Summer is nearly here and the Áras is awash with the colour of blooming flowers!! John and Laszlo were out planting onions and potatoes today and the hens are laying again!

It's been a busy 2015 so far! In January the Áras received an award for Excellence in Accommodation at the Irish Institute of Accommodation Awards. Well done all! Congratulations to Susie Small a worthy winner of this year's Gradam Áras Chois Fharraige. Go n-eirigh le Professor Nicole Muller who spent the past six months doing an international study in the Áras. We hope to see you again soon!

Mile buíochas d'Ann Gardiner, for giving a public talk in the Áras on ageing and mental well-being. John Joyce was delighted to welcome more than 30 family members from the US to the Áras for a reunion and impromptu party!! Tá súil agam go bhfilleadh na cuairteoirí seo ar ais ar an Áras aris 'sna todhcháin. Go n-eirigh an t-ádh le Bertie Reaney, Marion Geary, Róisín Ní Chuinn and Barbara Lynch who are entering an Áras team in the To Hell and Back Apollo Adventure Race on June 13th in aid of the Western Alzheimer’s Association - a great cause.

Our next residents & relatives meeting is on April 30 at 8pm - please join us.

Katie Folan - activities coordinator
Professor Nicole Muller says she was touched by how she was welcomed into the Áras community by residents and staff. The Professor of Speech and Language Pathology spent the past six months observing life in the Áras as part of a Fulbright-funded research project. She worked in conjunction with the Discipline of Speech and Language Therapy at NUI Galway and also with the assistance of the Irish Centre for Social Gerontology.

“One of the highlights of my time in Ireland was the way that everybody at the Áras welcomed me; the way they took me in and were happy to talk to me was just great.

“Beyond being able to do my research, it was great to encounter friendly faces on a daily basis. It wasn’t just a question of finding study participants; but also of making some real friends,” she said.

Áras activities co-ordinator Katie Folan said that Nicole would be greatly missed. “Nicole was, of course, here to carry out an important study but she quickly became a member of the Áras community during her visits. Nicole got fully involved in the life of the home; she took time to chat with our residents and got to know some of them very well. Residents and staff were quite lonely on her finishing up in the Áras,” said Katie.

Áras residents were also fond of Nicole. “I really enjoyed Nicole’s time with us. She was a lovely lady, very easy to talk to, very understanding, and listened to what the residents had to say. I found her to be very good company and very interested in all that we do in the Áras,” said Jude Conneely.

Nicole particularly enjoyed knitting and actually knitted a couple of pairs of socks at the Ciorcal Cniotáil. “We had some great music sessions as well; Anne Byrne came in and did the music sessions which was always good fun, but it was also just good to come in and talk with people and have a cup of tea and just sit with folks and visit,” Nicole said.

Nicole learned to speak Irish during a study abroad year spent at what was then UCG in the 1980s. She completed her doctorate at Oxford University before becoming a professor at the University of Louisiana. Nicole says she hopes to return to the Áras again soon, to visit the friends she has made. Her research will be published soon.

“IT WAS GREAT TO ENCOUNTER FRIENDLY FACES ON A DAILY BASIS”

Well done to Susie Small, the winner of this year’s Gradam Áras Chois Fharráige. Presenting the award councillor Seán Ó Tuairisg commended Mr McGrath for introducing the bursary, which has provided grants totalling nearly €10,000 to Irish-speaking student nurses from South Connemara over the past five years.

‘Tá ard-mholadh ag dul do Aidan McGrath ar an nGradam seo agus tá síúl agam go spreagadh sé eagraíochtaí eile leis an rud céanna a dhéanamh’. 'Tá sibh leat gach arís leis an Ghaeilge ag obair san earnáil seo'.

'Tá aithne agam ar Susie agus a mhuintir, mhuintir é Mháthair Susie! Ba mhaith liom comhghairdeas de chuid a chéile a dhéanamh le Susie as an éacht seo a bhaint amach agus guím chuí leis an éacht seo do éirigh agus í mbun traenála'.

The Gradam was set up to help encourage native Irish speakers to pursue careers in nursing. Mile buíochas to Councillor Ó Tuairisg for giving his time and support to present this award and to An Stíl Mhár a Bhi for their excellent concert afterwards.
Continuous Improvement

The Áras is committed to offering the best possible care to our residents. To this end we aim to constantly monitor and improve service in all areas of operation.

• As part of our annual review audits have been carried out on key performance indicators in order to drive continuous improvement.

• Staff members have received more than 1,000 hours of additional training this year.

• In excess of 40 regulatory policies and procedures have been reviewed and updated by BRÓD Healthcare consultants. These policies and procedures are under continuous review.

• The fire officer commended the Áras in February, noting there are "excellent fire safety procedures in place which I must commend you on."

• A Resident & Relatives survey has been carried out as part of our annual review. Respondents reported high levels of satisfaction with all levels of service. Responses are being used to guide further improvements.

• A more comprehensive care plan template has been adopted based on all relevant health assessments. Care plans are externally audited by a highly qualified nurse trainer.

• Three staff members have completed training and received certification as SONAS registered practitioners. The SONAS programme is now in practise in the Áras.

Satisfaction survey results

We received 29 responses to our 2015 residents and relatives survey. The survey measured satisfaction across 10 areas of service delivery. Feedback from the survey will be used to continue to improve the experience of residents in the Áras. Overall respondents gave the home 97% of the total marks possible.

For the full survey results see: www.thearas.com

Excellence award for Áras staff

Well done to staff on winning the award for Excellence in Accommodation from the IASI. The Áras is the only care home in Connacht to have received this award for hygiene, quality and cleanliness. The Irish Accommodation Services Institute only awards this to facilities that meet the highest standards after a rigorous inspection process. Other recipients included the Galway Clinic and the Mater Hospital.

Ceiliúradh Lá Padraig san Áras

Bhí an-lá againn san Áras Lá Pádraig! Bhí an t-ádh linn gur tháinig Róisín, Colm agus Micheál chomh fada linn chun ceolchoirm íontach a chur ar bun d’ár gcónaitheoirí, cuairteoirí agus foireann oibre. Le linn na hócáide bhí meascán de cheol Gaelach, damh sá ar an sean-nós agus amhránaíocht! An-chraic go deo!! Ar ndóigh, ghlac cúpla duine den fhoireann páirt sa gceolchoirm seo chomh maith nuair a thriall siad cúpla steip agus cabháir jig a dhéanamh don lucht féachanna!!! Maith sibh a Róisín, Choilm agus Micheál!
Tuairisc ar an nGáirdín!

Tá an tEarrach tagtha san Áras! tá beocht le feiceáil sa ghairdín timpeall an tí agus sa cló. Tá sé iontach torthaí ó gcaidh eile a fheiceáil. Tá oiniún agus fatai curtha againn anois. Tháinig duchán ar na fatai anuraidh ach tá súil agam tháirge órgáinach an scoth a bheithe agan i mbliana! Tá cearca an Árais ag déanamh go maith agus muid ag fáil uibheach go leor!!

For more about events see www.thearas.com or Cairde an Áras on facebook

**APRIL ACTIVITIES**

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**UPCOMING EVENTS**

- APRIL ACTIVITIES
- MAY ACTIVITIES
- JUNE ACTIVITIES

**Féileire Imeachtá - Aibreán ’15**

Residents will be informed of any changes to Calendar of Events.