

Student Care Team established in Moate Community School

Like any other Secondary School, Moate Community School offers its students an infinite clubs and teams. However, as a school that strives to develop well rounded students, the religion teachers felt they would like to offer students the chance to become involved in the organisation of school masses and other liturgical events during the year, a group to give back, not only to the school, but also to the wider community. The response was huge and a group that was expected to be comprised of 5-10 students has now in excess of 20 members.

At the beginning of October, the Student Care Team was set up. After endless lunchtimes of disputing the name of this new group in the school, we settled on this simple name, under the guidance of our Principal, Mr. Duffy. The team comprises of members from Transition Year, Fifth Year and Sixth Year. A lot of students were encouraged to join after the experience of the Youth Night in the St. Patrick's Church in September and many who participated that night are now members of MCS's Student Care Team. From the outset, students in MCS have been encouraged to be team players, and as part of this new and upcoming group in the school, this team of students contribute to the running of the school just like the Mentors, Prefects, Student Council or Games Committee. Luckily for those involved, they will also be receiving badges which it is hoped will communicate dedication to the group and willingness to work hard.

To date, the care team have been given the opportunity to share our *Thought of the Week* over the intercom on a Monday morning. Two sixth year students Leonie Canavan and Clodagh Flanagan have taken on this task with dedication and commitment. Although it appears to be a minor task, it makes a difference by provoking thought in the students and teachers weekly. After our successful musical, 'Back to the 80s', the team showed its appreciation to the teachers who worked so hard after hours to make the musical a success. The Monday morning after the musical, each member of the Student Care Team brought in treats for the teachers to enjoy at break time. The response and gratitude that we got for fulfilling this simple task was so rewarding and it really brightened up the day.

During the month of November, the care team remembered those who have passed away. A group of students worked on the annual bereavement mass which was held on November 29th. The students involved carefully chose readings and thought of a new idea, of giving all those who attended a bulb to take home and plant. They also had the opportunity under the guidance of their teachers to learn about the different aspects of the Mass and the preparation involved. This mass was open to members of the community and of course, members of staff and the students of the school.

Another group from the Student Care Team decided to organise a time of reflection for the senior students. This involved each student been given the opportunity to light a candle to remember lost loved ones and readings which were hand picked by students. This was a refreshing experience and students came out of the prayer service feeling refreshed. Without the hard work of the members of the Student Care Team who were involved in this task, the prayer services would not have been so memorable. The care team is currently looking forward to getting involved in the Christmas reflections which will be geared towards the junior years in the school.

On December 13th, the care team intend to travel to Knock, for a day of retreat, team building and reflection. As a group, we feel that this trip will bring us even closer together and improve our team work skills, and perhaps it will inspire some fresh ideas for our future hopes for the Student Care Team.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank our school chaplain, Ms. McCormack, our teachers: Ms Prendergast, Ms Feeley and Ms Neilan, Ms Fitzmaurice), our Deputy Principals: Ms. Murray and Mr. Lowry, and of course our Principal, Mr. Duffy. We know that without their constant guidance and support, the existence of the Student Care Team would not be possible. As the Student Care Team, our main role is to give back to our school community and the wider community, and without doubt, we will continue to do this not only in the months ahead but for years to come as the Team becomes part and parcel of school life in Moate Community School.