



Attic Youth Committee and their leaders take London by storm!



Deane Connolly presents a cheque to Bishop Colm O'Reilly for the Cathedra Restoration Fund on behalf of the Attic Youth Committee.

## Another successful year for the Attic Youth Cafe Longford

It is always said that young people are our future and nobody knows this better than the staff and volunteers in the Foroige Attic Youth Cafe in Longford. Since the cafe's doors opened November 2006 the cafe has grown to be now the central Hub for the Young people of Longford town and county. The Attic has without doubt become a hive of activity everyday with various programmes running on a daily basis.

The Attic opens its doors daily at 12:30pm to 2pm for lunch time where young people are welcome to drop in and eat their lunch and watch television and play pool or go on the computers. In the evening the Youth committee meet which is made up of local Transition Year students who decide the direction the cafe needs to take to maintain young people's interest. The Attic is open every Wednesday evening from 3:30pm until 5pm for drop in and this attracts huge num-

bers of young people as it gives them a safe social environment to mix and have fun in an out of school setting. Weekly Drug and alcohol educational programmes are run by Ms. Theresa Connell to educate young people on the harmful effects of these substances on your body and mind. Weekend activities include, Band nights, discos, bingo, table quizzes etc.

Overall the Attic is continuing to be a space that the youth of Longford take ownership over and appreciate what they can learn through the programmes and activities laid on for them in the attic and the skills they develop through taking part in these programmes. The Attic is managed by Foroige and the voluntary management committee chaired by Ms Ruth McGarry Quinn. The Attic has a youth committee which meet weekly and it is this committee that guides the management team on what the needs of

young people are in Longford. Each year the Attic Youth Cafe take part in Citizenship work in the community and this work such as organising the Longford Youth Factor on a yearly basis which raises money for local charities.

The Attic have won the overall Citizenship award in 2009 and in 2010 they were honoured with a merit award for compiling a booklet for 6<sup>th</sup> class students named Are youth Ready for the next step which featured information for pupils entering secondary school for the first time and prepared them for what to expect whilst giving parents food for thought on subject choices, healthy eating and drug and alcohol awareness.

The Attic is already fully underway with this year's Citizenship project which will not only benefit members of the Attic youth cafe but also the community as a whole through creat-

ing a budget card to help keep business local especially in this economic climate. The Attic Youth Cafe have taken part in many events over the past twelve months including, travelling to London to see a west end musical, trips to Dublin, Recognition events in Mayo, Summer Camps in adventure centres and sports day in Roscommon where they won the Tony Reid Perpetual Trophy. The Foroige Attic Youth cafe is now a fundamental part of the lives of young people living in the town and surrounding areas as it gives them a fun safe environment to socialise under the supervision of dedicated volunteers.

The cafe is a voluntarily led initiative and without the dedicated support of all the volunteers involved in the running of the Cafe on a weekly basis we would not be able to reach out to the many young people that use the facility. Successes to date for the Attic

Youth Cafe include; St Patricks Day Parade 2008 Best new entrant award, AIB Better Ireland Award runners up 2008, Pride Of Longford Award 2009, Permanent TSB Foroige Youth Citizenship Award winners 2009, St Patricks Day Parade 2010 Best non commercial entrant and Merit award winners Permanent TSB Foroige Youth Citizenship Award 2010. Special thank you to all the staff in the Attic Youth Cafe, Jim Maher, Theresa Connell, James Duignan and Kathleen Mahon and to all the Volunteers who continue to give their time selflessly throughout the year to help in the development of our young people.

*If you wish to find out more about the Attic Youth Cafe and you wish to get involved please contact  
Jim Maher on 086 9672920 or email james.maher@foroige.ie*

## Adoration in music and prayer

A Holy Hour is a traditional form of Catholic prayer that is said privately or in a church in the presence of God in the Blessed Sacrament. The monthly holy hour takes place on the last Saturday of every month between the hours of 8.30 to 9.30 and is organised by Fr. Brendan O'Sullivan. It is a time of adoration in music and prayer. It is aimed at the youth and families to welcome them to the church community.

Each hour shows the hall in darkness, which draws attention to the illuminated Blessed Sacrament on the altar. The holy hour commences with a candle procession. A

number of youths volunteer to bring a candle to the altar. This is accompanied by powerful music from the folk group. Fr. Brendan then leads the hour in silence, songs and powerful reflections. The rosary prayer is sometimes recited part in English, part in Slovakian or Polish. The folk group sing a number of songs from their albums throughout the hour. The boys from the Cenacolo community in Knock join us in the holy hour. A house in Ireland was opened in Knock, Co. Mayo in 1999 for young people suffering with drug abuse. They have found a sense of belonging and peace through prayer.

This is an opportunity for us all to give thanks and to pray for those who are in need of our prayers, such as those who are bereaved, the sick and those with troubled minds. The powerful hour of prayer and adoration is attended by both young and old and is growing from month to month and year to year. We hope that it will continue growing into the New Year. Everybody is welcome to this powerful time of adoration. It takes place between 8.30pm-9.30pm on the last Saturday of every month in the St. Mel's Cathedral Centre. See you all there!

## The meaning of the monthly hour from a young person's perspective

Many people, peers and others have often said to me why go to the holy hour? Why not come out or what do you get out of it? Sometimes I just don't answer or I'll answer them with, 'I'll say a prayer for you and just smile and continue on. But I think these few lines sum up one of my many reasons for attending our monthly holy hour.

**Time spent in prayer  
Is never a waste of time**  
*It is a time with blessing and a time with God. (Fr. Jozo Zovlo)*

As a young person, particularly growing up in our current time of economic crisis I believe it is important to take time out and reflect on our lives, our worries, all the little things that each and every one of us have on our minds at that time and also to give thanks for the many blessings in our lives. The monthly holy hour in our parish is one of the things that I look forward to as a way of giving myself time to reflect in a place where there is a sense of warmth and belonging and where you feel welcome. It is a place where you forget all your little worries and troubles and sit back and enjoy the beautiful music and candlelight while not forgetting the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. When I see young people and families come together it makes me smile and think to myself 'I'm glad I'm here tonight' and I believe it brings many blessings to our families and our community. I imagine it is of great benefit to the men from The Cenacolo Community and will empower them to overcome their addictions and it is always enlightening to see them present on the night. Also as a person who has experienced bereavement I think it is a wonderful time to remember our dead as you can feel their presence with you in front of the Blessed Sacrament. At the last holy hour I overheard a man saying 'I got a lot from that, when is the next one?' and he had just been bereaved, so this monthly holy hour has really touched the hearts of many people in our community.

Last Christmas will be etched in many of our minds forever and one of the things that I first thought of when I realised we wouldn't have the church was, 'oh no we'll have no holy hour' but it has continued with thanks to Fr. Brendan, the pastoral team and of course the folk group and I am very grateful for this.

Sometimes it phases me when people stereotype or put young people down by saying, 'ah sure they have no faith or what would they know?' So I would encourage people to come to the holy hour and see for themselves that young people are well represented and we should give them a chance, because I believe it is possible for all of us to lose sight of our faith but at some time in our lives be it through home or school we have all learned to pray and because of this, God always stands a chance with that person.

