Tá an Nollag ag teacht!

Tá Laszlo ag maisiú an Áras faoi láthair le go leor soilse agus maisiúcháin alaíni. The Christmas festivities will begin proper with the visit of Cór na nÓg on December 13th.

Beidh go leor imeachtaí speisialta ag ann san Áras le linn mí na Nollag. Beidh Bríd ag reachtaíl ‘Make & Do’, beidh Pat ag reachtaíl seisiúin ‘Ealaion Séasúrach’ agus beidh Eleanor ag cur taispeántas ‘Steip’ ar bun do mhuintir an Árais. Gan dabhth, beidh muidean busí!!! Beidh Cóisir na Nollag ar siúl san Áras ar an Domhnach, 20 Nollag, aít a bheidh Daidí na Nollag ag tabhairt cuairt!! Ho! Ho! Ho!

I would also like to invite all relatives to join residents and members of the Residents’ Committee for our next Residents’ AGM on December 1st. The event will be followed by refreshments and chat. Minutes from our September Residents’ Committee meeting are included in the newsletter for those who could not attend.

The Home was a finalist in this year’s NHI Care Awards earlier this month. Thank you to everyone who contributed to this achievement.

We’ve had some wonderful special events in recent months. Thank you to An Stíl Mar a Bhi for their wonderful concert in September. Thank you to all the other volunteers who have so generously contributed to life in the Home during 2015. Nár laga Dia sibh.

We wish you all a very merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous new year.

Katie Úi Chulain - activities co-ordinator

Nursing Homes Ireland Care Awards

Well done to Katie, our activities co-ordinator, who was a finalist in the Nursing Homes Ireland Care Awards, last month. Finalists for the awards were chosen from more than 300 entries from nursing homes around Ireland.

The NHI Care Awards are the leading healthcare awards in the country. They recognise those who demonstrate outstanding excellence and dedication in the delivery of exceptional care to older people. Katie was one of three finalists in the Nursing Home Community Initiative Award.

“I didn’t know we had been nominated, so to be chosen as one of the three finalists was really a wonderful surprise,” Katie said. “It’s a real tribute to all the wonderful members of the local community who so generously give of their time to come to the Áras to enrich the lives of our residents through performing music or taking part in our activities schedule,” she said.

Katie has been the activities co-ordinator at Áras Chois Fharraige since 2010. Prior to that she worked for Údarás na Gaeltachta as a community officer in Spiddal. She oversees a packed activities schedule in the Áras, thanks in no small part to local people who take part in weekly ceol sessions, card and bingo tournaments and a range of other activities.

She said: “I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the volunteers who so generously help with activities at the Áras: Bríd Ni Shírín; Aodán Mac Donncha; Sally Tim Úi Fhlatharta; Síle Lennon; Brigid O’Connell; Micheál Ó Conaill; Nóirín Joyce; Ann Byrne; Martina Goggin; Nicky Antaine Ó Curraoin; Séamus Ó Conchubhair; Bearthla Ó Griofo; Derval McCormack; and Pat Byrne. Míle mile buíochas!”

Katie with Gráinne Seoige at the NHI Care Awards

See www.thearas.com or Cairde an Áras on Facebook for more information
Author explores ‘wisdom of age’ at Áras care home

A new book by Spiddal-based professor Ricca Edmondson looks at how older people make a valuable contribution to those around them, through the concept of wisdom.

In Ageing, Insight and Wisdom, Professor Edmondson says that older people can be a great source of guidance but often they are not listened to. “If we draw attention to the idea of wisdom that’s one way of saying that older people have a huge amount to offer, but we have to be in a position to listen to it,” she says.

Professor Edmondson, who is originally from South Africa, moved to Spiddal in the early 1990’s after becoming a lecturer with the School of Political Science and Sociology at NUIG.

She became interested in gerontology, the study of ageing, through talking to older people in the West of Ireland: “They were just such fascinating people that it was a privilege to live among them; they were just so full of insights and humour and understanding of other human beings,” she says.

“In the West of Ireland older people have experienced kinds of life that younger people would have little understanding of. So from that point of view they have got a lot to say,” she says.

Professor Edmondson became interested in the concept of wisdom when she was completing her doctorate at Oxford University.

“For most of human history people have been interested in how you could reason well and how you could think well and how you could live well, then how you could bring these things together, and that falls under the notion of wisdom,” she says.

Professor Edmondson is an editor of one of the European Sociological Association journals and is interested in what makes up Wise Care. One of the papers she has co-written is based on research at the Áras together with another centre in Dublin.

“All the people I’ve spoken to who’ve stayed at the Áras have really enjoyed themselves; they’ve appreciated it very deeply. I think they have felt that this is a place where they can be themselves, and where they can enjoy themselves and where life is good,” she says.

Professor Edmondson says that wisdom is particularly relevant in the care setting, where having good judgement and decision-making are so important.

“Our study certainly suggests that humour and sensibility and creativity and diversity are really important in Wise Care. This is what we found in the Áras as well as the other centre in Dublin,” she says.

“It’s a question of how flourishing the older people are, who are in the Home. The people that I’ve known who were here in the Áras have been very, very happy. A friend of mine who stayed here for recuperation after an operation said it was the best holiday he ever had. He was amazed.”

Gradam Áras Chois Fharraige

Tugadh aitheantas do thriúr micléinn altranais as Chonamara ag searmanas bronnta i nÁras Chois Fharraige ar an Mháirt, 10 Samhain. ‘Sí Máirín Ní Churraoin as Baile na hAbhann a fuair an chead duais de €1,500 i nGradam Áras Chois Fharraige, comórtas a spreagann daoine a bhfuil an Ghaeilge acu cur isterach ar Chéim san Altranais.

’Síad Neansaí Ní Mhaoláin as Ros a Mhíl agus Cathal Gorham as Leitir Mealláin a fuair an dara duais agus bronnadh €750 an duine ar an bheirt. Mar chuid den duais seo, tugtar deis oibre páirtaimsireach don triúr i dteach altranais Áras Chois Fharraige an fhad is a bhionn siad ag baint amach an Géim san Altranais.

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Cuirreadh túis leis an Ghreadam i 2010, chun tacaíochta a thabhairt do dhaoine óga ón cheantair a bhí suim acu tabhairt faoi thraenáil altranais. Is comórtas bliantúil é seo atá oscailte do dhaoine a bhfuil an Ghaeilge ó dhúchais agus atá túscurtha acu lena Géim san Altranais.

Go dáta, tá breis is €10,000 bronnta ar mhicléinn as Deiscirt Chonamara le tacaíocht a thabhairt dóibh ina gcuid staidéar.

‘Sé Tadhg Ó Conghaile, Údarás na Gaeltachta, cómhaoinithe an sparánacht, a rinne an bhronnadh. Dúirt Tadhg go raibh Údarás na Gaeltachta an-sásta bheith páirteach sa Ghradam seo agus go bhfuil sé riachtanach freastal ar aosaigh an cheantar ina theanga dhúchas féin. Dúirt Tadhg go raibh ard-mholadh ag dul do Bhainistíocht an Áras as ucht an ghradam seo a bhunú.

Bhainistíocht an Áras as ucht an ghradam seo a bhunú comh maith le deis oibre a thabhairt don fhoireann oibre (45) ón gceantar áitiúil, a bhfuil an Ghaeilge ó dhúchas ag formhór acu.
Satisfaction with Áras ‘at the very highest level within the sector’

Thank you to the visitors who have been giving the Home such positive feedback on the HappyOrNot machine.

Richard Doyle, Director of the company that supplies HappyOrNot in Ireland said the Home’s satisfaction ratings is only matched by one other nursing home in the world using the system.

“Áras Chois Fharraige is consistently achieving a satisfaction rating of 98%. This is at the very highest level within the sector and is only matched by one other residential nursing home globally using HappyOrNot,” he said.

“We compared the client satisfaction ratings achieved by Áras Chois Fharraige with numerous other facilities globally, who use HappyOrNot and provide residential care. Within this sector globally, client satisfaction levels average in the low 90%,” says Richard.

The Home began trialling HappyOrNot last August. The machine offers a quick, easy and confidential way for residents and visitors to rate their levels of satisfaction. Clients who are happy with the service push a green button on leaving the building, while those unhappy can push a red button.

“When we looked at Áras Chois Fharraige from when the Home first started using HappyOrNot in August this year, the standard set was very high, starting at 95% over the first two weeks…remarkably since then the Home has managed to improve that standard,” he said.

Care team raise €2,500 for charity

Well done to care team members Bertie Reaney, Marion Ní Ghaora, Róisín Ní Chuinn, Barbara Lynch and Margaret Flaherty for their wonderful celebration of all things Gaelic in the Áras in September. The local volunteer group entertained us with traditional Irish performances featuring musicians, singers, poets, story tellers, sean nós and dancers.

Margaret Flaherty and Barbara Lynch (top right) joined Bertie Reaney and Róisín Ní Chuinn in the ‘Hell and Back’ challenge this summer; above: the cheque presentation.
Charity praises ‘excellence in activities’

We were delighted to welcome Sonas APC to the home recently to take a look at our activities schedule. Sonas is a charity that helps people with dementia to live full and meaningful lives. Sonas noted that the Áras demonstrates many instances of excellent practice.

Sonas describe Katie as a competent, committed activity co-ordinator, who it says is clearly supported by the proprietor and management. The report notes there is a broad range of scheduled activities available to residents and that on entering the nursing home the atmosphere is warm and welcoming, with a sense of light and space. The group said that the inclusion of the residents in the planning and evaluation of the activities programme is to be commended. It adds that it was evident from discussion that the PIC's priority is to ensure that the residents receive the best possible person-centred care.

The Home was complimented for offering activities that are especially relevant to its resident group, such as keeping hens and the creation of a vegetable garden for a resident who said he would like to get involved in gardening. Sonas said that the results of the Resident and Relatives’ Survey was also very positive, with 85% of respondents saying that they were very satisfied, and 15% satisfied, with activities in the home.

Sonas notes that a unique feature of Áras Chois Fharragá is that Irish is the first language of 70% of its residents and 70% of staff are Irish speakers, and that this provides a unique benefit of receiving care in the residents’ first language that would not be available to these residents elsewhere.

Some recommendations that Sonas made are that we are now using Life Story Books as an activity with which residents can talk to visitors and care staff. We are also trialling Talking Mats. The Áras has also increased the number of care staff trained as Sonas Registered Practitioners to a total of four. We look forward to welcoming Sonas back to the Home before Christmas for a scheduled activity training day for all staff.

If you would like to take a look at the full activities audit please ask at reception.

December events at the Áras

Gach maidin
- Na Nuachtáin - 'Chatting As We Go'
- Cór na nÓg

Beidh Cór na nÓg arais arís san Áras ar an 13 Nollag.
Cúrfidh siad tús le h'imeactaí speisialta na Nollag le Seirbhís Carúil do chónaitheoirí, gaolta agus foroinn an Áras. Ár mbuíochas ó chroi do na daoine óga seo, stiúrthóirí an cór agus na tsúiscimeátorí - nar laga Dia síbh.

- December 1: Residents AGM
- December 13: Seirbhís Carúil le Cór na nÓg
- Make & Do with Brid (tbc)
- Seasonal Art with Pat (tbc)

- JIG GIG with Eleanor
- December 20: Annual Residents Christmas Party - Special Guest - SANTA!
- Christmas Day: Festive Dinner
- December 26: St Stephen’s Day Celebrations
- Dé Luain
- Dé Máirt
- Dé Céadaoin