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| **Transition Year Newsletter**  **September 2025** |

Welcome to the St Patrick’s College Transition Year newsletter. In it, we hope to keep parents up to date with important events that are happening in our year.

A big thank you to the students who prepared articles and to this edition's editors, Martina and Valeria.

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| **Transition Year Bonding Trip to River Shannon Adventure** |

The class left the school on Monday 8th September at 8 am. It was an early start for some of us. We arrived at the venue at quarter past 10. We sat down at the lunch area and had the rules explained to us by instructors Steven and Porche.

After that we went to our first activity which was archery. We were split into two groups, and each instructor showed us how to shoot a bow and arrow. There was a target to hit, with colours white, yellow, blue and red on them. It was a fun competition between both teams. Our next activity was wall climbing - there were three sides to the wall and three difficulty levels, easy, medium and hard. This was also a fun activity but some of the class found the last level hard to complete.

The last activity on the land area was an obstacle course. First up was a race; we were split into two teams who raced against each other. The obstacle course had big and small fences, a net we had to crawl under, tractor tyres, barrels and long tubes that we all had to get through and over.

Afterwards, we completed it again, but the whole group were holding hands through the whole course and had to work together, which was a disaster, but great fun.

After lunch, the class prepared for the water activities, which were the best part of the day. First was kayaking. We were taught how to use and hold an oar correctly. There were kayaks for three, two and one person. We all wore wetsuits. Some groups spent extra time in the water but that was part of the fun.

Finally, we had to mudslide down a small hill into a small lake full of water and mud. This was great fun and most of the class enjoyed it! To wash off all the mud we went pier jumping. The water was cold, but everyone enjoyed jumping in!

Afterwards, we had hot showers, which were very necessary after the cold water and dressed to go home. We left around four o clock. We made it back to school at around seven. A big thank you to Ms Kelly and to Mr Freely for giving up their free time to spend the day with us.

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| **The Spanish Eye** |

*Every year, St Patrick’s College takes* *a number of international students, usually in our TY class. This has proven to be a very rewarding experience for everyone involved – the students, the school and the host families. If you are interested in hosting a student, please feel free to contact the school.*

Hello! We are Martina, Valeria, Olga and Josu, the TY exchange students from Spain. We are here in Ireland, a beautiful country, because we want to improve our English, learn about Irish traditions, meet new people and make new friends.

We started going to school as soon as we arrived in Ireland. On the first day, Mr Jennings made sure he introduced us to the school. He explained everything and gave us a tour around the school, so we could feel comfortable. The teachers were very friendly and welcoming with all of us and so were our new classmates.

We are doing Transition Year, and we love it. Most of the classes we are doing here, we have never done them in Spain. For example, work experience. We think that it’s very useful for our future knowing what working life is like.

There are also many subjects that we don’t have in Spain, such as Home Economics, where we get to cook. We also have SPHE, where we learn about mental health, which we think is important to teach students all over the world about.

To sum up, we are enjoying this experience a lot because we are learning new things, meeting new people, finding out about lots of different traditions and it has completely overcome our expectations

Thank you so much for giving us the opportunity to study in this school.

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| **Work Experience Diaries** |

*Work experience is an integral part of the TY year. Students learn valuable life and social skills while trying out potential careers. This year's class are enjoying work experience, and we hope that the following short diaries give parents a flavour of what is happening.*

**Archers of Ballina**

I have been working in Archers in Ballina for two weeks now. I am really enjoying the work and think I am learning and gaining valuable work and life experience by working there. I work in the yard and mostly now I have been loading bags of nuts and timber stakes for fencing into people's vans and cars.

Although it can at times be a bit boring, it's also an enjoyable job as the labour isn't too physically demanding and doesn't leave me feeling lethargic which I presume might happen at other jobs where I could be left doing very little. Working in Archers, I get very little time to do this as there is almost a constant flow of people coming in to get whatever they need, and we could do with more people in the yard.

I enjoy the practical side of this job and working with the rest of the lads in the yard. I had already known one from bringing home his turf over the summer holidays and that's how I got into Archers in the first place. Sometimes you just have to ask for a job. It's also good that I know someone who is already working there so it wasn’t socially awkward when I started. I enjoy the craic with the lads especially on the break when we head up town for food.

Overall I am enjoying the experience and am also learning how to deal with people who can be impatient and are in a rush and practically run towards you with their docket in hand or when it hits one o clock and another drove of cars and vans come through the gates and we have to deal with them all before closing everything down for lunch!

I look forward to going back every Tuesday, and next term I hope to change it up a bit and try a new work placement.

Darragh McAndrew

**Molloy's Chemist**

In my time at Molloy's, I've learned a lot about what is like to work in a pharmacy. I've learned about different diet requirements that affect people like being a celiac or being diabetic as many that are affected by this need to come into Molloy’s to find foods that suit their diet.

I also learned about the different deficiencies some people have like anaemia or osteoporosis, and the different supplements people must take to combat them. I learned how to help customers find what they are looking for or arrange orders for people over the phone when they aren’t able to come in.

I also learned about sorting our inventory and finding products that expires soon and moving it to the front, so people buy it quicker, but I also get rid of expired inventory or damaged product that we can’t sell.

I will hopefully be learning how to use the till next week. This is an important skill, but first Molloy's wanted me to know the very basic things, so I know what I can do when not given specific work. I also hope to work in the proper pharmacy part soon as I have mainly been working in the food section as that's where the most work needs to be done because it’s usually only one person working there as its the slowest part of the shop customer wise.

So far, I've been enjoying my time in Molloy’s, and I am looking forward to learning more about how to work in a pharmacy as I may go for a summer job in a pharmacy.

Charlie Ratchford

**Killala Motors**

I’m currently doing my first work placement experience at Killala Motors, and it has been a great learning opportunity for me. I have had the chance to get hands on with a lot of different jobs, like oil changes, front brake replacements and fitting a new radiator fan. I also helped replace an Eolys tank, which is under the car near the engine.I got to do the rear brakes as well, which was a bit harder than the front but learned a lot from it. I also helped fit a turbo air intake pipe and that showed me more about how the engine works and how air flow makes a difference. Another thing I got to see was a wheel alignment, which showed me how it can change how the car drives straight.

I was shown how to use the car lift while under supervision, which gave me a better understanding of safety in the garage and how to use the equipment and tools the right way. It also helped my confidence as it showed that they trusted me and were willing to take time to facilitate me to do it myself, so I had the opportunity to learn by doing.

It’s been a really good experience so far and I didn’t think I’d learn this much over the two days I have been there. I can't wait to learn more over the next while and it will give me a better idea of what I would like to do after I finish school.

Tadhg Mac Conghamhna

**Tesco’s Ballina**

In the one day I spent at Tesco Ballina for my work experience, I learned a few key skills to help in future times.

Firstly, I learned how to identify an item on a shelf by the last three digits of the digit line under the barcode, which correlate to the said item on the shelf, which helps to find where it goes if I am confused.

Secondly, I learned how to properly move a cage containing heavy items such as bottles and boxes. The cage requires actual skill as they are heavy, move slowly and turn very slowly. To determine which direction the cage can turn, you need to find the green coloured corners, as the wheels on those corners aren’t locked, while the red corners are.

Thirdly and lastly, I learned more communication skills, especially with customers. As I am tall, I am, expected to help customers with reaching high-up items, more so with older people who cannot stretch anymore. Communication also allows me to ask questions to my fellow workers and manager, as I have a lot to learn of where things go, and how to place them.

Overall, I find the job to be extremely engaging for me, as I am always doing something. I look forward to continuing with Tesco for my term and hopefully for the summer. The other workers seem to like me, and I like them.

Paulius Egan.

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| **RSA Road Safety Module** |

*Our TY class are taking a road safety module as part of their studies. Last year, a number of the class won awards in a national competition for materials that they created after taking the course. We hope that this year's class will be as successful. Later in the year the class will have the opportunity to sit the driving theory test.*

Road safety is a very important issue in Ireland. Every year, people are killed or seriously injured in car crashes, and the government is working hard to make the roads safer for everyone.

In 2024, 174 people died on Irish roads. This was a small improvement compared to 2023, but it’s still a very high number. A lot of the people who died were young—25 or younger—which is really sad and shows that more needs to be done to help young drivers stay safe.

One of the biggest problems is on rural roads, where most of the crashes happen. These roads are often narrow and don’t have good lighting or signs. Speeding is also a big issue. To fix this, the government is lowering speed limits and trying to improve road conditions.

As an introduction to the RSA Road Safety Programme our class watched the RTE Documentary “Impact”. It revisits one of the most devastating collisions in Irish history and lays bare the enduring physical, emotional and psychological scars left in its wake. It was hard hitting and a difficult watch as the story was told by the families involved. It showed how one poor decision to drive with alcohol and drugs had such a ripple effect resulting in fatalities and impacting survivors for the rest of their lives.

Ireland has a plan called the Road Safety Strategy, which runs from 2021 to 2030. The goal is to reduce the number of road deaths and serious injuries by half. They even want to get to a point where nobody dies on the roads, which is called “Vision Zero.”

In conclusion, while we are just beginning the Road Safety Programme, we look forward to becoming more aware of road safety and the personal responsibility we all have whether we are drivers or passengers.

Ryan Wilkinson

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| **Drumming Workshop** |

On Wednesday 3rd of September, the TY class had a drumming workshop in the school hall. The class was two hours long and it was taught by Lukasz Krzywav. It combined drumming with a mindfulness sound bath. To start, everyone was given a drum and taught basic rhythms because drumming was a new skill for many of the class.

After some time practising, we tried some improvisation where each of us had to do a different rhythm. Because we are such a talented bunch, we were soon having fun performing together and learning more complex rhythms from Lukasz which we put together into one big performance.

After the drumming lesson, we put back the drums into Lukasz’s van, and we spread out different mindfulness instruments like some ‘cymbals’, mats and blankets on the sports hall floor. This was the sound bath.

When the mindfulness sound bath started, we were all laying down in the mats, in complete silence with some blankets in a circle around the instruments. In the meantime, the teacher was playing the relaxing instruments to reduce our anxiety, have better sleep, improve our mood, and enhance our mental focus. Some of us even were sleeping, it made us feel so calm! While this was happening, the teacher walked around the hall with instruments in his hands, and he put them next to some of our heads.

It was a new interesting experience for us, we enjoyed it so much and we got to learn some new things.

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| **GAA Coaching** |

Last week we began our GAA coaching training with Michael Fitzmaurice.

The preliminary session involved a presentation about the course followed by an active training session in the hall. Through participation we learned that creating games and teams and making them competitive can achieve the goals of building fitness, agility and skill in a fun environment and is much more appealing and rewarding than just being asked to run or sprint.

Michael got us to play games where we would jog around the hall, and we would have to stop when he blew the whistle. He started to make the hall smaller, and it got so small we were basically running into each other. He then placed out some mats that we would have to jump onto. At the end he revealed what the games were about. This thought and planning that goes into preparing for a training session was an eye opener for us.

We will continue with these sessions until midterm after which we will divide into groups and get an opportunity to put our training into action when we must train a group from one of our local primary schools.

Our first day was very enjoyable and we look forward to our next session. Thank you to Michael for his excellent coaching.

Jack Barrett

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| **TY Online Courses** |

This week our class received their login details for a website called tyonlinecourses.ie

This site contains lots of different short courses that we can complete on a wide variety of topics to suit various interests. We can explore up to 30 future careers in the “Day in The Life” series, e.g., “Day in the Life of a Nurse” or choose from other topics such as “The Power of Sleep”, “Concussion” etc. At the end of each course, you complete a test/quiz and must achieve 80% to pass. You can then download and print your Certificate of Completion.

Today, my friend and I completed the concussion course online. I found it very interesting and found it useful because we play Gaelic, and some our teammates got concussion in the past.

The course consisted of questions and videos to help us get a better understanding and showed us what to do if we get concussed. We had to answer questions on what we thought was right in a situation involving concussion. We found this quiet challenging as the questions were multiple choice and quite difficult. It took several attempts to pass at the end which shows the questions are not common sense and that we learned from completing the course.

We now have a better understanding of concussion and the length it can take to recover, and the risk associated with playing on in a game if you receive a head injury.

Conor Tomas Diarmuid Loughney

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| **Upcoming Events** |

‘Work in Wind Energy Job and Education Fair’ is taking place on Wednesday 24th September in Oweninny Wind Farm Visitor Centre.

The Work in Wind Mayo event will showcase employers from across the industry as well as third level colleges and training providers**.** This is an excellent opportunity to find out about the varied roles available in the industry. Parents and students can also visit [www.workinwind.ie](http://www.workinwind.ie) and see first-hand via interactive activities and demos what these jobs involve.