



The Caimin's Connection

Keeping you up to date with the latest news in our school community

TYA (Hannah, Martín, Caoimhe, Darragh)

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Issue 5

Spreading Some Festive Cheer – by Caoimhe Hegarty



Last week, several students visited Carrigoran, a local care home for the elderly, with the mission of bringing joy and companionship to its residents in the lead up to Christmas.

Members of the SVP group, alongside singers and musicians made their annual visit to Carrigoran recently to play music, share Christmas cards, and lift the spirits of the elderly residents who live there.

On arrival, students were greeted by some of the staff members and were given a very warm welcome. The residents gathered eagerly to listen to a lovely musical performance by some of our school's talented musicians and singers, including Scott McCoy, Shauna Byrne, Freyja Evans, and Darragh O'Connell. The musicians began with a lively rendition of 'Dusty Windowsills', followed by a mix of other trad tunes. Smiles soon broke across the faces of the elderly residents, who tapped their feet, clapped their hands,



and swayed gently to the rhythm of the music. Following on from this, 'Back to the 80's' cast members Scott (TY) and Shauna (LC2), got the crowd going, with their performance of some popular hits from the musical. Transition Year student Freyja Evans wowed the residents with some more songs, accompanied by Darragh on the trumpet.

After this, the musicians and singers took a well-earned break from entertaining, while members from the SVP group took the time to distribute handmade Christmas cards and Christmas tree ornaments to the residents. Each card and ornament was crafted with care and decorated with colourful drawings and heartfelt messages. The residents were touched by the thoughtfulness and generosity of the students. The exchange of cards was very heartwarming to see and led to some nice conversations. It was a good opportunity for students to learn about the lives and experiences of the residents. Stories were shared, laughter was had, and genuine friendships were forged.

To finish up, the trad group played some Christmas tunes and Shauna sang 'Oh Holy Night', which had everyone in tears. One of the most touching moments was when the residents sang the song 'White Christmas' for the students of St. Caimin's, as a way of showing their gratitude. Our visit to Carrigoran left us with feelings of both fulfilment and gratitude. It reminded us of the importance of giving back to the community and the positive impact that even the simplest act of kindness can have on the lives of others, regardless of their age.



Latest News in St. Caimin's



Q&A with the Minister for Finance – by Hannah Carmody

Eleven Transition Year students from St. Caimin's had the opportunity to meet Minister for Finance, Michael McGrath, during his keynote address at Shannon Chamber's President's lunch in Dromoland Castle last week.

We received a very warm welcome at the stunning Dromoland Castle and were brought upstairs for a cup of tea, while waiting for the Minister to arrive. We were then called to take our seats and enjoyed a delicious roast beef dinner, with all the trimmings.

While presentations from both the Minister and the Shannon Chamber President were the focus of the luncheon, students from St. Caimin's and St. Patrick's Comprehensive kept Mr McGrath engaged, as we questioned whether the Government has enough money in the Budget to tackle the housing and pyrite problems, why we should consider politics as a career, and if Ireland is actually in a recession. I found it very interesting to listen to the Minister's responses, and I learned a lot about the housing crisis and how it is being monitored. It was intriguing to learn that the Government has a limited amount of funding that can be spent on the formation of new houses.

Other members of the public had the opportunity to ask the Minister questions about the outcomes of COP

24 and the Government's plans to tackle climate change. Mr. McGrath expressed his gratitude to the Shannon Chamber of Commerce for inviting him to Dromoland Castle and thanked the Clare County Council for sponsoring the event, which was also supported by Vhi, Shannon Chamber Skillnet, Dromoland Castle Hotel, and Irish Rail.

After the Q&A session, we enjoyed a delicious chocolate and praline mousse with cranberries for dessert. It was beautifully presented and tasted delicious. We then got a group picture with the Minister. He took time to shake hands with each of us and was very kind and attentive. Overall, I really enjoyed going to Dromoland Castle, it was a very interesting and informative experience.



Latest News in St. Caimin's

An Interview with Evan Crimmins – by Darragh Sweeney

I recently sat down with my classmate Evan Crimmins to ask him all about his Transition Year work experience.

I began by asking Evan about his job and how he got it. Evan explained, *"I fit windows and doors, and replace them if they are broken. I am friends with the son of the man I work for, so I just asked him for a job when I was at his house and luckily he agreed to give me the opportunity. I was delighted."*

When I asked Evan what he enjoys the most about the work he replied, *"I enjoy what I do as I am not restricted to working in the same place every day. We go to different houses a lot and we sometimes work outside*

which I like. The job comes with good pay too, so that's a bonus. "When asked to describe a regular day at work, Evan said "On a regular day, I get collected at nine, then go to the site we are working on that day, which is usually in Shannon or the surrounding areas. I work away and have lunch at one o'clock, then go to another job, then go home at half four."

I asked Evan if window and door fitting is something he would consider as a career, to which he replied, *"I don't think so. It is a very physical job that takes a toll on your body physically. I don't think it is sustainable long term. However, I am enjoying the work, I'm getting great experience."*

Thanks to Evan for taking the time to sit down with me for this interview. Best of luck for the rest of your work experience.

TY Team Building Day



Latest News in St. Caimin's

An Exchange Student's Journey – by Caoimhe Hegarty



With his final week in St. Caimin's fast approaching, I grabbed the opportunity to sit down with my friend, Martín Garcia, an exchange student from Barcelona, Spain. Eager to learn about his experiences during his time in our school, Martín shared insights into his daily life, the decision to come to Ireland, and some of the main differences between Spanish and Irish culture.

When asked about his school in Barcelona, Martín described it as a typical school, with some small differences. *"We start classes at eight o'clock in the morning and finish at five o'clock in the evening. At lunch, we can go home, just like here, and lunch is for an hour and a half. Here, you need to change rooms every class but in Spain you stay in the same classroom and the teachers switch. We change room for some subjects though, for example for science we go to the laboratory."*

Curious about Martín's journey to Ireland, I learned that his friend had a positive exchange experience last year, and this inspired his decision to do the same. He added, *"My parents and I think it is a good idea to learn English."* However, why Ireland? Martín explained that England was too expensive. *"The options were to go to Ireland or Canada, but Canada is too far away from Spain. My parents were too worried to let me go to Canada."*

Arriving in Ireland on the 30th of August with twenty other students from Spain, Martín shared his thoughts on the transition and what it's like to live in a different country. *"It's good to do new things, and the culture is different in Spain. New experiences are good,"* he said.

One thing that stood out in our conversation was Martín's not-so-positive view on Irish cuisine. According to him, the food was a bit of a shock. *"The food is horrible. You only eat beef or pasta. You never eat fish*

It's always beef with vegetables or beef with pasta or vegetables with pasta. I have only eaten fish three times since I have been here, and I am used to having fish once a week. You have potato with everything!"

I asked Martín if he likes it here in Ireland and he replied, *"I like it here, but I prefer Spain. The food, the weather. The weather is always raining here. In Spain, maybe it rains two or three times in a month."*

Despite cultural differences, Martín expressed a strong fondness for the people he has met and spent time with in Ireland. *"Everyone I know here is so friendly. I am staying in Sixmilebridge in the countryside in a lovely house. I am staying with Maria and Corey Phelan and their three children Sarah, Emily, and Jack. They are very nice and have looked after me very well."*

Outside of school, Martín goes soccer training two days a week with Sixmilebridge and meets his friends. He also visits places in Ireland at the weekends. His favourite place he visited was the Cliffs of Moher, despite the foggy weather. *"I also went to Dingle. I stopped in a little beach with surfers. I went to Limerick, Galway, Cobh, Lismore, and Dublin but I only saw the airport."*

When asked about the possibility of returning to Ireland, Martín said, *"Maybe in the summer."* He appreciated the good weather when he first arrived in September, but the rain is off putting! He said his favourite thing about Ireland is the people. *"Definitely the people, you are more friendly than Spain."*

Martín's journey from Barcelona to St. Caimin's has been a mixture of challenges and new experiences. Despite his doubts about Irish food and his frustrations with the Irish weather, he has found comfort in the many friendships he has made here at school. While Martín may miss the familiarity of home in Spain, his time in Ireland has certainly broadened his horizons. Thanks to Martín for taking the time to sit down with me and share his experience of coming to live and go to school in Ireland. Martín will be returning to Spain next week, with Tuesday being his last day in school. From all of the TY's and from the entire community at St. Caimin's, we would like to wish Martín safe travels back to Spain in time for Christmas! It has been lovely getting to know you.

Viajes seguros Martín!!

Latest News in St. Caimin's

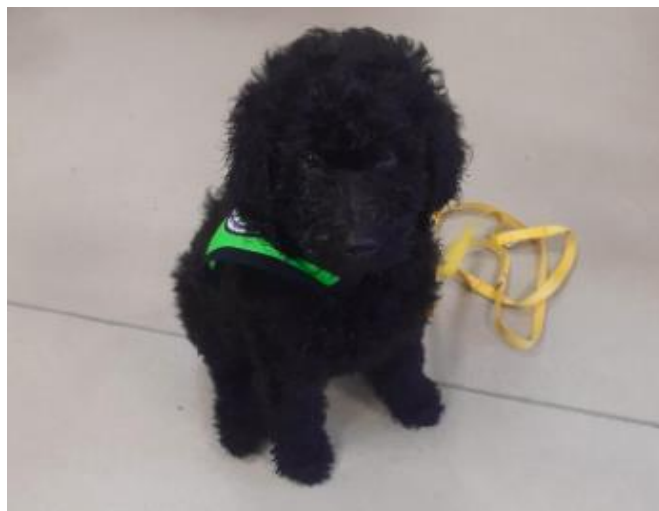
Meet Uma: our new therapy dog – by Hannah Carmody



On the 7th of December, St Caimin's was very happy to welcome Uma, the new therapy dog to the school Community. Uma is only 9 weeks old and is a golden poodle. Uma has been greatly loved in the school community. Uma came to St Caimin's to help students to relax and boost their mood. Uma is great company and makes your day happy and positive.

Uma is a therapy dog from My Canine Companion in Cork. My Canine Companion was set up in 2011 by Cliona O'Rourke and Niall Ruddy, with the aim of enhancing the quality of life for people, through the provision of highly qualified service dogs. It has quickly become the largest provider of service dogs to children and young adults in Ireland.

Uma has kindly been given to our school to train as a therapy dog to support all our students and staff. Ms Guinnane is the main handler of Uma and takes her home every evening. Ms Clohessy is the second handler and will take Uma at certain times as well.



Uma is in training at the moment. She will return to Cork with Ms Guinnane over the next 18 months for training and will be working with the trainers and team from My Canine Companion. After 18 months, we hope that Uma will be fully trained and graduate as a therapy dog. She is already quite trained. She can sit when you ask her, she will wait and sit for her food and will lie on her bed for you. The school decided to apply for a therapy dog because of the benefits to the whole school community.

Therapy dogs help students to be relaxed, calm, attend school, build friendships, support students in the hub, mainstream classes and in literacy classes. Uma can identify when students are stressed and need attention and support. There are guidelines which schools have to follow when adopting a therapy dog. The school must adhere to training the dog. The guidelines are to benefit the dog and to support those who engage with the dog.

Uma has already brought lots of love, fun and happiness to the staff and students in St. Caimin's and she has only been in the school for one week. Students and staff are already benefitting from Uma's presence. The school cannot wait to see the difference she will make in the students and staff's lives.



Ireland vs Spain: you decide! – by Martín Garcia

Spain and Ireland are two countries from Europe. One in the north, the other one in the south, one hot, and the other cold. But which one is better? That is the question!

First, I am going to talk about Spain. Spain is a lovely country situated in the south of Europe, near France and Portugal and the Mediterranean Sea. One thing that Spain has that Ireland does not have, is the mild weather. In Spain, the minimum temperature is 10-12 degrees, but in Ireland, if the temperature is 12 degrees, it is the best day in the year! In Spain, it's sunny. In Ireland, if it's not raining, it's cloudy, and if it's not cloudy, it's foggy! It's impossible to be happy in this country with this weather. I think that is one point for Spain.



My second point is that in Ireland, every part of the country is green with grass, cows, and farms. In Spain, there are cows and animals, but in Barcelona where I am from, it is all city, buildings, cars, pollution. That is a good thing about Ireland. The air is so clean. One point for Ireland.

Next up, food. This is another important thing that I need to talk about. In Ireland, you do not eat fish! The only fish I ate during my entire time here is salmon with pasta. What is this? In Spain, we eat a wide variety of fish: salmon, hake, cod, sardines...and you only eat beef and chicken here. Why don't you ever try pork or rabbit? It is delicious! To end this point, why is your dinner so early?

In Spain, it is typical to eat dinner at 8 or 9pm, and lunch at 2pm. You eat dinner so early you are hungry again after three hours. This point is obviously for Spain.

The fourth point I will discuss is the population. In Spain, the people are so selfish and rude. In Ireland, the people are most respectful, and they have good manners. For example, in Ireland you always need to say, 'Thanks' and 'Sorry'. In Spain, the people are not grateful, and this is an important thing that Ireland has, and Spain does not have. So, for me, that point goes to Ireland.

Right now, the score is tied, so to know the winner, I am going to talk about things to do in each country. So, in Spain, you can visit lovely places like Sagrada Família in Barcelona, la Puerta de Sol in Madrid, la Plaza de España in Sevilla, and other beautiful places, cities and landscapes. In Spain, you have mountains in the north and lovely beaches on the south east coast of Spain.

Now in Ireland, you have lovely landscapes. The Cliffs of Moher, the Dingle Peninsula, all of these places where you can see the sea and the mountains connecting. Moreover, Ireland has beautiful cities like Galway, Cork and Dublin, and a lot of places that represent the history of this country. In Ireland, you are never going to be bored.



So, after reading this, which country do you choose? Spain or Ireland?!

