



CEO REPORT

MARY STRINGER

Welcome to our 17th edition of the Reach Deaf Services Newsletter.

2024 brings us into our third year of the strategic plan and our continued focus on achieving our goals keeps us as busy as ever. In January we held our annual review of the strategic and operational plans and agreed our goals for 2024. The operational plan for 2024 has been reviewed by our Governance, Strategy and Organisational Development Committee. A lot has been achieved in the past 3 years and we are on target to achieving almost all aspects of the plan by 2027. An important aspect of our work in Reach Deaf Services is the Chaplaincy. We are in the process of reviewing of this service and expect this will provide us with a better understanding of how we can provide support to the Deaf Community going forward.

We have continued to engage with other organisations to allow us to keep up to date with developments in the sector. In particular, we have attended meetings with the Disability Federation of Ireland and The Wheel.

The National Disability Authority invited organisations in the Deaf Community to make submissions on the ISL aspect of their Disability Strategy. We were happy to be invited to do this and covered areas such as the accessibility, awareness and guidance on the ISL act, the SLIS voucher scheme and mental health.

POLICY OFFICER

GEMMA DEVINE

I'm Gemma Devine and I'm the new Policy Officer at Reach Deaf Services. I've been working in the Irish Deaf Community for the past five years and my background of study involved social policy and human rights. I previously worked at Reach Deaf Services; within the first Supported Living Support Worker team. This occurred during the de-congregation period from St Joseph's House. I'm delighted to return to Reach Deaf Services in a new role.

My responsibilities involve the creation, updating and maintenance of organisational policies and procedures. I ensure that we are in line with HSE, HIQA, national and international policies, and procedures. Also, I will be conducting Policy Tool talks for staff which will begin shortly. This will support all staff to understand organisational, national and international policies in line with their role. Lastly, I will ensure all policies and procedures are available in accessible formats for all staff and clients, which include easy English and ISL versions.

I'm looking forward to supporting Reach Deaf Services in any way I can within the Policy Officer role.



SUPPORT LIVING SERVICES

LINDA TIERNEY - HEAD OF SERVICES



As we embraced 2024 we had to say a sad farewell to a wonderful lady Anne Murphy (RIP) who passed away peacefully in her own home on 4th January.

Anne's funeral was a day of celebration of her life, her legacy of how she was a driving force for the Deafblind Community was shared and we all got to share fond memories of how she lived her life and connected with the people around her. Anne is sadly missed but will never be forgotten. We have added in her inspiring reflection that she had requested to read at her funeral as the words are very powerful and remind us to remain committed to the vision of support for the Deaf Community.

When pain and fear are overwhelming , there is nothing I can do expect trust.

Remember those special people who helped you in the past, that dark January night you nearly died but you lived.

Try to keep things in perspective.

Remember other people are out there. Keep going in this limited way, keep singing!

Who knows what surprises tomorrow will bring,

May I find patience and calm.

May I always remain faithful to my spirit of adventure, even when there seems little reason to do so.

Remember for everything there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven.

A time to feel daffodils and a time to let go.

Though one day it surely have some questions for 'the man above'

Anne Murphy

RIP January 2024



Staff Report

We are delighted to see Kim Goos held her first Crisis Prevention Training for a staff group following her successful completion of the CPI Train the Trainer course. Having our own trainers as part of the Reach Deaf Services team is very beneficial and it will enhance and develop the quality of the support practice we provide to service users.

A number of staff have also engaged in the Leadership & Management course and we look forward to many more courses been shared across the service for staff to develop their skills.

Congratulations to Sharon Murphy who will now take up the role of Supported Living service Manager and lead the support team. Sharon has 15 years' experience working across many departments within Reach Deaf Services and is dedicated to achieving the vision of support service users to lead self-directed lives and become active members in their community.

Looking forward to the next quarter of the year and enjoying the developments and positive steps we are making in developing the service.

National Gallery of Ireland - Irish Sign Language Tour

On the 7th February, Barry Wickham from Reach Deaf Services was the first Deafblind visitor to avail of the sensory tour provided by the National Gallery of Ireland's Irish Sign Language tour guides, Deaf Interpreters Lianne Quigley and Susan Whelan.

Barry along with his support staff Adebowale went along and through the medium of ISL, learned about the history of the artist and painting through materials gathered by the gallery called "tactile boxes" featuring sensory materials. Paintings that were featured were the acclaimed Johannes Vermeer, "Girl writing a letter" and materials included carpet examples lace examples, clothing examples. Barry was able to feel through the medium of touch what materials featured as the tour guides explained how the painting was laid out.

Another painting that was also featured included Sir John Lavery's "The Artist Studio" and materials included materials similar to what was seen on the picture, fake fur, jewellery and even a painted canvas so Barry can feel paint on a canvas as to imagine what the paint would be like.

There are regular ISL tours at the National Gallery and you can check out their website for more information. For more tailored ISL tours, you can email tours@ngi.ie



EDUCATION SERVICES

LINDA TIERNEY - HEAD OF SERVICES



It has been a busy term; love was in the air at Boarding- we had a St. Valentine's Day party for both Boarding campuses and there were games, Kahoot quizzes and lots of sweet treats. Both boarders and staff wrote positive things about each other- this was lovely to see, and we certainly felt the love! The St Patrick's day party this year was split, with boys remaining at St. Joseph's and girls staying at St. Mary's. We had a St Patrick's day Kahoot quiz, green milkshakes, a scavenger hunt and some games of bingo that the boarders enjoyed, one of them even won 3 times! The luck of the Irish!

We celebrated International Women's Day in Boarding. To get into the spirit, we all wore purple. Two former boarders, Noeleen and Helen, came in to help us celebrate. Noeleen is a professional make-up artist, she gave the boarders some great make- up tips. Perfect timing for the girls who are going to the Debs this year. Helen then treated the boarders and staff to getting their nails done with some beautiful designs, there was a long queue waiting for this.

We also had a small party to mark the occasion, this included a very important birthday celebration for our youngest boarder. Boarding staff and boarders were very busy preparing the day before, baking cakes and buns with purple icing and creating posters for all the boarders with empowering messages, we also had beautiful purple flowers created using felt by our very skilled staff member. The place looked great that day. Also, we had informative video messages for the boarders to watch, from past students discussing their experiences of completing the Leaving Cert and the Leaving Cert Applied. As a sign of our long-term commitment to supporting and empowering women we also came together to plant an apple tree on the grounds of boarding, there will be a plaque added to make everyone aware that the tree was planted on International Women's Day and represents strong women and their importance in society.

We also had Brian Crean from Irish Deaf Society coming to Boarding to talk to St. Joseph's boarders about the importance of feminism and we would like to thank him for his time.

We want to congratulate Madars on passing his driving test- here's a picture of him with his new car. A huge well done to Madars, it took a lot of dedication and perseverance, but it really paid off. We're all so proud of you Madars. Our TY boarders completed their work experience placement at various places, such as Mad Brothers Café and Curam Care Home. They all had positive experiences and had a better understanding of what they would like to do when they leave school. A special mention goes to Kiera, who was offered a part-time job at her work placement! Kiera spent a week at The Dean in Cork and a week in a local coffee truck shop. Kiera explained she enjoyed working in the local coffee truck shop as she enjoyed the pace and she learnt how to make different kinds of coffee. Kiera was delighted to be offered the part-time job.

The boarders took part and celebrated World Book Day in The Holy Family School. The theme was that children are more likely to enjoy reading when their choices are championed, and we make reading fun. They selected a character from a book and dressed up as that person. Sean Brady won 1st prize dressed as Captain Hook. Congratulations, Sean.



Working Things Out

Working Things Out Programme was rolled out to TY students as part of the curriculum, by Helen Newman and Jackie O'Brien. This is a preventative youth mental health programme to promote positive coping. The following topics were covered, learning practical cognitive behavioural therapy strategies, CBT coping skills, dealing with anger and conflict, understanding the key to solving problems, developing helpful thinking strategies, behavioural therapy strategies, managing feeling down, improving relationships with friends, family and reducing stress. The course ran over an 8-week period and all students received a Certificate of Achievement at the end of the course. In Boarding, individual sessions have been rolled out to boarders that will benefit from it. Here's a picture of Sean B and Sean Mc Manus who successfully completed the course after being presented with their Certificates. Congratulations to both boarders!

A blast from the past

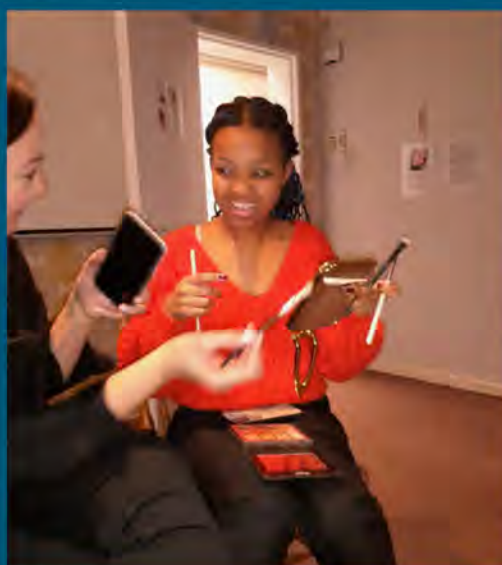
Redmond O'Shea met with Japhet Ogu, a successful TikTok influencer and he is also a past boarder of St. Joseph's Boarding. He is a Deaf influencer who has over 655,000 followers on TikTok, where he creates comedy and dance content using Irish Sign Language. This powerful platform on TikTok provides a great opportunity to spread awareness and showcase the beauty of Irish Sign Language. Japhet said "Some people might say, 'You're Deaf, you can't do it' but I didn't listen to them, and I became an influencer on TikTok by working hard to achieve my goal."

When asked for advice on what makes people successful on TikTok, Japhet explained; "What makes people successful on TikTok is, from my experience so far, originality. Consistency and readiness to improve. Also learning from others and listening to your audience and appreciating their input. My advice for people who are interested in making content on TikTok, is to first of all keep in mind that they are more likely to get negative comments, or something that insults them about being deaf, or where people expect that they can't do what hearing people can do. They are wrong because they don't know about their background, or their intentions in their life. My favourite quote is: 'don't give up on your dream just because of negative things from them', and they won't know what will happen unless they give it a shot. I always try things that I haven't done before, and I always find something that's successful for me."

We are very proud of his achievements, and we wish him well with all his plans in the future.

Staffing

We would like to congratulate Niall Ivory who is now our permanent Care Manager at St. Mary's Boarding. The events and achievements above wouldn't be possible without the hard work put in from our team, we would like to say a big thank you to the team at Boarding for making our boarders' time at Boarding positive and fun.



CHAPLAIN FOR NCDP

FR PADDY BOYLE



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26th – 29th September 2024
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The Dublin Diocesan Pilgrimage
Led by Archbishop Dermot Farrell

5th to 9th Sept 2024

From €899

JWT Booking form: info@joewalsh tours.ie

- **Fully escorted pilgrimage**
- **Return flights from Dublin to Lourdes**
- **5 nights hotel accommodation near Grotto**
- **Breakfast, lunch and dinner each day**
- **20kg check-in bag per person**
- **Airport transfers**

List of hotels & prices varies

- **see website for details**



For further information
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BE PART OF THE 2025 JUBILEE YEAR JOIN THE ICF IN ROME IN APRIL 2025

JOIN US IN ROME IN APRIL 2025

The Jubilee Year begins on **December 24, 2024** and ends **January 2026**

See the calendar for the Jubilee events throughout the year.

ICF are planning to be part of the Jubilee Events taking place in Rome from **April 28-30th 2025**

ICF - International Catholic Foundation for the Service of Deaf Persons

If interested head to the website www.icfdeafservices.org/jubilee-2025



General Calendar
JUBILEE 2025

DECEMBER 2024
24 December
Opening of the Holy Door of Saint Peter's Basilica

JANUARY 2025
24-26 January
Jubilee of the World of Communications

FEBRUARY 2025
8-9 February
Jubilee of Armed Forces, Police and Security Personnel
16-18 February
Jubilee of Artists
21-23 February
Jubilee of Doctors

MARCH 2025
8-9 March
Jubilee of the World of Volunteering
28 March
24 Hours for the Lord
28-30 March
Jubilee of the Missionaries of Mercy

APRIL 2025
5-6 April
Jubilee of the Sick and Health Care Workers
25-27 April
Jubilee of Teenagers
28-30 April
Jubilee of People with Disabilities

MAY 2025
1-4 May
Jubilee of Workers
4-5 May
Jubilee of Entrepreneurs
10-11 May
Jubilee of Musical Bands
16-18 May
Jubilee of Confraternities
24-25 May
Jubilee of Children
30 May - 1 June
Jubilee of Families, Grandparents and the Elderly

JUNE 2025
7-8 June
Jubilee of Church Movements, Associations, and new Communities
9 June
Holy See Jubilee
14-15 June
Jubilee of Sport
20-22 June
Jubilee of Those Working in Government
23-24 June
Jubilee of Seminarians
25 June
Jubilee of Bishops
26-27 June
Jubilee of Priests
28 June
Jubilee of the Eastern Churches

JULY 2025
28 July - 3 August
Youth Jubilee

SEPTEMBER 2025
15 September
Jubilee of Consolation
20 September
Jubilee of Workers for Justice
26-28 September
Jubilee of Catechists

OCTOBER 2025
8-9 October
Jubilee of Consecrated Life
11-12 October
Jubilee of Marian Spirituality
18-19 October
Jubilee of the Missionary World
30 October - 2 November
Jubilee of the World of Education

NOVEMBER 2025
18 November
Jubilee of the Poor
21-23 November
Jubilee of Choirs

DECEMBER 2025
14 December
Jubilee of Prisoners

JANUARY 2026
Closing of the Holy Door of Saint Peter's Basilica

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