

# The Loreto Times

Loreto Grammar School, Omagh - E-magazine



**Head Girl Eilis (Centre) & Deputy Head Girls Maura (left) and Lauren (right)**

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**HIGHLIGHTS OF  
LOCKDOWN ARE  
FEATURED IN THIS  
ISSUE**

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## **Full Return To School Following Lockdown**

Relief, trepidation, excitement and anxiety are just some of the words used by our students and staff to express their feelings about returning to school following lockdown. This has been an unprecedented time for us all. Unchartered waters have been crossed and there will no doubt be many more challenges ahead, but we have taken every step possible to enable everyone to return to the building with confidence. Already students have embraced the new routines of the post lockdown school day and the collective spirit and willingness to protect each other have been palpable. Our pupil Senior Leadership Team have taken up their new positions and are ably led by Eilis, Maura and Lauren (pictured above). Our Social Media platforms were awash with student work and achievements throughout the closure period. In this first issue of our school e-magazine we have endeavoured to give you a flavour of some of the highlights of lockdown experiences and online learning. It has been a turbulent time, marked with highs and lows for us all.

# SKI TRIP - JANUARY 2020

ANDALO, ITALY

Our Year 11 pupils took to the slopes in Italy for a fun-filled week in January



# Time Capsule Containing 'Visions for 2020' Reopened for First Time

January 2020

At the end of January, past and present pupils of Loreto were given a window into the past, when they dug up a time capsule that had been buried in 1996. The 20-20 Vision project was organised as part of the European Nature Conservation year. It ran through 1995 with students across Ireland encouraged to imagine what the world would look like in 2020 and to bury their thoughts in a time capsule. Our pupils, along with Sixth class students from the Loreto National School in Rathfarnham, Dublin, filled a time capsule with newspapers and artefacts from the 20th century and wrote about their visions of the 21st century. The President at that time, Mrs Mary Robinson, attended the ceremony at the Dublin school. Our current principal, Mrs O'Hanlon, former principal, Mr Colm O'Neill and past History teacher, Mrs Margaret Wilkinson, led a group of representatives to Dublin for the reopening of the capsule on 31st of January. They were joined by the Class of 1996. Tributes were paid to Sheryl Heaney who as a member of the class had contributed to the project in Loreto, but who died tragically in a car accident in 2002. Past pupils, present pupils and teachers all enjoyed a very poignant day.



**Pictured above are the Class of 1996, including Mrs Margaret Wilkinson and Sr. Geraldine McAleer (front row, far right hand side)**

# Shared Education

In the month of January our pupils participated in a three-day Sports Leadership Event. This was a Shared Education initiative organised by CBS Omagh and Arvalee School and Resource Centre. The aim was to develop pupils' organisational, communication and team working skills as future Sports leaders, culminating in an 'Inclusive Games Event'. The six schools involved were Arvalee School & Resource Centre, Christian Brothers School, Omagh Academy, Omagh High School, Sacred Heart College and ourselves.



**Mrs McCann (Shared Education Co-ordinator) kept us updated with the highlights of the collaborative work and events which took place between Omagh schools throughout the academic year.**



# PRAMERICA SPIRIT OF COMMUNITY



**In March we presented this amazing young Loreto lady, Lauren, with her Pramerica Spirit of Community Certificate of Outstanding Achievement. She was chosen for the accolade in recognition of her incredible volunteering work.**

**Last summer, Lauren had the opportunity to visit Cambodia on a four-week expedition and took part in numerous volunteer projects. She was involved in designing concrete cylinders for the local drainage system, helping to build a dam which allows the locals to transport food over the river and planting banana trees for the poorest family in the local village. She also donated some of her own money to buy the local people she was helping food and livestock, which was instrumental in creating an income for families.**

**Three years ago, Lauren was chosen to participate in an exchange programme to the USA and subsequently volunteered in a Washington soup kitchen. It was established to help feed and provide shelter for the homeless people in the city.**

**@Pramerica sent us a lovely feature (above) of all the 2020 finalists. We now look forward to the postponed finals later in the year.**

# FRONT PAGE NEWS FOR OUR HOME ECONOMICS DEPARTMENT



**The Big School Cook Off team launched their cooking demonstration roadshow with our two pupils, Eimear and Milly, exhibiting thier skills in the SuperValu store in Omagh. The girls progressed to the Finals, held in Belfast Met Titanic Quarter in March, where they were delighted to collect their Regional Winner prizes**



# BBC School Choir of the Year



There was great excitement when Loreto Choir was featured during lockdown on a special BBC programme. In the absence of a 'Choir of the Year' final, the judges were asked to pick out memorable performances from the heats and we were honoured to have been chosen.



# SR. ORLA TREACY VISITS LORETO, OMAGH

March 2020

## International Woman of Courage

On March 11th, just days before lockdown, we had the honour of welcoming Sr Orla Treacy to our school. Sr Orla inspired us all with stories about the struggle to educate the young people of Rumbek in South Sudan, whilst facing the most shocking adversity. She is an incredible, resilient and truly awe-inspiring woman, who made a lasting impact on our whole school community. We felt truly privileged to have had her company for the day and delighted to donate £4500 to her works. Thank you to the pupils, staff and local community who supported us.. You can read more about her incredible work in the following pages.



Sister Orla was born in Ireland in 1973. At a young age, she was inspired by the compassion of her teachers who were religious sisters. She joined the congregation of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary, known as the Loreto Sisters. In 2006, Sister Orla joined other Loreto Sisters who were starting a new mission in South Sudan — a country besieged by civil war, inter-clan conflict, insecurity and starvation, where women and girls are particularly vulnerable.



Upon arriving in Rumbek, Sister Orla was determined to help turn the tide. She and the Loreto Sisters started a girls' boarding school with 35 students. Today, Sister Orla serves as the head administrator of the Loreto Rumbek Mission in Maker Kuei, overseeing a boarding secondary school for girls, a co-educational primary school (grades K-8), and a women and children primary health care facility. The Loreto Schools have served more than 1,200 students from across the country in a single decade, representing more than 64 ethnic groups.



Violence against women in South Sudan is among the highest in the world. Rape and other forms of sexual violence are widespread and committed with impunity. Girls and women are routinely forced into marriages and subjected to sexual slavery or domestic servitude. In a country with one of the world's highest rates of maternal mortality, 53 percent of girls in South Sudan are married by the age of 18 (nearly one in 10 by the age of 15). And 76 percent of girls do not receive an education — the highest rate in the world.



In 2017, famine swept through South Sudan, including the town of Rumbek. More than 40 percent of the population faced malnutrition — including 1 million children. Sr Orla helped establish a medical clinic at the school to serve meals to her students, employees and their families. Food provisions directly affected the school's attendance rates, which improved by 95 percent. The sisters work with community members willing to risk their lives to source and transport food provisions through conflict areas in South Sudan, ensuring the delivery of more than 12,000 meals per week. These efforts, coupled with a nutrition program for malnourished infants, have dramatically improved children's health in the region and resulted in more than 700,000 meals provided per year.



# Technology & Design

## YR 8 TROPHY CHALLENGE

Year 8 pupils were asked to design and make a trophy from recycled materials for someone who deserved recognition during lockdown. There were many deserving recipients who were thrilled with their prizes!



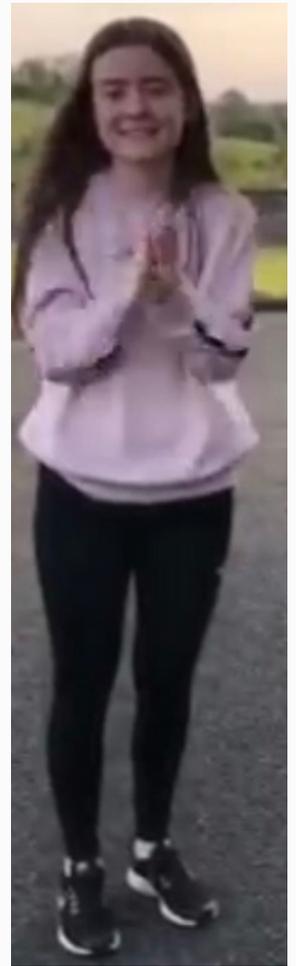
Niamh making her presentation of her NHS hero mum



Sarah was delighted to present her trophy to her parents



Oonagh presented her trophy to her Granny in recognition of hard work during lockdown



**8pm on Thursday evenings became a highlight of the lockdown week for many. We took to our doorsteps and clapped for our NHS carers**



# Chase the Rainbow



**Loreto Art students produced some wonderful rainbows as part of a Weekly Creative Challenge during lockdown. This was in response to the social movement #chasetherainbow which started in Italy after the spread of Covid19. With social distancing and school closed, Loreto students were connecting with each other by creating colourful rainbows which they were then putting in their windows for others to see.**



# TADPOLES

**Watching Hannah Mc Sorley light up our TV screens and TIK TOKS was one of the highlights of lockdown**



## **TIKTOK TADPOLE INFLUENCER - HANNAH MCSORLEY**

A “TikTok tadpole influencer” is not a career path that Hannah McSorley had ever anticipated. In lockdown, however, with her GCSEs on hold, the 17-year-old Loreto pupil turned a time-honoured pastime – collecting frogspawn – into a potentially lucrative online empire. Hannah’s mesmerising daily videos of her tens of thousands of tadpoles have attracted 1.3 million followers on TikTok as @.baby.frogs, leading to a deal with a US influencer agency. “I’m honestly amazed by the following I have,” she said. “It’s just the simple things: tadpoles, frogs. People find it fascinating.” A week into isolating with her family at their home, Hannah came upon a patch of frogspawn at risk of drying up in a shallow puddle. She took it home in a jar, thinking it could be an educational experience for her nine-year-old brother. Another clutch followed a week later, necessitating an upgrade in housing from one tub to two tubs, and then a paddling pool filled with plants and rocks. What was intended as a project to keep her busy during lockdown sparked a TikTok sensation, drawing hundreds of thousands of views and many requests for help. She has written her own ‘how-to’ guide for those wishing to start their own “journey with tadpoles”.

# Mental Health

AWARENESS WEEK: 18TH-24TH MAY 2020

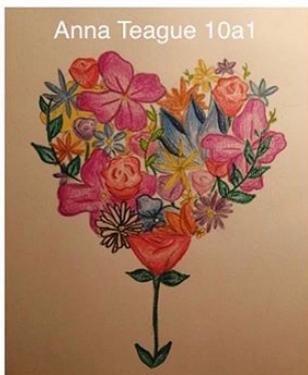
Mental Health Awareness week inspired lots of creative opportunities. So many of our staff and pupils promoted Kindness during the week and it was tangible in all the posts on social media. Here are just a few highlights of all the amazing random acts of kindness.



Niamh McKenna 8a1



Clodagh McGlone 9a3



Anna Teague 10a1



Emer Conway



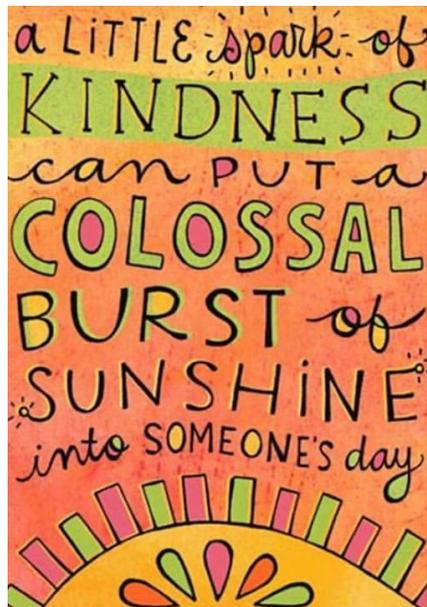
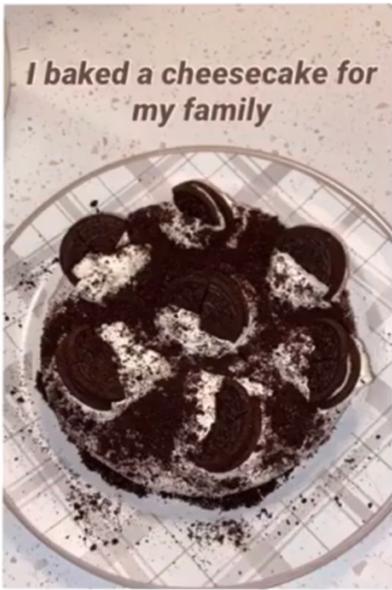
Aine Harvey 8a5



I'm cooking dinner while my family is at work



# Random Acts Of Kindness





This was one of our favourite 'lockdown kindness' images!! Current Yr 14 pupil Orlagh is pictured with her cow named Polly. Orlagh bottle-fed Polly as a calf and describes her as 'a big pet'. During lockdown Orlagh helped her father on the family farm and also worked part-time for Fane Valley Farm Supplies, as well as continuing her A'Level studies online.

# RIP SR. GENEVIEVE



## **"WE WILL MISS SR GENEVIEVE'S GENTLE PRESENCE IN OUR STAFFROOM"**

We were very saddened by the passing of our dear Sr Genevieve (Mary) Mullarkey, from Omagh and Roslea, who died peacefully on 22nd May 2020 in the loving care of the Specialist Palliative Care Team of Omagh Hospital.

"Sr Genevieve was a Loreto sister, a past pupil, a member of staff and a gracious and supportive friend to so many. We will miss her gentle presence in our staffroom, her unwavering support and her true tenacity of spirit.

Her desire to live every day to the full and to make the most of the limitations placed on her by her illness was truly inspirational. Sr Genevieve loved to go out and stay connected with people, to talk, laugh, share memories and stories... we are blessed to have had her in our lives".

(Tribute by Principal, Mrs O'Hanlon)