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Ar nós do bhaile féin

## Winter 2015

## Tá an Nollag ag teacht!

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



Beidh go leor imeachtaí speisialta againn san Áras le linn mí na Nollag. Beidh Bríd ag reachtáil 'Make & Do', beidh Pat ag reachtáil seisiún 'Ealaíon Séasúrach' agus beidh Eleanor ag cur taispeántas 'Steip' ar bun do mhuintir an Árais. Gan dabht, beidh muid busy!!! Beidh Cóisir na Nollag ar siúl san Áras ar an Domhnach, 20 Nollag, áit 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.

Comhgáirdeachas le Máirín Ní Churraoin as Baile na hAbhann a bhuaigh Gradam Aras Chois Fharráige le déanaí agus do Neansaí Ní Mhaoláin agus Cathal Gorham, a bronnadh an dara duais orthu sa Ghradam.

Well done to Bertie, Marion, Róisín, Barbara and Margaret who raised more than €2,500 for the Western Alzheimers Association. Thank you also to all the people who contributed to this worthy cause.

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 Stil 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 Ui 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 Aras Chois Fharráige since 2010. Prior to that she worked for Údarás na Gaeltachta and as a community officer in Spiddal. She oversees a packed activities schedule in



**Katie with Gráinne Seoige at the NHI Care Awards**

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 Ní Shírin; Aodán Mac

Donncha; Sally Tim Uí

Fhlatharta; Síle Lennon; Brigid

O'Connell; Micheál Ó Conaill; Nóirín Joyce; Ann Byrne;

Martina Goggin; Nicky Antaine Ó Curraoin; Séamus Ó

Conchubhair; Bearthla Ó Gríofa; Derval McCormack; and Pat Byrne. Míle míle buíochas!"



## 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 Fharráige

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

'Siad 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 páirt-aimsireach don triúr i dteach altranais Áras Chois Fharráige an fhad is a bhíonn siad ag baint amach an Céim san Altranais.

Cuireadh tús leis an Ghradam i 2010, chun tacaíocht a thabhairt do dhaoine óga ón cheantar a bhí suim acu tabhairt faoi



thraenáil altranais. Is comórtas bliantúil é seo atá oscailte do dhaoine a bhfuil an Ghaeilge ó dhúchais acu agus atá tús curtha acu lena gCéim 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 dhúchais féin. Dúirt Tadhg go raibh ard-mholadh ag dul do 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 dhúchais ag formhór acu.



**Comhgairdeachas** do Mhairead Small ar bhreith a linbh, Casey. Long life, health and happiness to Mairéad, Máirtín and their bundle of joy

**Pygmy Goats:** Well done to Louise Ní Chionnaith who won the prize for picking the best name for our pygmy goats. It was Tom, one of our residents who owned goats prior to coming to the Áras, who had the final say!! After a lot of deliberation and a very close contest, the winning names for our goats were Salt and Pepper.

**Míle buíochas** to the local needlework group who made three "fiddle blankets" as a gift for us.

**Afternoon at the races:** Our Afternoon at the Races 2015 was a very big affair, held during the Race Week on Galway Plate Day. Residents wore hats made by themselves at our Arts and Crafts sessions. All residents got dressed up in their finest attire to enjoy a big barbeque upstairs. The day finished with the Galway Plate race watched by everyone in the upstairs sitting room! What a day! Competition for the 'Loveliest Fillies' was won by Nora G and Nora F; 'Dashing Gentlemen' was won by Seán Ó F and Seán H; the Tote won by Mary and Pádraig. We were exhausted by 5.30pm!

**Féile Bealtaine** was a special time in the Áras with lots of fun and creativity. Special thanks to Martha Williamson who carried out two wonderful pottery sessions. Thanks also to Pat who ran a wonderful art session in which residents created these lovely rabbits. Thanks also to Ann who conducted a reflexology session and to The Butterfly Company who performed their Broadway themed show.

**Mozart and Bach in the Áras:** Thanks so much to Adam Heron for his wonderful piano performances in the Áras. Adam first performed pieces by Mozart and Bach in a very special concert during our Féile Bealtaine celebrations. Since then he has been back a number of times. Adam is currently studying music, having won a scholarship to a prestigious School of Music in England. His great passion is the piano and this was very evident in his wonderful performance.

**Voting:** Thank you to An Garda Síochána and Galway County Council for bringing the voting box to the Áras to make it easier for our residents to take part in the referendum.

**An Stíl Mar A Bhí:** Míle míle buíochas to An Stíl Mar A Bhí 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.

## 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%'s," 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.



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

## 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 on raising the grand sum of €2,518.47 for the Western Alzheimers Association by completing the Hell and Back adventure race during the summer. A

wonderful team effort by all involved! The Presentation of monies raised was made to Noel Higgins and Eileen Kelly, Western Alzheimers Association.

Maith sibh ar fad agus muid anbhrodúil go deo as an éacht seo a bhaint amach!!!





### Cóisir Oíche Shamna

Our residents and their families, staff, friends and a number of 'púcaí', big and small, gathered together in the Áras to celebrate Halloween on Saturday October 31. Before the party our residents were busy making lovely decorations to help decorate the Áras in suitable spooky style!!! Maith iad as an obair iontach atá déanta acu!

As the bonfire was being lit in the courtyard, music man Steven and staff entertained everyone in the sunlink. Ceol, craic agus neart le n-ithe! As the darkness descended, some of our residents, staff and friends enjoyed a sing song and storytelling around the bonfire.

Míle buíochas do Lucy, Aisling, Orlaith, Hazel agus Bríd a thug cúnaimh leis an ócáid seo a reachtáil agus do na 'púcaí' ar fad a tháinig ar chuart againn! Nar laga Dia sibh



### Wedding bells!

We were delighted when newlyweds, Bridie (Brid McDonagh's granddaughter) and her new husband Phil came to visit us at the Áras after their marriage last August. Fad saol agus go mairfidh siad a nuacht.

### Remembrance Service

A Prayer Service was held in the Áras on the 27th November 2015 to pray for those of our residents who have passed away in the past twelve months. The upstairs sitting room filled up with residents and relatives, musicians and the staff choir. Fourteen personalised candles were placed on the altar to be lit for our deceased residents during the service. Katie commenced the service by welcoming everyone on behalf of the Áras and introducing the three Ministers of the Eucharist Sally, Síle and Bríd.

The Ministers then took over by blessing everyone present with holy water. Mary brought a list of the names of the deceased to the altar. The names of the deceased were read out by Síle while Katie lit a candle for each of them. When all the candles were lit, the lights were turned off to give to add to the very peaceful atmosphere in the room. This was followed by prayers and singing. We were joined by Ann Byrne and Martina Goggin, Helen Dunworth who travelled from Lettermullen to perform music for the service, along with Matron and Katie who sang a selection of hymns and songs. All of the relatives present received the personalised candle lit for their loved one to take home with them. This was a very emotional and poignant service.

Katie finished off by thanking all present for coming to join us and extended an open invitation on behalf of the Áras to the relatives of our deceased residents to come and visit us any time. Our door is always open.

## 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 Fharráige 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 ar ais arís san Áras ar an 13 Nollag. Cuirfidh siad tús le himeactaí speisialta na Nollag le Seirbhís Carúil do chónaitheoirí, gaolta agus foireann an Áras. Ár mbuíochas ó chroí do na daoine óga seo, stiúrthóir an cór agus na tuismitheoirí - nar laga Dia sibh.

- December 1: Residents AGM
- December 13: Seirbhís Carúil le Cór na nÓg
- Make & Do with Bríd (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

- Cén Scéal? Ar maidin
- Physio @ 2i.n.

### Dé Máirt

- Fuinneamh @ 11:30i.n.
- An Siopa Beag @ 1.15i.n.
- An Ciorcal Cniotáil le Noreen @ 2.30i.n.

### Dé Céadaoin

- Páidreacha @ 11.30r.n.
- Ceol @ 3:00i.n.

(Dé Céadaoin 2 & 23)

- Eistigi @ 3in
- (Dé Céadaoin 9 & 16)

### Déardaoin

- Bingo @ 11.30r.n.
- Cáirtá '25' @ 3i.n.

### Dé hAoine

- Fuinneamh @ 11:00in
- Movie/Doc. 6pm-7pm.

### Dé Satharn

- 'Eistigi' 6pm-7pm

### Dé Domhnaigh

- Aifreann an Domhnach ar RTÉ @ 11r.n.

- Aifreann leis an tAthair Seán (4ú & 23ú Nollag @ 11.30i.n.)

**Other Activities in the Áras:** Imagination Gym, The Beauty Parlour, The Angelus, Personal Shopping, 'Let's Chat', Arts & Crafts, Strolls in & around the Áras, Concerts/Shows, Treat Time., Information & Social Evenings, Themed Parties.