

St. Mel's College

By now all our students who have moved on to Third Level are well settled into their courses and we ourselves have just returned from our Hallowe'en Break. Students have got into the rhythm of the school year and Transition Year students are on work experience.

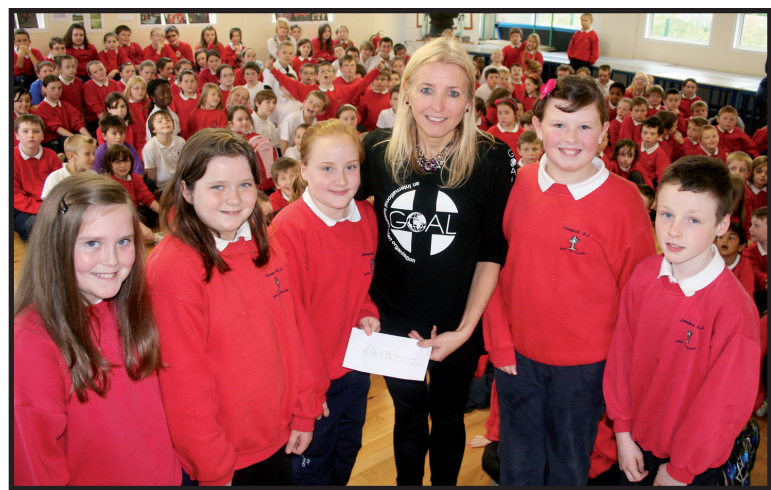
As I write a storm is thundering up the avenue, echoing the daily economic forecasts. We wait with bated breath for the latest budget news. The news is not good. However, within the boundaries of the College we all find sanctuary. Life throws challenges at us when we least expect them. Some of the surprises we receive are not the most pleasant. But it's important that the young men in our care are equipped with the skills needed to cope with the vicissitudes of life. We can pass on to the Celtic Cubs in our care some of the coping skills we were forced to learn in the lean eighties. Adversity must not be seen as an enemy for often in the midst of adversity we find opportunity.

The sporting campaigns have begun and we are having some early success. On behalf of all teams and athletes I'd

like to say a special thank you to all our coaches who put in so much extra time, on a voluntary basis, to work with our sportsmen to prepare them for competition. In these times of cutbacks and austerity it is good to see that the spirit of volunteerism is alive and well in the College.

We would like to say goodbye and thank you to a man who gave thirty eight years service to St Mel's. Our Guidance Counsellor Pat O'Doherty retired this Summer after long and loyal service. On behalf of staff and students, past and present, we wish Pat a long, happy and healthy retirement.

Finally as we enter the season of Advent all staff send warm wishes to every family who is, or have been associated with the College. We hope that despite the present economic downturn we can turn to our most important assets for support and joy. Friends and family are the richest currency we will ever have. As we gather during this holy season to celebrate and to glow in each other's company we may realize what real wealth is and how rich we are.



Maura Lennon, GOAL receives €413 from the proceeds of Jersey Day, Stonepark National School.

GOAL Grows in Longford

■ TIERNAN DOLAN

Nature never ceases to amaze. Despite the horrendous snow and ice last winter, the snow-drops popped up on time in the spring to herald the arrival of the magical new growth. Similarly, despite a massive fall in incomes locally, support for the aid agency GOAL continues to grow and defy logic. For the second year in a row, walkers and joggers turned out for the Christmas day GOAL Mile in record numbers despite the snowy freezing conditions. This Christmas day will be the 16th event in a row and again a huge crowd will gather at Connolly Bks at noon to help the poorest of the poor in the developing world.

Every year seems to throw up a different massive disaster in some part of the world. Earlier this year, parts of Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya were

ravaged by drought leading to a famine on a huge scale. As ever, it's the elderly, the young and the poor who suffer most in the most unspeakable manner. But once again, the incredible generosity of the people of Longford shone brightly as thousands of euro was donated locally which was used by GOAL to help the unfortunate people in the Horn of Africa.

Throughout the town and county of Longford hundreds of people, young and old support the work of GOAL through a vast array of fundraising events, from cake sales to donations from 50th parties, from jersey days to quiet donations. GOAL may be doing the work on the ground but its vital work could not continue without the continued and valued support of the generous people of Longford.

So on behalf of GOAL, a simple but sincere thank you.



Class 111, 2nd year, St Mels College had a Jersey day in October 2011 to raise funds for school children in Calcutta, India to help provide them with running water for a school over there. The boys raised €850 which will make a huge difference to their fellow students who are less fortunate.

Aisling Children's Arts Festival 2011

The 14th Annual Aisling Children's Arts Festival took place during the last week of October. As usual the week started off with a Family Fun Day in St Michael's Boys School. We realise now that the rain does not deter children and their families from having fun. Children participated in a huge variety of workshops, took part in traditional carnival games, scaled a mobile climbing wall and held lizards, snakes, owls, hedgehogs from the Animal Roadshow.

The highlights of the day were the two family shows featuring Jason Maverick, the winner of the Rotterdam International Street Theatre Competition and Jack Wyse, the first ever Irish Winner of The Street Performers World Championships. The girls from Scoil Mhuire ensured that all the children had their faces painted while the boys from St Mel's helped with the circus skills workshop. ... And that was just day one.

The Backstage Theatre was busy for the week hosting a variety of shows and exhibitions for the festival. On Monday night Whitehall NS and St Teresa's NS, Killoe held a photography exhibition in the Atrium Gallery. On Tuesday night it was the turn of Kilasonna NS and St Mary's NS, Edgeworthstown to take to the stage to perform the play that they had written and produced themselves under the guidance of Chris Thompson and Doug Fox Roberts. One of the high-



Children enjoying the exciting activities at the Aisling Free Family Day.

lights of the week was undoubtedly the performance of The Adventures of The Kings of Ireland's Son. This provided a great opportunity for three local youth organisations,

The Aisling Children's Arts Festival, The Attic Youth Club and Backstage Youth Theatre to work together under the guidance of Padraig McIn-

tyre and Shane Crossan to produce a play based on the work of Padraic Colum. Almost 600 children participated in the workshop programme which started on the Family Fun Day and finished with a full day of workshops in the Temperance Hall on Saturday. The festival is organised by a small voluntary committee compris-

ing of Fiona Jackson, Colette Meally, Nora Horan, Teresa Mc Guinness, Moe Reynolds, Angela Crossan, Aine O Suilleabhain, Sive McGuinness, Rosie O'Hara, Brid Nevin, Patricia Mc Kiernan and Maria Gray. They are able to organise the festival due to the generous sponsorship of local organisations and businesses.

Good Neighbours in St Mary's, Clonguish and St Joseph's

Since the fire at St Mel's Cathedral we have been made very welcome at St Mary's Church Newtownforbes for many ceremonies. We are most grateful to Fr Ciarán McGovern and the people of the parish for their generosity and patience in allowing us use their beautiful church. Everyone very much appreciates the lovely dignity, respect and co operation they experience on what are very emotional and often difficult days in family life. We wish all in Clonguish a very happy Christmas and peace and joy in the New Year.

Many families too, have held family funerals in St Joseph's Hospital Chapel since the fire at the Cathedral. We are very grateful to all at St Joseph's for their generous help and co operation towards families and community on funeral days. Your good work and gentle kindness is very much appreciated by all in our Parish. May you all have a happy Christmas and peace and joy in the New Year.

