

Scoil Naomh Comhghall, Coininsi

St. Comgall's N.S., Connors, Clones, Co. Monaghan



June 2009

We wish everyone an enjoyable, relaxing and well-earned break during the summer holidays.

School Year 2008-2009: Another school year has just ended and the summer holidays are upon us again. We enjoyed a wonderful year and our pupils and dedicated school staff have worked extremely hard. I would like to take this opportunity to extend my sincere thanks to them. Indeed, events and experiences shared throughout the past year have certainly helped us to develop a good sense of who we are at St. Comgall's in 2009.

Commendable Endeavours: As we ponder on another year's experiences, we recognise and applaud children for their academic, artistic and sporting accomplishments. Chloe Maguire and Amie Somerville achieved joint 1st Prize in the Clones Film Festival Art competition. Well done to Sarah O'Connor whose handwriting earned her recognition for a second year running in the INTO/EBS Handwriting Competition. Congratulations are also due to our senior pupils for their enthusiastic participation in the Ribena Soccer Competition held in Monaghan and the hockey blitz which took place recently in Three Mile House. Two senior teams performed admirably in the Clones Credit Union Quiz while they also earned €400 for their poster in the HSE competition (*picture below*).

Excellent Attendance: Congratulations to Amelia Butler, Senior Infants, who achieved the highest attendance record in the school for 2008/2009. Good attendance is crucial to a child. Missing a few days may seem insignificant but regular attendance has a positive impact on pupil achievement. If a child is not in school, then a child misses a day of education that cannot be retrieved.



Effective Parental Involvement: Research deems that an effective home-school partnership makes a real difference and impacts upon children's attendance, progress and interest in learning. Once again, we are indebted to all our parents for your continued co-operation, support and encouragement. We are most grateful to each and every one who helped with the cake sales and a successful Christmas raffle and thanks also to those parents and locals who supported us with sponsorship.

As a result of all the ongoing fund raising efforts, St. Comgall's is now a well resourced school. All of the pupils benefit from funds raised by the Parents' Association, across all areas of the curriculum and it is proving vital for giving our learners the best opportunities possible.

As Peter leaves us this year, I would also like to take this opportunity to thank his Mum, Maria Clarke, secretary of the Parents' Association, for the commitment and energy given by her to St Comgall's P.A. She gave her valuable time graciously, to organising various events in support of our school and will be sadly missed.

PE Coaching: Physical education is an important part of our curriculum. During the year coaching in gymnastics, Gaelic football and hockey with Sinéad McDonnell, Colin Malone and Christine Russell, respectively, inspired us with new and innovative ideas to get children moving. It also enabled us to develop high-quality physical education provision and to support new sporting talent. We look forward to continuing with these initiatives into next year - swimming is already penciled in for the Easter/summer term 2010!

Developing Creativity: Music and French classes also continued this year. Music provides a rich opportunity for developing creativity, allowing children to express their feelings through sound. Consequently, all children had the opportunity to engage in tin whistle lessons with Fran McMahon where they learned many new, lively tunes. Jeanette Coyle explored new French phrases with the children and we certainly enjoyed a lovely 'French cheese tasting' session with her. Thanks to all teachers for their expertise and enthusiasm in teaching these classes, we look forward to a resumption of same at St. Comgall's next year.



School Visitors: The Northern Fisheries Board – As part of the SESE curriculum we became involved in the 'Something Fishy' programme, organised through the Monaghan Education Centre. The programme explores different aspects of fish life including the life cycle of the salmon, fish species, angling methods and the conservation of our rivers and lakes. A key element of the programme is that it promotes learning about fish and the environment in a local context. Three members of the Northern Fisheries Board facilitated this initiative which was an activity-based educational exercise and it proved to be interesting and attractive to both teachers and pupils. The Fire Safety Officer – Pupils received a fire safety awareness lesson courtesy of Clones Fire and Rescue Service. The information was part of a nationwide programme entitled '*Safety Team*' which has been designed to enhance the level of awareness of fire safety in the home and to raise the level of children's understanding of fire safety in the community. It was delivered by local firefighter, Alan O'Dowd. Our Local Garda -An Garda Síochána run education programmes in primary schools, aimed at informing pupils about the functions of the Gardaí as well as giving practical information about such topics as crime prevention and personal safety. The programme is provided as part of the Social, Personal & Health Education curriculum and this year safety on roads when using bicycles was the main focus of attention. Local Garda, Johnny McEvoy facilitated this session. Sam Maguire - The All-Ireland Sam Maguire trophy, won by Tyrone in September 2008, made a recent visit to St. Comgall's. All the pupils had the opportunity to learn about the trophy from Cuthbert Donnelly and get up close to a most celebrated award in the GAA. It was fantastic to see the excitement on the faces of the pupils. No doubt, this unique visit of the Sam Maguire will live in the memories of the pupils for many a day.



School Tours: Friday 5th June saw us venture to Ballybay Wetlands and Castleblaney Leisure Centre for another fun filled school tour. In Ballybay the pupils were able to engage with nature and wetland habitats and were challenged to find their way around the park using map-reading skills. Later on, bowling, indoor soccer and an obstacle course, were the order of the day in Castleblaney, as pupils experienced a sense of excitement, enjoyment and achievement through a variety of progressively challenging and innovative activities. Would you believe a karaoke at the end of the tour had everyone up singing and dancing to Abba's 'Dancing Queen'? Many thanks to Debbie and Róisín for their company, help and good humour on the day – great fun was enjoyed by all! Our final outing was spent on the very beautiful Crom Estate. The walks were all really interesting and tranquil, along the shore and through the woods. We spent time pond dipping for unexpected water life and ended off the day playing safely in an enclosed playground.



Sacramental Preparation: Congratulations to Peter Clarke and Michaela Maguire who received Confirmation on May 8th and Rachel Maguire who received First Holy Communion on May 24th. We thank all those who played a very positive part in preparing the children for these key moments in their faith journey. A tremendous amount of goodwill and enthusiasm was shared among parents, priests and teachers in the children's sacramental preparation.



Sport's Day: On Wednesday, June 10th the entire school took part in our annual sport's day over at the football pitch. The day promoted fitness and teamwork in a fun and enjoyable way. We were so lucky with the weather and were encouraged by a great group of cheering parents. Full participation of all present was promoted with a teachers'/parents' race. Well done Christine, Margaret and Candace; the race added great entertainment to the sporting schedule. And didn't the children look terrific in their fancy dress costumes?? Huge thanks to Mrs. Pennell and Helen for the organisation of all events. Plenty of medals and prizes were distributed - everyone was a winner in this very enjoyable learning environment.

Recycling: Thank you to all those who recently collected seventy-four bags of unwanted clothes and other items in our recycling initiative. We are very grateful for all of the effort which parents and the local community have made in generating much needed school funds. We have already received a cheque for €168, for the first bag collection and expect another €90; final payment due for the remaining thirty bags. A total of €258 will now be used to pay for music classes in the new autumn term. So, let's hope everyone continues to recycle their unwanted clothes – most importantly, it's good for the environment as it diverts waste from landfill. Bags will continue to be gratefully received in 2009-2010.

School Uniform: If buying either a school uniform or school tracksuit for next September, then I would be grateful if they could be purchased in McGarry's of Clones and Hicks of Lisnaskea, respectively, in order to maintain consistency in garments' colours. We consider it important to maintain the proper code of dress as it promotes a positive school image and develops pride in oneself and in the school. Following are prices for this year:

McGarry's, Clones: School Uniform

Jumper	€20 - €25 (depending on size)
Trousers	€14 - €15 "
Shirt	€5 - €6 "
Tie	€4

Hicks, Lisnaskea: Tracksuit (£)

Bottoms	£8.99 (small) £11.99 (big)	} <u>Deal</u> all inclusive £40
Polo Shirt	£7.99 (all sizes)	
Sweatshirt	£11.99 (all sizes)	
Jacket	£15	

School Staff & Management: We were pleased to welcome Mrs. Pennell back to St. Comgall's in February and thank Ms. McDonnell again for providing temporary cover for Mrs. Pennell during her maternity leave period. We thank members of the Board of Management for their attendance at meetings, for the interest they showed in the school's management issues and, in general, for promoting participation and partnership in the running of St. Comgall's.

Summer Break:

The school will reopen at 9:20am on Tuesday 1st September 2009. Happy holidays!



Catriona Donnelly (Principal)