



## INTERIM CEO REPORT

TARA MC BREEN & KEITH ADAMS

Welcome to our 15th edition of the newsletter.

As the dark evenings draw closer, our Borders are preparing for Halloween activities and looking forward to the half term break!

In September, we celebrated ISL Awareness Week 2023 in line with the International Week of Deaf People. Reach Deaf Services were delighted to mark this special occasion in the Deaf Community by hosting an event in Cabra Library, and we are very grateful to our guest presenter, Dr Cormac Leonard for giving a presentation on his historical research on Deaf people in Irish Institutions 1851-1922. For those who missed the event, the video of the presentation can be accessed with the link: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pfAA\\_Zv2vBE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pfAA_Zv2vBE)

We are delighted to confirm that Mary Stringer, CEO, returns to work from maternity leave on the 7th of November 2023.

As Acting CEO and Deputy CEO, we have been truly honored to come back into the organisation and see first-hand all the good work taking place. Whilst it will be difficult to say a second farewell, we are leaving knowing that the organisation is in great hands with Mary in the CEO role, and our chairperson Nessian Vaughan and the Board of Reach Deaf Services.

# HR GENERALIST REPORT

KRISTINA HARRIS

Over the past number of months, there has been much excitement on the recruitment front with Reach Deaf Services. A number of individuals have commenced their roles across our Support & Social Care Worker departments with a further five in processing with the HR Department. Sofiya Kalinova commenced her role as Policy Officer for Reach Deaf Services and Jack Higgins commenced his role as Student Accommodation Residence Manager. In our Community Services, Internal members Donna O'Halloran and Saoirse Van Den Burge commenced their Fixed-Term roles as Community Support Managers. In our Boarding Services an internal expression of interest was opened for two Fixed-Term Care Managers and also two Fixed-Term Team leader roles of which Niall Ivory & Charlene Gannon were appointed for Fixed-Term Care Manager positions and Nicholas O'Halloran & Emma Shaw were appointed for Fixed Term Team Leader positions. The HR team have also welcomed a new member, Eiti Sharma commenced as HR Administrator in August 2023. We wish all who have joined recently a warm welcome to the team.

We have future recruitment for the September - October period with vacancies including Night Porters, Transport Escorts and ongoing Social Care Workers.

Training has maintained a steady pace this year with ongoing training sessions across the mandatory scope of First Aid, Safeguarding of Adults and Children, Medication Management and much more. In the Community Service some Social Role Valorization (SRV) training will take place with direct teams during September. In October the HR department will be commencing a new Dignity at Work training which will be in-person training for all teams and management to attend. This will be valuable to provide insight to legislation and best practices. All teams in Reach Deaf Services undertook training in the fundamentals of GDPR via HSEland online module which will be closed out by end of October.

With the building works currently taking place in the Deaf Village Ireland unfortunately our Monthly ISL catch up days have been paused but we very much look forward to seeing everyone in the new revamped Deaf Village Ireland. Meanwhile, our team of ISL teachers continue to provide 1-to-1 ISL classes to a total of 17 team members including working with the ISL Interpreting team to provide ISL induction to new on-boarders. On the 20th September 2023, Reach Deaf Services hosted an ISL awareness Lunch in Cabra Library in celebration of National ISL awareness week where Cormac Leonard done a presentation of his Irish Deaf Solidarity with research featured from 1851-1922. It was a great day and fun for all in attendance.



Reach Deaf Services have made many adjustments to our processes and systems and have sought ways to further improve our connections across the services. In 2023, many departments have now adapted to use of Microsoft Teams which has greatly improved the connections and information sharing between teams. The IT department are now also in review of three possible HR system solutions which we hope to acquire before close of 2023.

# HEAD OF ADULT SERVICES

LINDA TIERNEY



## LOURDES EXPERIENCE - BY ANN FOLAN

I went to Lourdes on the 8th of August. We arrived late so went straight to the hospital. The next morning staff Alice came up to hospital. We went to mass. The staff looking after me in the hospital were very nice. I was brought for a walk around the ground. It was beautiful.

There was mass everyday. I went to light candles and to visit the grotto nearly every day. One day, I went up to the hotel to meet my friend for a glass of wine. We chatted about our plans for the rest of the trip. That same night, there was a light up service where people walked around with small lanterns that lit up the sky. It was beautiful. The deaf community had our own mass that night in the hospital. After, I was able to go on the balcony and look at the light service from up above. It was nice to watch all the people walking with the lights.

The next day, staff brought me to the shops to buy things for my home. I loved looking around the beautiful shops. I then had food in the hospital. We then done the stations of the cross that evening. We all bathed our hands in holy water and put it over our faces. We then got our group photo from Lourdes.

Staff that was with me supported me to buy small pins for the staff that looked after me in the hospital. They also gave me back pins that I will keep forever. I also got a present from two deaf reach staff – a Lourdes purse and a Lourdes bracelet.

On the last night there was a party with all the students and volunteers that helped over the time of the pilgrimage in Lourdes. I had a lovely night and was dancing with all the staff / helpers. We had great fun at the party singing and dancing all night.

I really had a great time in Lourdes and I did not want to go home, I wish I could have stayed longer! I cant wait to go back next year!





# BOARDING CAMPUS

CHARLENE GANNON & NIALL IVORY



## SEPTEMBER WELCOME BACK TO BOARDING PARTY

We were delighted to welcome back the boarders from their summer break and it was lovely hearing what they got up to over the summer. Some attended the Summer Camp with Chime, some boarders visited different countries and a couple of boarders had a thrilling summer, trying different activities such as go-karting and mountain biking! This year, we welcomed nine new boarders at both campuses and we are looking forward to working with them and their families. We had our annual Welcome Back BBQ and it was great seeing everyone catching up and playing games. It was also a great way for new boarders to introduce themselves to everyone. Thank you to our two chefs for putting on a lovely spread, and to the activities Co-Ordinators for organising games on the day, a most enjoyable time had by all! We couldn't believe how much the boarders have grown over the summer.

The staff also arranged a bonding trip to Dun Laoghaire for the new boarders, to help them bond with the whole team. They walked along the Pier, saw some Seals and had an ice-cream. A good outing enjoyed by all!

Our boarder, Luke Street, was selected to represent Ireland in a friendly match vs Wales and the match was in Dublin. Some of us went and watched the match. Unfortunately, Wales won 2-1. This was a great experience for Luke and we are proud of him! Another boarder of ours, Caoimhe O'Connell, is currently training for Irish Deaf Women's Futsal Team and is hoping to represent Ireland at 5th World Deaf Futsal Championships in Brazil and we wish her all the best.

We are excited to see what this year will bring our boarders.

## PARENTS PLUS

Reach Deaf Services and Holy Family School for the Deaf will be rolling out a Parents Plus Adolescent programme. This will commence on 6th October 2023. It is being held in St. Joseph's boarding Campus for Deaf boys every Friday from 10.20am to 12.30pm. It will run for eight Fridays and will finish on Friday 1st December 2023. It is an evidence-based Parenting course promoting communication and positive relationships in families. It is rolled out each year, so parents can avail of it. If you are interested in participating in this please contact Jackie O'Brien ([jobrien@reachdeafservices.ie](mailto:jobrien@reachdeafservices.ie)).



## STAFF UPDATE

There are some changes in the team; Charlene Gannon and Niall Ivory are our Acting Care Managers, Nick O'Halloran and Emma Shaw have stepped into the Team Leader roles. We know they will do a great job ensuring our service is of high standard. We also welcomed the following staff to the team; Janet McEvoy and Michael Byrne will be working at St. Joseph's and Nicole Stephens and Shonagh Bowe will be working at St. Mary's. We are currently advertising for one more Social Care Worker- if you are interested, please check our website.

## ACTIVITIES

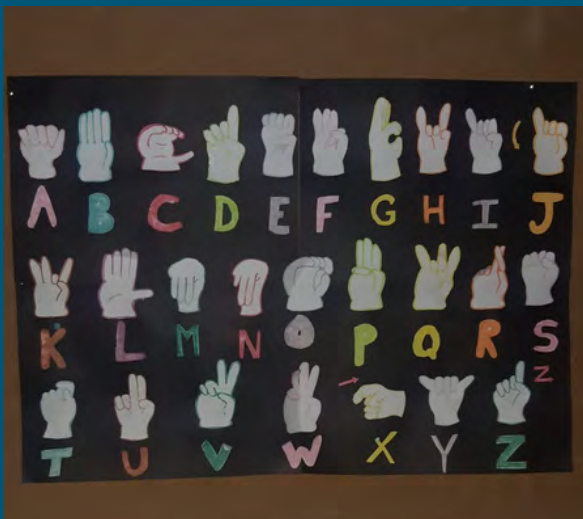
This year, we will have Boxing, Dancing and Swimming and the activities are funded by Deaf Sports Ireland. We are also looking to start an Art Club for our boarders- watch this space! We always welcome suggestions from our boarders and we have a Boarding committee where the boarders have meetings to discuss suggestions and share feedback. Food is one of the favourite topics at those meetings. Speaking of food, Ray, our new chef, had a meeting with the boarders and gathered suggestions for dinner- we look forward to trying new food!

## INTERNATIONAL WEEK OF DEAF PEOPLE

The week of 18th September is International Week of Deaf People and at St Mary's Boarding we were busy planning different events to mark this occasion. Seeing as blue is the chosen colour to represent Deaf people, we wore blue clothes and baked a blue cake! Breda Whelan-Mooney brought in decorations to put up around Boarding. Justin Smyth hosted a workshop where the boarders discussed why it is great being Deaf; some shared that being Deaf makes them feel powerful, we discussed how important ISL is, and it was also agreed that the Deaf people are the funniest people! We also shared our favourite signs- we learnt some old signs too and it was interesting seeing how signs have evolved over the years. Emma Hamilton wrote a beautiful poem about ISL- you can see it the next page.

The staff in St Joseph's Boarding wore blue and one of the boarders baked a cake and decorated it with Irish Sign Language written on the top of it. We played some games and celebrated ISL awareness week.

Some of the staffs in boarding went to Cormac Leonard interesting presentation on Deaf Solidary using his historical research on Deaf People in Irish Institutions between 1851-1922 and it was fascinating to hear the different stories of how Deaf people supported each other at the time. Thank you to all involved in planning the above events to mark an important occasion.





# CHAPLAIN FOR NCDP

FR PADDY BOYLE



## REPORT BY FRANKIE BERRY / JOHN PATRICK

We continue to provide Pastoral support to Deaf individuals within the Community. Depending on where you live and for anyone who's in need of advocacy /spiritual support / ISL Interpreting for Funerals/ sacramental events,

## KNOCK CO MAYO

This year NCDP annual pilgrimage to knock, on the last weekend in August, was a huge success with those staying for the weekend in Knock house Hotel and others coming as day trippers on a day pilgrimage. Weatherwise, we were relieved and grateful that we escaped from the heavy showers while we were indoors.

On Friday evening, we had the Rosary pilgrimage outdoors walking the lovely surrounds in the of beauty of nature before it went dark. On Saturday morning, there was a guide tour of Knock and many were surprised to see how much the museum has improved with additional information and familiar faces of people who are continuing to be ambassador for Christ through various important Charitable organisations.

Many pilgrims took the time to pray on their own and sought for individual confession in the Reconciliation prayer room.

There was a huge turnout of pilgrims attending the 3pm Mass in the basilica, with many travelling from all parts of Ireland. Bishop Ray Browne was the main celebrant and he was leading his parish from Kerry Diocese. Bishop Browne was pleasantly surprised to see the deaf Pilgrims in such number in Knock and willed to be in the group photo with us as shown. He is the contact link person for Deaf Ministry.



Our sincere thanks to one and all who participated voluntarily especially with the those in need of support with wheeling, being a guide with DeafBlind plus interpreting throughout the day and in the Eucharist. It was good to feel refreshed & renewed on our return to Dublin on Sunday.

## LOCAL DEAF ARTIST

It was with great pleasure to have met up with well-known Local Deaf artist Niall McCormack who joined us on the day and he shared with us his brilliance art work of the Knock Apparition that is now in display in St Mary's Hostel. The close up photo of the Chapel in its brilliance light is the story of the Apparition during wet cold evening in 1879.

For those who haven't been to knock should make their visit to St Mary's Hostel, in the foyer, to see this wonderful artwork displayed. There's always something new to learn.



## 70TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION IN OUR DEANERY

Many of us who attended and educated from St Mary's School & St Joseph's Schools, received the sacrament of Confirmation the Most Precious Most Precious Blood church, received the Sacrament of Marriage and also knew of Deaf people whose funeral took place over the years. Last Sunday marked their 70th Anniversary.

Archbishop Dermot Farrell said mass and reminded us all that each of us received hospitality and in turn, we are to receive people with open hearts and minds and for everyone to be part of our faith community.



## LOURDES 2023

There were 12 pilgrims, some with their Carers and 6 Volunteers along with the Fr Paddy Boyle, John Patrick and Fr Joe Jones and Fr Gerard Tyrrell who helped out in different ways while in Lourdes with Deaf People.

'My sincere gratitude to each and everyone of you for your incredible support and assistance in Lourdes. Your contributions have been immensely valuable and have truly touched my heart. The Pilgrimage to Lourdes is a significant moment in my life and knowing that I have your unwavering support makes it even more special. Your kindness and generosity are blessings that I will forever cherish. Thank you for being there for everyone throughout this journey.'

John Patrick Doherty



LOURDES AT NIGHT, TAKEN BY ONE OF THE VOLUNTEERS WHO WENT ON HER 1ST TIME TO LOURDES WITH THE DUBLIN DIOCESE PILGRIMAGE TO LOURDES.



@reachdeaf1845



@ReachDeafServices



@ReachDeafServices



@ReachDeafServices

Reach Deaf Services  
Deaf Village Ireland  
Ratoath Road  
Cabra  
Dublin 7

Tel : 01-830 0522

Email: [info@reachdeafservices.ie](mailto:info@reachdeafservices.ie)

CHY: 1394  
RCN: 2002138



Reach Deaf Services

Editor: Alan Smyth  
Email: [alan@reachdeafservices.ie](mailto:alan@reachdeafservices.ie)