



Thornhill College Mercy Ambassadors

Our Thornhill College Mercy Ambassadors have been blessed to work closely with Sister Deirdre Mullan to spark conversation regarding the aspects of life that we take for granted. The academic year of 2021-2022 focused on the 'Women at the Well campaign', where young female ambassadors scattered across America and Ireland used their initiative to raise money for those deprived from the right to water.

A central component to this campaign was to develop a personal and universal understanding of mercy. Collectively, we viewed mercy as an opportunity to forgive both the mistakes of others and our personal mistakes in life, but most importantly, we must learn from these mistakes and never be too harsh on ourselves!

We were chosen to participate in the 'Mercy Girl Effect Global Leadership Conference' – which is an international mercy conference with representatives from pupils in the USA and schools in Ireland. We felt most privileged and honoured to be chosen to attend and converse with students our age on mercy concerns. As part of this international conference, Cathy Johnson highlighted the importance of intertwining our personality with our duty as Mercy Ambassadors of Thornhill College. As we share the characteristic of empathy we saw the need to raise awareness for the 'Women at the Well', inspired by Sr. Deirdre's presentation on the Mercy Girl Effect Project. We further brought this into action through an array of fundraisers such as our 'Tea and Chat' mornings, which allowed us to actively discuss our plans to incorporate mercy into our futures as young leaders, confidently fulfilling the legacy of Catherine McAuley, *"To fit young women for earth without unfitting them for heaven."* This is what we strive to do as Mercy Ambassadors in Thornhill College.

Inspired by our fellow Mercy Ambassadors in America, we decided to collect a Loose Change Appeal for our global Mercy Sisters. We were truly amazed and overwhelmed by the support of our school community, who raised £500. We know that Sr. Deirdre Mullan will put this very generous contribution to good use for the 'Women at the Well' campaign. To us and our school community, Mercy has been to live out the key values of compassion, kindness and acceptance. A huge component of this is forgiveness of ourselves and others and recognising when we are at fault. Behind our mistakes there is an educational purpose from which we can learn from. Thus fulfilling Pope Francis' vision, *"A little bit of mercy makes the world less cold and more just"*.





What we have taken from our role as Mercy Ambassadors this year...

During the Mercy Conference earlier this year, we had quite interesting and informative conversations about helping younger year groups of our schools adapt to life in secondary school. From communicating with the new coming students through letters and emails the summer before they enter the school to reach out before the school even starts, it was insightful seeing girls from across America speak of this 'Big sister, Little sister' system they had implemented within their schools to make the rather daunting school environment a lot more personal and comforting for the newcomers. As a Wellness Ambassador, I enjoyed working alongside similar minded women in maintaining the mercy ethos within our own schools, learning from the words spoken by Sister Deirde and the key speakers of this event.

Rachel Wallace (Year 14)

Following the global virtual celebration of the Mercy Girl Effect, I felt inspired to initiate change amongst young people, particularly those struggling with mental health. Only a few hours before the conference, I had been appointed Head Girl of Thornhill College; a coincidental blessing to initiate my journey of leadership.



The Myers-Briggs Personality test, led by Cathy Johnson, shed light on my strengths as an energetic and motivational leader, one whom fosters teamwork with an aim to support and nurture those around me. Combined with my enthusiasm for psychology, I encompassed these skills when introducing an early intervention nurture room within our school followed by a "Walk and Talk" service for students, alongside our prefect team and wellness ambassadors. On the second day, Sister Deirdre spoke of our mission as women of mercy to help those denied the right to water, and although thousands of miles across the world, her message struck home in Derry. She reminded us that behind every devastating statistic, there is a human being struggling, feeling lost and hopeless. This is also true of those battling mental health, with many suffering in silence. My mission as a global citizen is to apply the mercy values of love, compassion and kindness to minimise the damage caused by mental health deterioration.

Ava McGinn (Year 14)

To me, the conference sparked so many thoughts in my own mind, and encouraged me to reflect on how I carry out my own daily tasks with mercy and how I can continue to do so as I progress into the next chapters of life and possible career paths. It highlighted the importance of leadership amongst young women and reminded us that there is always space for us to take up that role, whilst simultaneously highlighting the need for strong team working skills, especially if we are to progress with mercy through a secular world.

Molly Duffy (Year 14)

We are extremely grateful to Sister Deirdre Mullan for extending her kindness and passion to our Thornhill students, and to Mrs Collins for her help and guidance throughout this experience.



Easter Floral Workshop

A number of our staff had the pleasure of taking part in an Easter Floral Workshop with Bernie's Blooms just before the break. They made beautiful floral displays and learnt new skills too. Well done to our office staff, Ms Downey and Mrs Doherty, who also won the raffle.

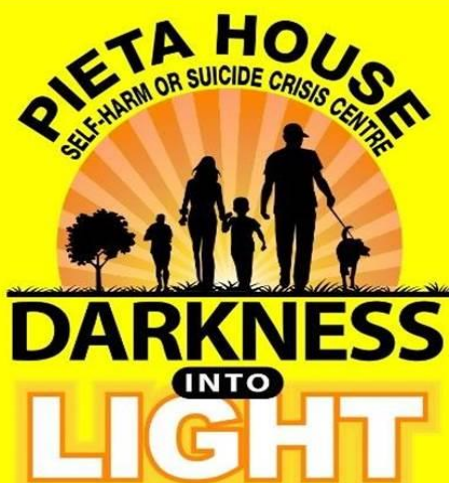
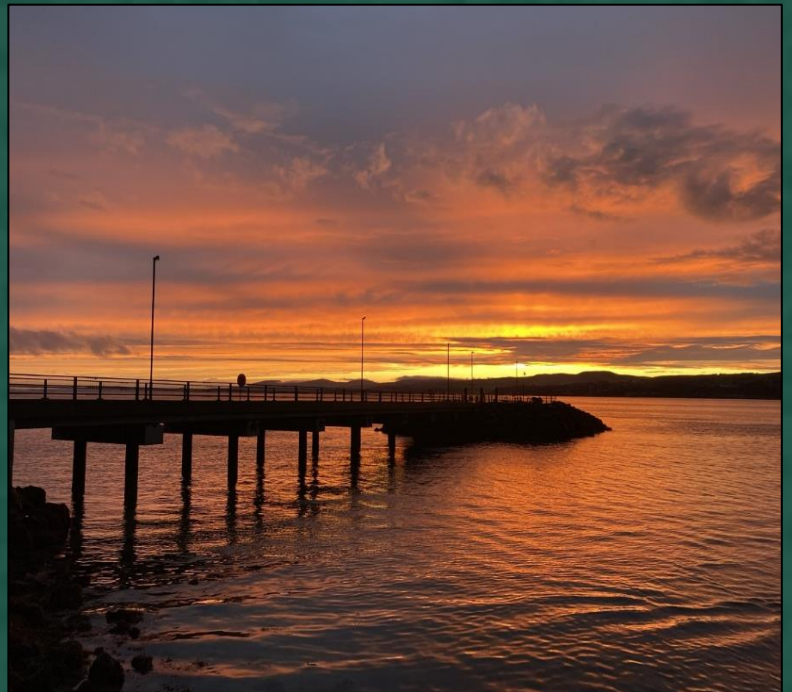


Congratulations Roisín

Our congratulations go to our Year 10 student Roisín Crowe for winning second prize and a £50 voucher in Ulster University's Uplan Photo Competition.

To celebrate World Town Planning Day, the Planning Department of the Belfast School of Architecture and the Built Environment in conjunction with Ulster University asked pupils to take a photograph that inspired them of either the Natural world or Built World around them, and describe how it aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goal 11.

The judges were very impressed with Roisín's submission. They felt that her peaceful and tranquil image caught the need to preserve and appreciate the ocean and its resources.



Darkness Into Light Walk

Darkness into Light have an annual fundraising walk which takes place this year on **Saturday 7th May at 4.15am**. The walk starts and finishes at Sainsbury's on the Strand Road.

You can register for the walk and donate money towards Pieta House using the following link: <https://www.darknessintolight.ie/register/derry/default>

Anyone from our school community who would like to take part in the walk should meet outside the café at Sainsbury's at 4am.

Trócaire Lenten Fundraising

We would like to sincerely thank the entire Thornhill community for helping to raise £4200 for Trócaire's Lenten Appeal. Students and staff were incredibly creative in finding ways to raise funds. For example, students organised raffles, Easter Hampers, sponsored silences, Guess the Baby: Teacher Edition, an Easter Egg Hunt, Shoot the Hoops, a highly competitive game of rounders with teachers and many many more. We would also like to thank Roisin from Trócaire for supporting our Year 13 Mercy group throughout the year. All money raised will assist the people of Zimbabwe who are struggling in the face of the effects of climate change and the added challenges of Covid-19.

Mr Liam Morgan
Religious Education Teacher

TRÓCAIRE
Working for a Just World



Ukraine Relief Appeal



Congratulations to our Junior Prefect Team on their efforts to raise money for the Derry Diocese Ukraine Relief Fund. The pupils raised a very impressive £1165 in their raffle. Many local businesses provided prizes, including: The Sacred Tree, Foyleside Shopping Centre, Rebekah's Beauty Lounge, The Millennium Forum, Nibellicious and Ella Mc Geady (Bespoke Bag Creations – Year 11 pupil in Thornhill College). Easter Hampers were donated by the Hasson and Mc Guigan families and countless other prizes were donated by friends of Thornhill College. Our Year 13 Crafting for Charity group donated a bespoke crocheted blanket. The Junior Prefect team worked tirelessly to promote this very special cause.



Our Place in Space

8B enjoyed a guided tour of the scaled model of our solar system entitled 'Our Place in Space' presented by the Nerve Centre.



Could you use £100 or £250
for the summer holidays?



If you have a mobile phone or digital camera, enter the

**Derry Credit Union
Digital Photography
Competition!**



- The competition is open to teens aged 13-18.
- The theme is: A Celebration of Us!
- Click here for more information and an entry form: [Derry Credit Union \(derrycu.com\)](https://www.derrycreditunion.com)
- Deadline is Saturday, 21st of May, 2022, at 1.00 pm.
- Get snapping and good luck!



Manchester United Foundation

Recently students participating in the Manchester United Foundation Female Development programme had some of their questions answered by Manchester United Women's first team players. One of our students, Aoibheann was one of these participants. You can see the video by following the link below. This video has also been posted on the Manchester United Foundation social media platforms as well. Well done Aoibheann!

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/etnugujt90gtbzi/AABih8PN76sVqMTrhWyef6S5a?dl=0&preview=Ulster+Q%26A+1920x1080.mp4>



Thornhill Responds to the Listening Church

Pope Francis formally launched a two-year consultation process within the Church and encouraged followers to take time to “look others in the eye and to listen to what they have to say.” This Synod is the process of journeying together by listening, praying, discerning and making decisions together for the purpose of understanding Christ in our lives. The idea of community and dialogue comes from the sense of responsibility we have for each other. In the Bible, God encourages us to take care of our brothers and sisters. We must remember the importance of maintaining the connection with each other and focusing on building a community of love in word and actions, as shown in St Paul’s letter to the Ephesians; “Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.” Pupils in Thornhill College took time to respond to Pope Francis’ call for the entire People of God to journey together.

During Year 8 RE lessons, pupils were placed in small groups to discuss the outreach and impact of the Church in our local and national community. These proved to be very insightful deliberations in which pupils identified how love can be shown through the Church day to day. The Year 8 groups were also tasked with writing an open statement to Pope Francis on their thoughts for the Church in the future. The discussion proved to be most thoughtful and sensitive to the needs of the Church on a wider level, with one group identifying how inclusion can be shown during times of prayer and Mass. For example, it was suggested that the use of sign language and Braille sheets could be accessed during Mass on a weekly basis. This is a most practical example of how the Gospel challenges Christians to “My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.” Year 8 also responded to the Listening Church through prayer and reflection. They contemplated on their own hopes and dreams for the future and how God is part of that journey. They created beautiful cards and composed their own prayers that highlight how God is with them. Year 10 also responded to the invitation to “look others in the eye and listen to what they say.” They addressed important issues on the future of the Church and the inclusion of all groups in society through the creation of PowerPoint slides. Outreach was a key component in their dialogue in which they identified how the Church could engage with younger members through the use of social media, the inclusion of women as priests, Tea and coffee mornings once a week in the local community centre to make people feel welcome and the development of children’s liturgies during Sunday Mass for younger families.

In the words of Bishop Donal McKeown, the mission of the Church is to bring ‘good news to the poor’ and how we can walk together on the journey with Christ. This journey will ask us to consider ‘Lord where are you leading us?’ and the pupils of Thornhill have superbly begun this process.

This article is included in the latest edition of The Net Magazine

*Mrs Ciara Collins
Religious Education Teacher & Liturgy Coordinator*



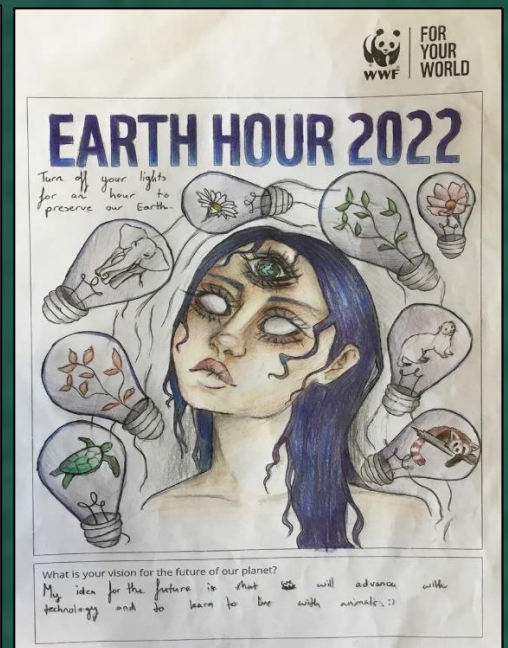
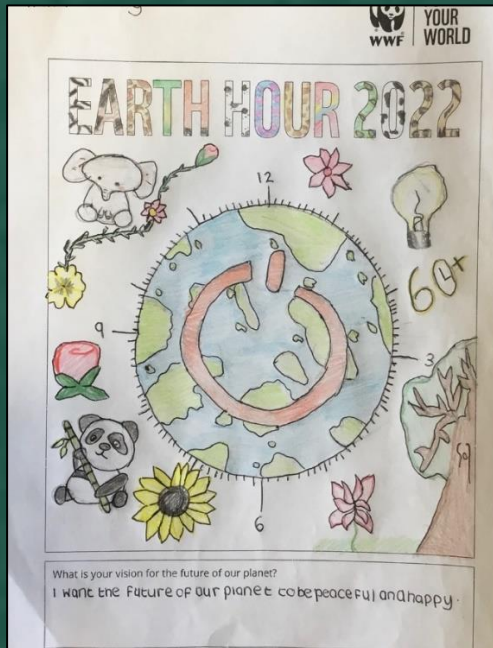
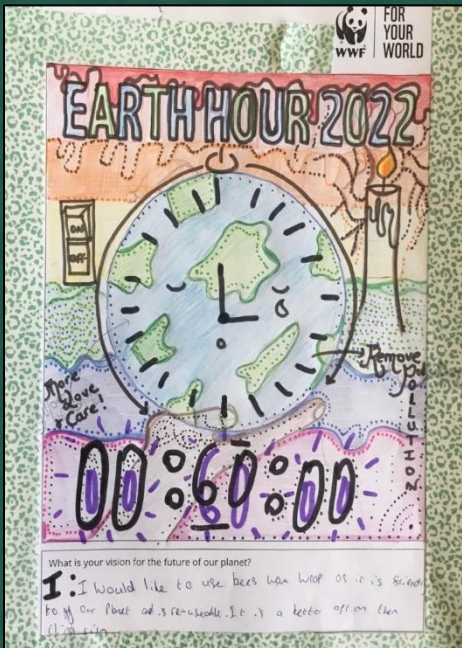
Earth Hour Poster Competition Winners

Congratulations to all those KS3 students who participated in the Geography Department Earth Hour Poster Competition. The standard of entry was extremely high. Our winners were:

Year 8 Grace 8B

Year 9 Kayla and Anna 9H

Year 10 Leia



GCSE Geography Fieldwork

The Year 11 Geography classes thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to put their theoretical knowledge into practice in the field, when they participated in their GCSE Geography fieldwork exploring the Curly River. Well done to all involved and the great work that was completed!





Year 8 Forest School

Our thanks go to Ciara from the Playtrail who facilitated a Forest School for our Year 8 students. The girls learnt how to build a shelter, build and maintain safe fire habits, make Dreamcatchers, eat S'mores, develop archery skills and relax in hammocks. The girls enjoyed a truly magical experience.



Congratulations Aileen

Our congratulations go to Aileen McCaul (Year 13) who was recently selected as one of the prize-winners in the Lyra McKee writing competition. Below is a copy of her entry.



It Won't Always Be Like This. It's Going To Get Better

It has been a long two years. If you told me from February 2020 that in just a month we would be going into a lockdown, and that all of our lives would be forever impacted, I think she would laugh at you. The only reason we are able to comprehend anything that has happened over the last two years is because we have lived it. But some haven't. The pandemic took a massive toll on our mental health, we couldn't see our friends and our families for months, and for some people, they were the only reason to keep going. We were taken out of school, the place that would give us, "The best years of your life!" or so we were told. No one could have predicted this, and where we are now is what I believe is the new normal, and I'm oddly okay with that.

I remember the day we left school, we were going off for our St Patrick's Day holidays so I didn't bother coming in for the half day beforehand, so when I got the news that our school was keeping us off for the time being, I was filled with instant regret for not seeing my friends and going in for that measly half day of school. I didn't see my friends for a month after that day, and I know it doesn't sound that long but I was used to seeing them every day, for hours at a time, so after a month it had felt like I hadn't seen them in years. We had a lovely picnic in the park and we all wore our masks and just talked about this new lockdown, and what it meant for our education. How were we meant to do our GCSE's? Are we doing online school? Will we ever go back to normal? It was such a change, and I missed my old life, I missed my teachers and I actually missed school.

For me, lockdown was a long, confusing time. I got to experience nature on a new level, I was able to go to school from my bed for the first time, and I remember jumping up and throwing my hair in a ponytail when that one teacher would ask us to turn on our zoom cameras. It was such a unique experience, especially for my generation. We lost our teenage years, the fun ones where we should have been sneaking out to watch the sunrise all summer, and go out for meals in fancy restaurants just for the sake of going out. When I finally went back to school in September of 2020, we were in bubbles. Each year-group was confined to their own corridor, and our teachers had to do all the running from class to class, and I haven't heard a single complaint about anyone being late for class since. After Christmas that year, we went back to online school for a, "2 week" circuit break, which lasted until March, and from March until the end of April we prepared to do exams, which is something no one expected. On the bright side, we got an early May summer, which was the best summer of my life.

From May, I went on so many adventures with my friends. We went camping outside my Grandmother's house in Ballyliffin, Donegal, but ended up sleeping on her sofa because there were bugs under our pillows. My family started a new tradition of monthly board games, which still runs today and shopped and shopped until I dropped, I don't think my bank account will ever forgive me. Now, in February 2022, everything is calm. School is full-time, in person, out of bubbles. I can actually eat lunch with my friends every day again and eat dinner in restaurants with more than 6 people. I'm okay with doing my AS exams this year, the first proper exam I have done since my maths GCSE in December of 2019. Life is normal, it's good and the world is finally starting to calm down.

When I am older, telling my children or even my grandchildren the tales of the Covid-19 pandemic, obviously being far more dramatic than I should be. But I will tell them that way back on the 13th of March, 2020, when the world and all our lives changed forever the politicians, the people at the World Health Organisation, even ourselves, we all told each other, and ourselves, that, "It won't always be like this, it's going to get better," and no one believed them, that they were only saying that to stop panic and fear. But, looking back at the girl I once was, and the girl I am now, they were right. It got better.

Aileen McCaul (Year 13)

Junior School Reward Steps

Congratulations to the pupils in Years 8 and 9 who have reached 10 points or more in the Junior School Reward Steps during April. These points were rewarded for the students' positive contribution to the life of the school. Congratulations to all of you and keep up the good work!

YEAR 8

8A: Olivia Anderson, Grace Bradley, Caitlin Deane, Shannagh Deery, Maya Ferry, Crystal Gjorgjievski, Riley Glenn, Meghan Jackson, Kirsten Mackey, Lauren Mackey, Jessica Martin, Teagan McCallion, Molly McCaul, Bethany McColgan, Laura McGeady, Ellie McLaughlin, Maya McLaughlin, Skyeisha McShane, Niamh Scullion, Aoife Thompson & Ashleigh Ward

8F: Zara McCool, Fraya Porter & Neva Rotherham

8G: Mazvita Bunhu

YEAR 9

9B: Cara Louise Connolly, Zara McKinney & Abbie Thompson

9C: Shara Jackson, & Aoife Kerlin

9D: Isabella McErlean, Ava McFadden, Ava McIntyre & Eimear Smith

9E: Niamh Baldrick, Maria Brady, Hannah Courtney, Brianna Deane, Cadie Doherty, Emma Doherty, Annie Duffy, Ava Gillam, Alana Holmes, Lucie Kelly, Aimee Kerr, Abbie Leonard, Grace McCloskey, Eva McCormick, Ava McIntyre, Sophie Melarkey, Emma Melaugh, Seyedeh Saina Mousavi, Abbie Redden, Emily Rooney & Ciara Taylor

9F: Rylee Doran

9G: Cora Carlin, Broghan Doherty, Emilee McCallion, Clodagh Mount Laverty, Eva Mullan, Oonagh O'Neill, Eabha Redden & Jenny Treat

9H: Kayla Callan, Laurie Glenn, Farrah McDermott & Caragh McSheffrey



Year 13 Wellness Ambassadors

Congratulations to our fantastic group of Year 13 Wellness Ambassadors on completing the Mental Health Ambassador programme with Action Mental Health.



Junior School Reward Steps

Congratulations to the pupils in Years 8 and 9 who have reached 20 points or more in the Junior School Reward Steps during April. These points were rewarded for the students' positive contribution to the life of the school. Congratulations to all of you and keep up the good work!

YEAR 8

8G: Tammie Harper, Rose Abdelsayed & Natalie Effirul Ikhwan

YEAR 9

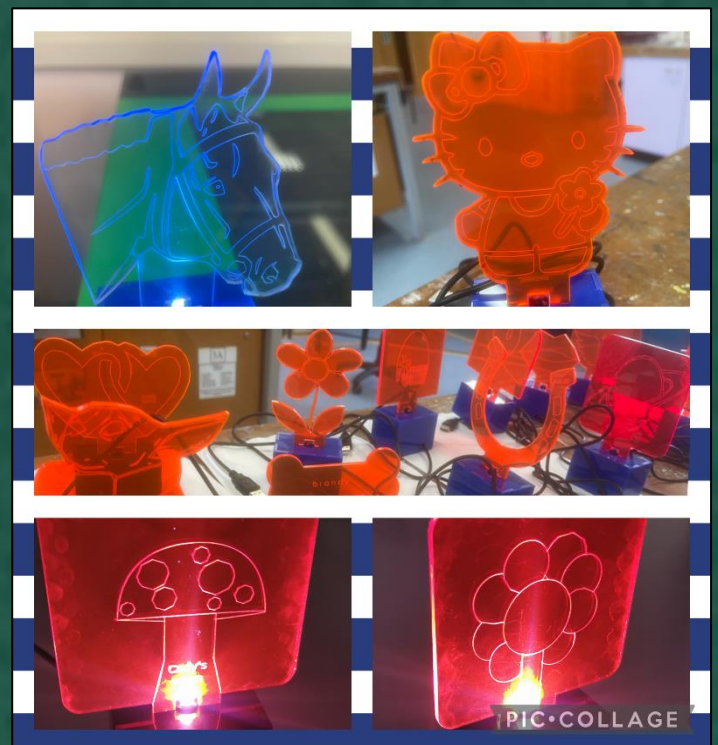
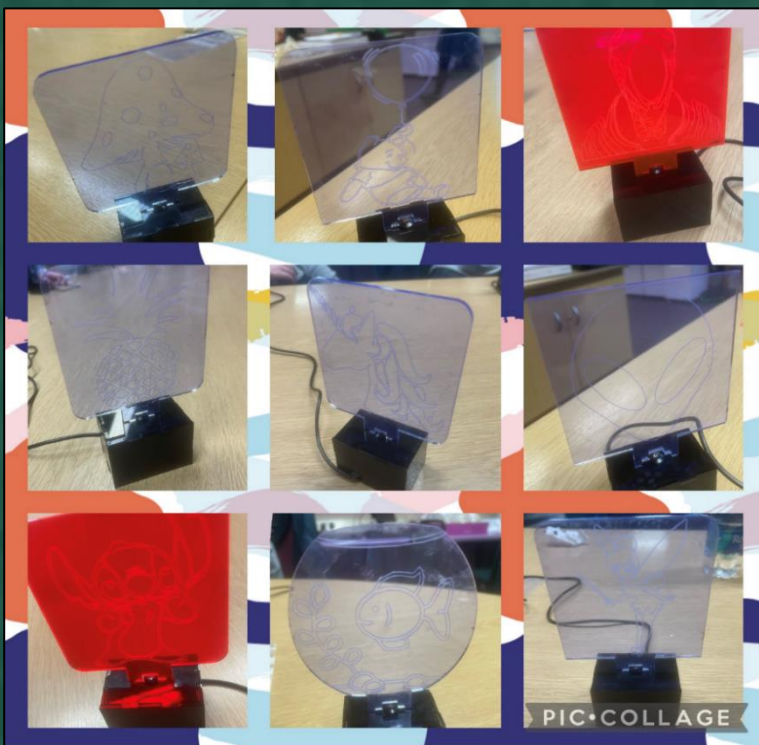
9B: Sarah Geary & Rachel McColgan

9G: Holly Barr, Aine Bryce, Maggie Campbell, Leah Giboney & Anna McLaughlin



Year 8 Technology & Design

Year 8 students have been creating some amazing LED Lights. This project introduced lots of new learning such as Computer Aided Design, Computer Aided Manufacture and Electronics. A fantastic overall product has been produced by all, each student also had the chance to incorporate their own design into the final product. Well done!





New Electric Votive Candle Stand in Our School Oratory

Our Oratory is a beautiful sacred and quiet space that many of us benefit from on a very regular basis within our school community. Over the Years our Year 14 girls have made a financial contribution to the Oratory for the upkeep and aids to prayer. Indeed, much of our mass sets and altar linen has come from past pupils as well.

Thanks to the generosity of our girls, we now have the most beautiful candle stand in the Oratory.

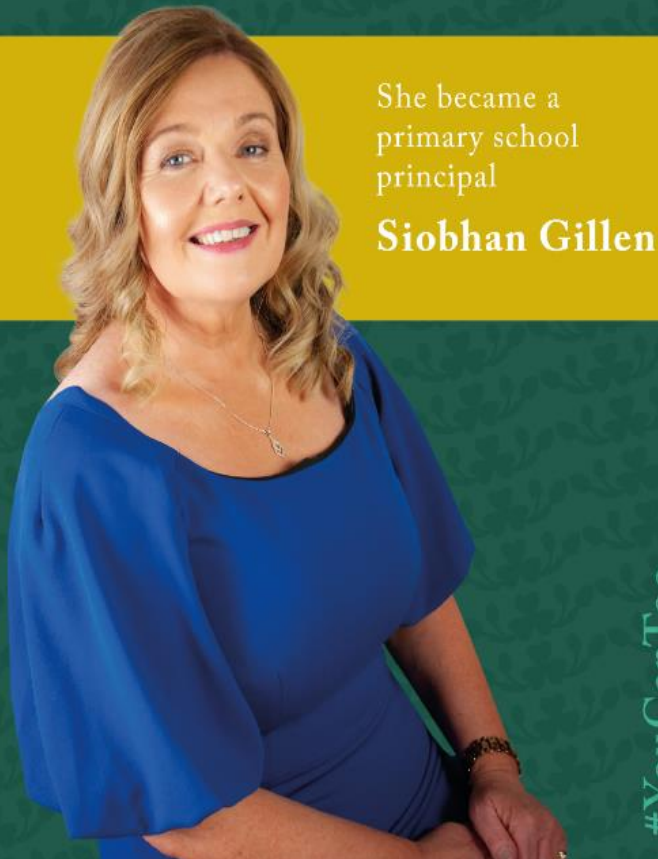
A coin offering will activate a candle and all money raised will be donated to the many charitable causes our community contributes to on an annual basis.

So please make use of this lovely aid to prayer and new addition to our beautiful sacred space.

Mrs Teresa Hodgins
Head of Religious Education



Thornhill College
Past Pupils



She became a
primary school
principal

Siobhan Gillen

#YouCanToo



GREATER SHANTALLOW COMMUNITY ARTS PRESENTS

THE EARHART ART PRIZE
for Female Artists in Ireland

CASH PRIZE of **£2,000**

Closing date for entries is Wednesday, May 18th 2022
Enter via www.studio2derry.com/earhartprize



Believing in yourself
is the first **SECRET**
to **SUCCESS**