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# NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 8 - MARCH 2021



## CEO REPORT

Message from our Interim CEO

Welcome to our first CIDP newsletter of 2021.

I feel extremely privileged to have been appointed Interim CEO for CIDP and very grateful for all the well wishes I have received. CIDP is a fantastic organisation and I would like to take this opportunity to thank Keith Adams, our previous CEO for all his hard work and dedication over the years, helping to steer CIDP to where it is today.

The first quarter of 2021 has been extremely busy for CIDP and marked a historic date in our history as we closed the doors to the main building of St Joseph's residential service. A number of our residents have moved into their own homes and we have supported a small number of residents to transition to nursing home. In addition we have said goodbye to a number of staff who have worked with us for many years, we would like to thank these staff for their dedication and committed service. We have also welcomed new staff into the organisation and extend our warm wishes to these staff and hope they have many happy years working for CIDP. The transformation from a residential model to a community model is well under way with full decongregation projected to be towards the end of October 2021.

We were excited to see the roll out of the Covid vaccine with many of our staff and residents availing of it, we remain vigilant in response to the pandemic and look forward to the day when we can all meet again in a safe environment. On that note, we were delighted to welcome back the Boarding students in February 2021 who have settled back in extremely well following a long period of learning from home due to Covid restrictions.

Our Head of Care Lisa Moriarty is moving on in May 2021 and we would like to thank her for all her hard work and dedication, we wish her all the best in her future endeavours. The Recruitment process is now ongoing for her replacement.

I had the privilege to meet virtually our chaplaincy team and was delighted to hear all the good work they are doing.

I would like to personally thank our Board and Committee members for their continued commitment to CIDP and of course a big thank you to our residents, students and staff. CIDP continues to grow and develop as an organisation as a result of the drive and commitment of all our stakeholders. I remain confident that we can continue to deliver service excellence and enhance opportunities for our community.

I hope you find this newsletter informative and we would be delighted to receive any feedback. Please send any feedback to Alan Smyth, editor at alan@cidp.ie

Tara McBreen

## HR REPORT

Mary Stringer

The main focus of the HR department over the past few months has been the recruitment of staff for St Joseph's House and Community. We are still running an active recruitment campaign to ensure that we are fully resourced to support people to move into the community.

In this regard we have taken on new staff before and after Christmas in both St Joseph's House and in the boarding campus and I would like to take this opportunity to welcome them all to CIDP.

Covid 19 has also been a priority on our agenda. The roll out of the vaccination was a very welcome development in keeping our staff and service users safe. The majority of our staff have now received their first vaccination.

We both ended the year and started the year with the good news that five of our staff members had welcomed new additions to their families. We would like to congratulate Emer Nolan, Ciara Duignan, Michelle McNulty, Sabrina Hanley and Paul Ryder on the birth of their new babies. Welcome to the CIDP family Réiltín, Fiadh, Ellen, Julietta and Éanna.

# ST JOSEPHS HOUSE & COMMUNITY SERVICE

While COVID 19 did slow us down in on our journey of transforming lives and transitioning to community living, we still managed to support three people during 2020 to transition into homes of their own and a further five in January 2021.

We also managed to support three people to transition into an interim Nursing home in 2020 and a further four in January 2021 while they await the build and opening of the Cabra Nursing home. We have also provided sign language support for those in the nursing home so they can participate and have access to communication with the new team in the nursing home.

It is with great sadness that we marked the passing of Gerard Doran and that we could not attend his funeral mass in person however many of us did attend virtually and our Chaplain Frankie Berry kindly interpreted the mass for us.

We are delighted to advise that the community service is currently supporting 12 service users who have transitioned from St Joseph's House and are now being supported by our community team within their own homes. While lockdown has proven difficult to engage in community connection our dedicated support team have been supportive and creative in ensuring all individuals in the community are informed and take part in virtual connections to stay connected to the Deaf Community.

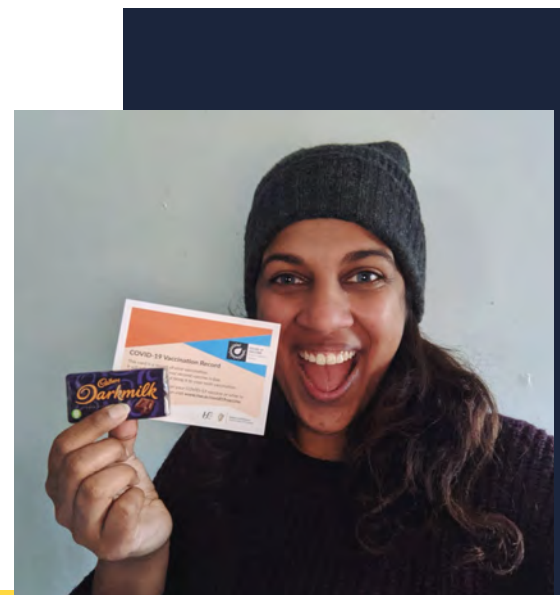
There is no doubt that 2020 was a challenging time for the decongregation project, as we had to prolong individuals who had secured homes in 2020 into the New Year of 2021 due to restrictions.

During lockdown, our Discovery staff supported the wider team as part of the Frontline support but also continued to keep their key individuals reassured and motivated about their transition to their new home.

While the project was paused in many ways, we were still able to maintain our connections with Housing agents and have proposed properties in place for people to view where restrictions would allow. This has helped in keeping spirits up in what can only be referred to as unprecedented times.

We said goodbye to our Main House on the 4th of February and closed the door to over 50 years of memories of supporting Deaf people in a residential setting and while it was sad to see the door close it was also wonderful to see so many doors open for individuals in their own homes.

We are now dedicated to supporting residents remaining in a smaller St Joseph's House which has been refurbished to meet their needs while they wait to transition to their own homes.



Seeta Manjeshwar

# ST JOSEPHS HOUSE

We are looking forward to the return of training and upskilling our staff in Social Role Valorisation and to continue to work towards our vision of a quality service in the Community supporting individuals to live a self-directed life.

As reported in the newsletters throughout 2020, St Joseph's House and the community have remained COVID-19 free throughout the pandemic. This is due to the diligence and compliance of all staff and the service users, I would like to thank all of those involved and ask them to remain diligent in the coming months during the vaccine roll out. To date a number of service users and staff, both in St Joseph's House and the community have received their vaccines, this will continue until all service users and staff have been offered the vaccine; following this, we look forward to a level of normality in everyday life.

We are delighted to welcome all our new staff to the team Racheal Abiola, Mikolaj Kostic , Esther Ewulonu, Emma Dillon, Sharon Keller, Nicola Flood ,Prisca Mayukua, Davia Talkevicene and Gosia Maliszkievicz you are very welcome and we wish you all the best as you join us on our Transition Journey to the community. We also want to welcome Donna O'Halloran to the Transition Team as she takes on a new role as Discovery Coordinator

## Gerard Doran

Sadly passed away on the 22nd January 2021

He came to St Joseph's House in September 2018

Gerard brought a lot of humour and fun to the days in SJH and made alot of friends because of his fun - loving personality and he will be greatly missed.

We will remember all the good times,

Rest in Peace.



# SERVICE USER

## Bridie Towey

My name is Bridie Towey and I recently moved from St. Joseph's House into my new home. This is my story of how my life changed this year in 2020.

I am originally from Roscommon and from a young age, like most Deaf children around the country, I was sent to St. Mary's School for Deaf children in the early 1950s. I boarded there and completed all my education there and when I finished school, I ended up staying on and working there for many years.

It was tough working in St. Mary's School; I did hard work and was responsible for the laundry and keeping the school clean. I would also be responsible for cleaning the grounds and had the responsibility to hand out the candles in the evening time. It was tough repetitive work and I did not enjoy my time there.

In 1994, I had the chance to move to St. Joseph's House in Stillorgan, Co. Dublin. I moved there in 1994 and immediately, I felt so happy to live there. I cried in the beginning, you could call them "happy tears" as I was so happy to live there. It was like I had retired and was no longer expected to work so hard.

My friend that I had grown up with, Ann was also living in St. Joseph's. We were in the same class in school and even made our first holy communion together. She has been a life-long friend even to this day. I am also very close to the Director of Care Geraldine Gallagher and consider her a dear friend of mine.

A few years ago, I was asked about moving out of St. Joseph's House and maybe moving into my own home. The HSE has a new policy called "The Time to move on from congregated setting" which is about enabling people like me to move out of institutional living into their own homes in the community to live ordinary lives in ordinary places.

This was a scary time for me as I have always lived in an institution so to move into my new home was a big step that I took. In March of this year, I moved into my two bedroomed apartment in South Dublin. I have 5 staff who do day, evening and night-time shifts. As I have never lived on my own before, they support me to do everyday tasks that you might take for granted like cooking and making my own decisions on how to live my life.

I have such a great team and they are a great source of comfort to me. My day to day routine is pretty relaxed, I get up when I want, eat when I want and decide what I'd like to do that day. Some days I might just take it easy and others days I might head out.





When I moved out this year in March, the dreaded Coronavirus hit us all and it meant my new life was suddenly on pause. All the things I had planned to do were on hold. It has taken me time to warm up to my new living arrangements as I really do miss St. Joseph's House but I'm very happy in my new home and I've even been busy decorating and adding personal touches to my apartment.

Video-calls are great and I've been able to stay in touch with friends and family during the times I have had to cocoon. Isn't technology just great? When the virus goes away or dies down, I hope to go on a little holiday to Kerry to a hotel I stayed in before that had a swimming pool and hope to soon resume my visits to see my friends at Deaf Village Ireland.

I'm 74 now and finally, I am living the life I deserve.



Since moving out of St. Josephs House on 23rd October 2019 I have enjoyed everything about my new life, having my own home, exploring all the local shops.

I like the area I live in because the bus route is nearby, I travel to different shopping centres nearby, to see what I like and go there again, I like the choice all around me. I'm happy to be near my family, we see each other when we can.

News about the coronavirus gives me mixed emotions, I follow the news about it on RTE and through conversation with friends and family, but it does upset me that it has been here so long, it's crazy. I want the vaccine and have it all finished.



I keep enjoying every day, most days I join Zoom meetings with people from my day center in Bray. I teach ISL to people in my group once a week, and through the Deaf Covid Road Run I developed a friendship, she began calling in June 2020 and still continue to call over WhatsApp every week. I am happy something good come from COVID.

Alice Jackman

# BOARDING SERVICE

Amid concerns regarding the increasing numbers of Covid cases, the Department of Education announced that schools would remain closed. This was disappointing news for boarders and staff alike. However, staff teams were enthusiastic, resourceful and determined to maintain contact with the boarders.

While in lockdown a number of boarders celebrated their birthdays - Staff sent wishes via Video clips as well as cards to let them know we were thinking of them.

In the second week of term staff teams on both campuses began to link in with all the boarders through the medium of Zoom.

Each week various staff members organised outreach Zoom sessions.

All the boarders were invited to attend. Sessions were informal and relaxed. These meetings had many positives and provided the boarders with an opportunity to meet various staff and more importantly to meet each other. Sometimes participants met with boys or girls not usually in their group / circle.

We also welcomed a new staff member to St Mary's, Aoife Prendergast. We are delighted to have Aoife on Board

## **Activities**

In addition to the weekly Outreach sessions, a number of fun activities were planned- Activities ensured a different level of interaction between all participants.

The creativity blossomed and a range of activities such as themed quiz nights, Yoga and exercise sessions and treasure hunts were hosted. We were very lucky to have the support from our Placement Students from TUD and CDS in Trinity College who used their imagination and creativity to plan and host the outreach activities in the last few weeks of lockdown. I am glad to say it was a success and would like to thank everyone for their suggestions and support!

## **ISL and Tea**

This initiative was originated during the first lockdown (March 2020) to ensure all staff had the opportunity to practice and become more comfortable using ISL whilst working from home. It was an opportunity for the staff team to come together in an informal way (with their cup of tea!) and participate in a range of fun games that would challenge and also leave many wanting more! The Activities Committee attempted to create various games that were fun and light hearted as well as being insightful and informative. These ranged from finger spelling competitions to comparing and contrasting old and new signs. It was great to see the ISL and Tea sessions being shared with all of the staff in CIDP. We have such a wealth of knowledge in our Organisation so I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their participation and feedback!

# BOARDING SERVICE

## Watch this Space

We are currently updating the information on our services in the Boarding section for the new CIDP Brochure. A committee is in place to oversee this work.

We will be focusing and preparing information for the following, Welcome and Introduction, What we do, (Activities and Key working) where we live and the Model of Care.

The Model of Care will have a new unique design. It will be visual and it will have the seven Pillars that are central for our Boarders as they progress through the stages of Boarding. It will inform our everyday work and delivery of services, ensuring it is of the highest quality with each boarder at the core.



### BOARDER 1

*I am happy to be back in Boarding as I have nothing to do at home. Happy to see my friends, likes activities, feels independent, can focus on school work in my room. I like going to the shops and I like the area.*

### BOARDER 2

*After spending time at home with my family, I was not used to social distance. Now I can see my friends and there is great support here in Boarding.*

## CHIME MENTORING PROGRAMME

Chime have developed a Mentoring Programme for Deaf and Hard of Hearing young people and are preparing to launch this nationally. They delivered an introduction to this programme to staff in February.

The Programme aims to address issues that focus on the transition to further education, vocational training and employment by providing individualised mentor support through a series of information sessions, workshops and activities.

The programme currently has two mentors, Laura Donnellan and Julianne Gillen and it is Chime's new initiative developed specifically to target young Deaf and Hard Hearing aged 16-25 as they begin their journey from post primary education into adulthood.

We look forward to this initiative being rolled out as this is a programme that will hopefully support many of the boarders in our service. They will be given the opportunity to explore and identify their goals and aspirations for adult life with a clear pathway to achieving them.





## NATIONAL CHAPLAINCY DEAF PEOPLE

**One of the most important aspects of the work of a chaplain is visiting people - when they are sick, when there is a death in the family - when the person is experiencing a crisis and needs a listening presence in their lives. Below are the accounts from two of our chaplains, Frankie Berry and John Patrick Docherty of their experience of visiting members of the Deaf Community. Also you will not know how modern technology is playing a greater and greater part in the life of Deaf and Hard of Hearing people.**

### **Visits to people living in isolation, during critical/serious illness.**

During these difficult times it has been hard for families to deal with losing a loved one during Covid. I recall attending a funeral under the Covid guidelines and I felt that the most important thing in this type of situation is not expressing words but to be there for the person that has lost a family member. Covid has forced us to become more proficient with technology. We can now connect with family members that are in care homes or hospitals by a video call. I have been using this method to keep in contact with many people in the Deaf community that may be living alone or in care homes.

Members of the Deaf community that live on their own can feel isolated during these times. On foot of this, I have assisted some of the deaf to become more familiar with video calls e.g. Facetime. This helps them to stay connected with friends and family that live in different parts of Ireland and abroad. Being able to connect with family via video call helps to ease the difficulties of not seeing family or friends during lockdown.

I visit care homes and it can be difficult to communicate while wearing a mask. The Deaf are happy to have visitors even though it is difficult for them to communicate with someone while they are wearing a mask.



**John Patrick Docherty**

# NATIONAL CHAPLAINCY DEAF PEOPLE

## Hospital virtual / Face to Face visits

In my line of work as a pastoral Chaplain, I visit those who are sick in hospitals. A lady I was in regular contact went into hospital for a routine check-up. She ended up with having the need to stay in for further medical investigations.

At the start of pandemic, we thought her stay would be a short one, but it wasn't to be. This led for her to stay longer than expected. This was hard on her and also on the other patients in not being allowed for any face-to-face visitors.

Luckily, she was already familiar with technology with the use of i-pad and smart phones, she was up to date with what's happening around her through her own social networking. We had adapted to having a facetime virtual meet-up once every few weeks. This enabled her to feel less alone and to catch up with what's happening in her other parts of life. During those virtual visits, we would chat about anything that was on her mind to her asking about how people she knew were keeping?

She had the opportunity to be able to follow the on-line web masses from either Ballygall/ Bonnybrook parishes whenever possible. She found these very nourishing spiritually. There were times, she couldn't get to see the virtual masses due to her need of care given by the nurses which collided with the times of the masses or there would be a poor access to WIFI network.

Weeks turned into months, her medical health went into a decline, much faster than anticipated, I had the fortune to have made a face-to-face visit to her in the hospice. I could sense that she was pleased to have seen me as I was to. We were at ease, feeling content to sit in each other's company without the need to say too much. During those moments, it was good to acknowledge our friendship, giving thanks to her for the talents she shared and gave to those around her. Also, more importantly for the love she had in her lifetime from her family and friends. We parted ways with a wave and a smile, knowing we wouldn't see each other again on this earth.

This brought home to me that each of us are on borrowed time and with the time we have left, it's important to make the best of what we have for ourselves and others.

Frankie Berry



# NATIONAL CHAPLAINCY DEAF PEOPLE

## Memories of Oscar Romero

My last trip away was in January 2020. I was excited to be going with my friend on a visit to El Salvador, where she had lived and worked for many years. I knew a little of the country from her, other missionary friends and a few Salvadorean priest friends.

But for nearly all my adult life Bishop Oscar Romero has been one of my heroes. Why? Because he was a man who could see the awful poverty in his country because of injustice and he asked all the people to seek a just and fair society. He was a man who became bishop of a time of violence in his country when many people were massacred, and he preached the way of peace.

He was a preacher who went against the view of the government and knew he was putting his life in danger. He was the church leader who championed the poor. He was their voice.

In March we have always celebrated the feast of two special saints: our own St Patrick and St Joseph. Now we have a 3rd special saint whose feast day is on 24th March. - his name Oscar Romero.

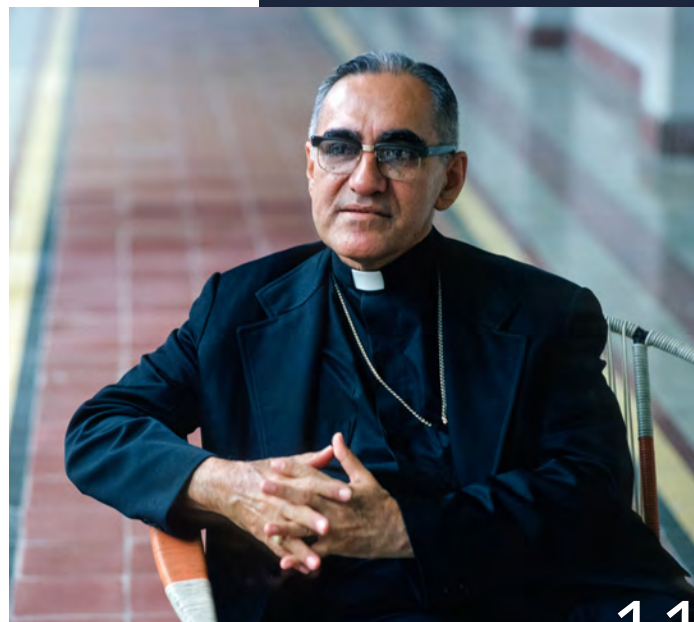
Oscar Romero was from El Salvador a small country in Central America. In 1977 the Pope appointed Oscar as Archbishop of San Salvador. This meant he was the leader of the church in the country.

Most people lived in poverty. As people began to get organised and work for their rights, they suffered persecution. There were many killings including church workers and leaders. Many of the awful events were carried out by those who wanted the poor to stay poor. There was also violence from some of those fighting for justice. Oscar was a man committed to the people, to the church and to God. He spoke out and preached for an end to the killings and violence. He spoke out demanding a just society. He became a voice for the poor. He became an inspiration for his people and for people around the world.

He was totally committed to Jesus and the gospel.

On March 23rd, 1980, he was shot dead when saying Mass in January 2020 I prayed in the church where he had been shot dead. I saw the wall plaques left by hundreds of people and of Oscar also by his who had received miracles through his prayer. And I visited the small simple house where he lived.

40 plus years earlier I had been inspired by the words and courage and commitment to justice. Romero from afar. In that house and chapel, I was further inspired seeing him also as a person who lived simply, who prayed constantly, who cared deeply for all around him



# NATIONAL CHAPLAINCY DEAF PEOPLE

genuinely worked to better the condition of his parishioners. He started an Alcoholics Anonymous group, worked with grassroots religious organisations, and worked to complete the building of a church that had been under construction since 1862 (work was completed in 1962).

Although shy as a child, he showed himself to be a natural leader and gifted orator. He was also adept at using media to get his point across, broadcasting sermons on radio to reach the poor who felt unwelcome in churches. His concern for the "voiceless" poor went further than just charitable work, he also wanted them to become more active participants in improving their conditions.

Archbishop Oscar Romero was the leader of the church in El Salvador (small country in Central America) from 1977 to 1980. This was an extremely dangerous time. The government and army were responsible for repression of the people. Totally committed to Jesus and the gospel, Oscar Romero spoke out against the government demanding a just society. He spoke out against the violence and killings. He became a voice for the poor. He was an inspiration for his people and for people around the world. He knew he was in danger because of his preaching. On March 24th, 1980 he was shot dead while saying Mass in a small hospital chapel, beside his house.

In January last year I felt privileged to pray in the church where he had been shot dead. And I visited the small very simple house where he lived. I heard stories of his kindness and concern from people who knew him.

Over 40 years ago, as a young Irish person, I had been inspired by the words, courage and commitment to justice of Oscar Romero, from afar. Last year on holiday in El Salvador, I was further inspired by him, as a person who lived simply, who prayed constantly, who cared deeply for all around him, who saw Christ in each person and worked to bring the light of Christ into every situation.

Pope Francis canonised Archbishop Romero in 2018. His feast day is on March 24th. "Each time we look upon the poor, on the farmworkers who harvest the coffee, the sugarcane, or the cotton... remember, there is the face of Christ."

Denise Flack





In 2019, four students began their journey to becoming the first Deaf primary school teachers using Irish Sign Language (ISL) in Ireland. Kevin Dudley is just one of the four students, and in this piece he describes his experience of the B.Ed in Irish Sign Language at DCU so far.

## Kevin Dudley

I am profoundly deaf since birth due to genetics, as both of my parents are also deaf. I attended a Deaf school where the teachers and SNAs communicated with us through Irish Sign Language. Some of the teachers in my school were also deaf, so that added to making school experience really enjoyable.



I never encountered any difficulties communicating with others until my teenage years. I was extremely active in secondary school playing sports such as soccer, rugby and water polo, however, playing with teams who had no knowledge of ISL really impacted my participation in the sports as I always felt left out. While it was tough for me trying to participate in sports, I'm happy that things are gradually improving with sports clubs becoming more aware and inclusive when it comes to people with disabilities playing sports.

With my passion for sport, I went on to study Sports Management and Coaching in Institute of Technology Blanchardstown after secondary school. It wasn't until I was offered the opportunity to work in the Holy Family School for the Deaf in Cabra as a PE teacher covering a maternity contract, that I had thought about becoming a teacher.

I contacted Dr. Elizabeth Matthews, who worked in DCU's St. Patrick's Campus, inquiring about a primary teaching course at DCU. She informed me she was in the process in developing a new course that would allow deaf students to become primary school teachers. Fast forward three years later, I received an email from Dr. Matthews with the great news that DCU had established the Bachelor of Education in Irish Sign Language. I applied for a place on the course and was delighted when I found out I had been accepted!

I've just completed my first year of the B.Ed (ISL), and it's been a challenging but enjoyable year. Primary teaching requires a lot of studying and reading, so this took up a lot of my time! The course has been very rewarding, as I've had the opportunity to work the most amazing lecturers and colleagues, and not forgetting the wonderful children on my school placement. My school placement was probably my favourite part of the course so far, as I got to return to the Holy Family School for the Deaf. Unfortunately, due to the Covid-19 global pandemic, my school placement was cut short.



With DCU closing due to the pandemic, students had to learn remotely. I struggled a lot at the start, but over time I got used to this new normal. Our lecturers worked tirelessly to ensure students were comfortable with virtual learning and contributed additional support to meet the needs of all students. The wellbeing of students is a top priority for DCU, so I cannot thank DCU enough for their continued support over the last year.

I'm really looking forward to what the future has in store for me after graduating from DCU. I would love to teach at the Holy Family School for the Deaf full time, with the hope of becoming a school principal in the future! Ultimately, I want to provide the best education possible to children and ensure they are in a classroom environment where they are comfortable and happy.

I would like to sincerely thank the CIDP and Folens for their continued support. It is greatly appreciated and I am forever indebted to them."



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**Sinead Leahy is currently in her second year studying a B.Ed in Irish Sign Language at DCU. In this piece, Sinead talks about her experience communicating with family and friends as someone with hearing loss and her future aspirations as a primary school teacher.**

## Sinead Leahy

"I have severe hearing loss in both ears which can make communicating with my family and friends difficult at times. I have a cochlear implant in my left ear and a hearing aid in my right ear, so when we're in a noisy environment, I struggle to hear people clearly when they are speaking to me. Thankfully, my family didn't have to learn sign language as I have perfect speech and rely on lip reading to talk with others. However, I did learn Irish Sign Language as a child to communicate with my Deaf friends who used sign language.

My primary school was really well equipped to deal with children who are Deaf or using Irish Sign Language. I was in a mainstream class, but had an SNA, so if there was ever a problem with my hearing aids I would just go down to the deaf unit and the teachers there would help me with any issues I had. Unfortunately, my secondary school didn't meet the same standards.

That being said, there were a few teachers in the school who were really helpful and supportive. I first heard about the B.Ed in Irish Sign Language at DCU from one of my secondary school teachers who herself had hearing loss. I knew I wanted to become a primary school teacher since I was in primary school myself, so I was delighted when I heard about this new course being offered for people using Irish Sign Language. I'm now in my second year studying at DCU and it's been a great experience so far. I really enjoyed my first year at DCU, despite the challenges that Covid-19 brought to education this year. With the closure of the university and learning from home, my exams were changed to continuous assessments as my internet connection isn't stable at home. This definitely eased the pressure of worrying if the internet would connect or even drop off in a middle of an exam.

After I complete my studies at DCU, I hope to go abroad and teach in multiple different countries so that I can expand my knowledge of the schooling systems around the globe and see what methods work best for teaching children.

I would like to say a special thank you to the CIDP and Folens for their support of this scholarship. This has been a great opportunity and I'm extremely grateful to be supported in my journey to becoming a primary school teacher."



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