtown Training Initiative. This was a new model of a level three QQI major award in 'Employability skills' course followed by a level four course 'Pathway to employment' over eighteen months.

As the third lockdown commenced, the new learners had to be registered and inducted online spending the first four months of the course online. An extremely challenging time for all.

In February, we started the '5k everyday LTI challenge'. Three teams took part, the Courtown learners, Gorey learners and the staff of both. The idea was that each team would cover 5k a day for fourteen days. At the time restrictions of 5k exercise limits took place. In total after the fourteen days, we had covered the distance of 52 marathons. It gave the learners a chance to get to know each other, which really helped when we eventually got back to the classroom in April.

In April we saw the return to the training centre, with the start of the practical modules. This was very welcomed by both the staff and learners.

In June, the learners took part in the Cork Virtual Marathon, supporting the Wexford Sanctuary runners, with one learner Ross Sutton completing a full marathon.

Operation ho ho ho made a return in November, the learners made Christmas decorations and craft for the market. The market was very well supported by the learners' families and stakeholders.

Welding was introduced into the workshop, adding to the pre trades modules, learners can now do QQI modules in Welding, Woodwork, Paint & Decorating & Floor and Wall Tiling. We have established links with the apprenticeship sector in WWETB and there is a progression route available to learners looking for an apprenticeship.

The Beauty and Hair and Barbering section started. The learners did modules in Manicure, pedicure, two week and gel nails. A QQI module in blow drying hair, with barbering and more beauty areas to start in 2021.

The learners also did Barista training.

Wexford Development kindly funded the students to do courses in First Aid, Manual Handling, Fire safety and Food safety in December.

The dedicated staff team in Courtown worked under extremely challenging circumstances early in 2021. My thanks to Gordon O'Shea, (Assistant Coordinator), tutor team: Celina Hayden, Tara MacNamee, Stephen Sheridan & Vivienne Perry. A special mention for Catherine Cleary of WWETB, our adult literacy tutor who provides invaluable support to our students.

I would also like to thank the board and staff of Gorey Youth Needs, particularly Mandi Tighe, for all the invaluable support of Courtown Training Centre.

2022 will see Courtown Training Initiative start its fifth year. The continued focus will be on providing a welcoming safe place for young learners to try practical trades-based modules, with the opportunity to re-engage in education as a positive experience.

Yvonne O'Connor

Coordinator, Courtown Training Initiative.





Acknowledgements:

During 2021 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
- PPFS
- Wexford Municipal District
- Gorey/Kilmuckridge Municipal District Council
- Sheila Barrett, Wexford CYSPC
- Vincent Daly, retired Area Manager, Tusla
- Youthreach
- WWETB
- Pobal
- Pobal Better Start Mentoring & support Program
- Gorey Badminton Trustees
- Gorey VTOS
- Gorey School Completion Program
- Wexford County Childcare Committee
- IT Carlow Wexford Campus
- Warren Hill Construction
- Gorey Guardian
- Miriam Grace Coaching
- FAI Local Development Officer
- Paul Buckley, JLO
- Pat Cody, Evelyn Redden & Carol Byrne, Gorey Garda Station
- Gaelscoil, Gorey
- Barnardos
- Sarah Rueben
- Sports Active Wexford
- Tesco Gorey
- Ken O'Mahoney, Box Coffee
- Hungarian Community of North Wexford
- The Ireland Fund
- Louise O'Byrne – Community Enhancement
- Ann Canty Parent & Toddler
- WLD
- John Kelly - WLD
- Gorey School of Art
- Gorey Youth Support Network (GCFSN)
- Clive Curran Accountants
- Gorey Rangers CE Scheme
- Gorey Community School
- Creagh College, Gorey
- Educate Together, Gorey
- St. Josephs CBS
- Bunscoil Loreto
- Gorey Central
- Leinster Rugby
- St. Aidan's Services
- Aontas
- Smith & Byrne
- Leader Funding
- FDYS
- Mr Fox

- Gabrielle Brickley
- James Kirwan
- Colin Travers
- Terrence White

- All the local Businesses who have supported our services over the year.

Tell it as it is: Lockdown Competition

Title: “Unintentional Simulation” by Senuri Wickramaratne, 16
(From a Student’s point of view)

I turn over. My mind suddenly waters down from the deep sleep. I wake up, unintentionally, 7 minutes before my alarm fires. I lay there, unmotivated to get up. I continue a bad habit of picking my phone up, even though I told myself I would not yesterday. I scroll through my phone, checking for inexistent messages. A notification pops up; 30 minutes until English class. I eventually get up from bed and head to get dressed. I put on my black hoodie and changed into comfy pants. My desk lays there, from the work I left unfinished from yesterday. I sit down on my chair and open up my laptop. I join the class and stare at the three dots go round and round in a circle. Eventually, I was able to enter the meeting. The call was crowded with initials and muted mics. An eery silence wanders through, as if our friends became strangers all of a sudden.

Eventually, a voice vibrated the silence. “Good Morning how was your weekend?”. Silence continues. I presumed everyone’s weekend was the same as mine.

Dull, lonely, and simulated. Same as every weekend for the last few months.

The awkwardness continued for a few minutes until someone replied “Good”. I felt the white lie, she just wanted to please the teacher. The class continued as normal. We learned about poetic techniques and studied poems about hope. Clearly the teachers were subtly hinting at us to give us hope during this time.

The class does not feel the same. Obviously, because it is through a screen. And surely, I realised that from the beginning. But what I mean is, I miss my classmates, being goofy in class and secretly throwing paper airplanes behind the teachers back. I miss the breaktimes where we would chat about complete nonsense. I miss the smell of books filling our classroom. I miss it all.

Finally, 5 hours later my classes were over. My eyes were straining, and I could see gradient dots around the room. I headed downstairs to eat lunch. In the kitchen I meet my sister who already started eating her lunch. She was on her phone trying to keep up with her college threads. I sat down straight across from her. She did not notice me. She was in a completely different dimension.

“What time is your next class?” “I say. She does not answer. Few seconds later she answers, “Three o’clock”. Still with no eye contact, we return back to silence. Suddenly, she gets up in a rush, quickly leaving her plate in the sink. She runs upstairs and leaves me alone, again. Weird, isn’t it, how I hated having my sister around, now I am begging to have, at least a social interaction with her.

I look for my parents, who I have not seen since last night. I find my Mum in the laundry room. She pops my uniform (which I have not worn in so long) in the washing machine. She clicks the button, and the clothes start to swing around in circles.

She greets me and gives me a kiss on the cheek. We both head to the living room. We find my Dad, watching the news. My phone vibrates in my pocket. I get a notification from the news saying:

“Covid-19: Dept of Health notified 46 further deaths, 1,986 new cases and the number of people in ICU move up eight to 156”

It had become normal. Every day at 6, I get an update. I could turn off the notifications, but it happens to be the only thing my brain is eager to know.

The 6 o’clock news is on. My Dad’s eyes are glued to it. I listen for a short while. But my mind filters the words because I already know, it is not good.

I could almost recite the news at this point.

I get up and decide to go on a walk. It was dark and cold outside. I put my hands in my jacket pocket. And I plugged in my earphones to listen to Lo-Fi beats.

The cold air felt soothing as the wind blew through my hair. I walked down my estate. I meet my neighbour rolling out the green bin. He was staring at me for a bit, but I was unsure if he was smiling as he was covered by a surgical mask. I smile, even though I was wearing a mask, and continued to walk, trying to make it less awkward. I take off my mask again, so I could breathe in some fresh air.

A light shone on my face, as the moon gets revealed by a cloud. It was a full moon. It felt like it was just a full moon two days ago. I do not even realize how quickly the moon phases go by, anymore. I look up at the moon. And I also see a star, and another star and another star. I spot Orion's belt. I find it so fascinating how it is in a straight line.

I would do anything to be up there in space. It seems less chaotic, calmer, and quieter. It seems safer.

I decide to walk back home as it was becoming quite chilly. I open my front door and I can feel the heat from the house hit my cold, bare face. I inhaled a lovely smell of soup. Mum was preparing her "famous" soup. I helped her prepare the table. I meet my sister again, this time she seems calmer. We all sat around the table. Finally, a time where we were together. No distractions, no stress, just in the moment. We talked about our day. Noticing how it was the same as yesterday and the day before and the months before.

After dinner, I headed upstairs. I had completely forgotten about the unfinished assignments. I sat down grabbed my pen and started writing. My mind kept losing focus. I kept getting distracted. I tried so hard to focus, but my mind just kept thinking...worrying. I felt this sudden anxiousness. My chest felt full and my heart hurt a little. I decided I couldn't finish the work, so I got ready for bed.

I laid on my bed and kept doubting myself for not completing my work and not getting things done. I could have but I also could not. I was lost in my thoughts; this all felt a bit too much. I missed my friends, my grandparents. I was tired. My head hurt. This was all too much.

I knew the next day was going to be the same.

But sleep was the only escape from this unintentional simulation.