



Co Longford Social Services 40th Anniversary Celebrations

On 15th September 2011 Co. Longford Social Services celebrated its 40th Anniversary at its head quarters St Joseph's Hospital. The hugely successful event began with Mass celebrated by Bishop Colm O'Reilly. This was followed by the unveiling of a memorial to the late Sr Calasanctius, our co founder. Guest speaker Denis

Doherty (former CEO, HSE) addressed the gathering and launched "Thoughts & Reflections" compiled by Padraic Gearty. This booklet is all to do with Volunteers helping Volunteers. Kieran Nugent, from Irish Red Cross, designed and launched our new Website on the night. www.mealsonwheelslongford.ie
 The organisation, founded in 1971

by Sr Calasanctius and Dr Gerry McDonagh recognised the need for a Social Service within the county. Padraic Gearty was nominated Chairman on its inception in 1971, a post he held for some 38 years. In 2009 Padraic resigned his post but not before he had assigned Donie Murtagh, Chairman and Denis Hughes, Assistant

Chairman. Both men joked "It is now taking two of us to fill the post held by one man for the last 38 years"! Sadly, 2011 has seen the passing of Sr Calasanctius and Padraic, two wonderful people who motivated and guided the entire force at Co. Longford Social Services. Today, 40 years later, the service has gone from strength to strength,

delivering over 48,000 meals in 2010, Chirophy Services for over 65's, visitation of the sick and elderly in their homes and the provision of transport to Day Care Services, Clubs etc. Further details of our services can be viewed on www.mealsonwheelslongford.ie or telephone 043 3350114/3350138.



Remembering Padraic Gearty RIP

Many people contribute to community life and whether that commitment and involvement be great or small, they all enrich the community in which they live. Longford has been particularly fortunate in that so many people, through various organisations, over many years, give so willingly of their time and talents to help make Longford the vibrant, friendly and forward-thinking town that it is. The late Padraic Gearty epitomised this philosophy, perhaps more than most, and his life-long involvement in the sporting, charitable, political, legal and cultural life of the town is without parallel. His was a life of leadership by example, full of optimism and positive thinking, that helped to engender a similar vein of thinking in the many individuals and groups he encountered and helped throughout his life.

He was a man with an innate sense of moral righteousness. He sought, as he always had, an understanding of the predicament or problem that confronted people and an analysis of how best to respond to it. On many occasions, often unseen and unheralded, his adopted stance, in sometimes difficult circumstances, showed outstanding courage, a reasoned and principled view of what was just and unjust. A very popular and affable man with a great sense of humour, he retained many life-long and lasting friendships with people from all walks of life. His involvement and untiring efforts for the betterment of Longford was surpassed only by his loyalty to his immediate and extended family.
Ar Dheis De go raibh a Anam.

Ni bheidh a leitheid ann aris - Sr Calasanctius

Sr Calasanctius born Susan Duffy in Dromard, committed her entire life to improving the lives of others, particularly the sick, the elderly and those who lived outside the margins of society. Her kindness and empathy led her to challenge many of the accepted norms of the time. These traits also drove her to transform or set up a number of organisations dedicated to the provision of services. Sr Calasanctius started her career of mercy back in 1946 when she was appointed a permanent nurse in the County Home, became Matron in 1954 and when she retired in 1983 she continued her works of mercy working full-time with Longford Social Services. As a Mercy sister and a member of the parish community she played her part through Longford Social Services which she started some 40 years

ago. Under the auspices of the council, sub-divisions were created and put in place, later to prosper independently:- Meals on Wheels, Hospice Homecare, The Millennium Cemetery, Tuesday Club (89 Club), Ladies Family Club, Community Information Centre, Laundry Services, Guesthouse scheme of 1974, School Breakfasts Clubs 1977, Stroke club and House maintenance/Repairs.
*"Sr Calasanctius was an inspiration and a legend, by whom we all of us have been led and driven, who refused ever to take no for an answer; by whom we have been motivated and guided, who has illuminated and given purpose and meaning to our lives of which at least some of us did not ever think could be possible."
 Padraic Gearty.*