

PACCS 26th Annual Conference on 5th & 6th March, 2010.

'Embracing the Future'

Friday, 5th March, 2010.

The twenty sixth Annual Conference of PACCS, which was held in the Anner Hotel and Tipperary Institute, Thurles, was officially opened by Eileen Aiken, Founder member of the association. She congratulated PACCS on how far they have come since it was first founded.

She spoke of how parents had come together to fight the cuts in education in the 1980s and from those beginnings had gone on to form PACCS. The first Conference of PACCS was held in Tullow in 1984.

She went on to speak of her involvement in ACCS and of her being the first parent to be President of that Association.

Eileen said that above all she would encourage parents to speak up, not to be afraid to ask questions. This is how we gain our knowledge. We must stand up and be counted.

She concluded by saying how proud she was of having being a founder member of the association and to see how it had now grown. She also complimented PACCS on the warmth and welcome which continues to be there at all of their activities. Parents and guests are genuinely welcomed and that has always been evident in all Conference, Regional and school meetings.

Eileen was then presented with a bouquet of flowers.

The minutes of the 25th Conference were then read by Connie Carolan. They were proposed by Marion Gilligan and seconded by Grace Mooney after which they were signed by the President.

The Financial Report was delivered by John Murphy, Auditor. He congratulated PACCS on the tight control of the budget, while delivering the work on behalf of parents in meeting the relevant partners and delivering training throughout the Regions.

This report was proposed for adoption by Catherine Riordan and seconded by Tom Harbison.

The Secretary's Report was then read by Connie Carolan.

The P.R.O.s Report was given by Anne Leamy in which she outlined the activities of the Association over the past year.

The next session was chaired by Teresa McSweeney, Hon. Secretary, PACCS.

There was one constitutional motion on the agenda to be taken and this was now done. Standing Orders were read and proposed by Catherine Sides and seconded by Leona McCormack.

Eileen Aiken, John Murphy and Pat Herlihy sat on Standing Orders committee and the tellers were Kay Herlihy and Sandra Boylan.

The motion, which was proposed by Leona McCormack and seconded by Margaret Molloy, was carried.

Tommy Walshe thanked everyone for their contributions and called on Grace Mooney, Vice President to close the evening session.

Grace, in her closing remarks, referred to Eileen Aiken's address and would concur with her advice to parents to ask questions and share information. She said when she had attended her first conference she was reticent about asking questions of the speakers but it is only in doing so that we learn and gain our knowledge to pass on to the parents we represent. We welcome questions and if we do not have an answer - and we do not know everything - we will find the information and get back when we have an answer.

This session was followed by Dinner in the Hotel.

Saturday – 6th March.

This session of Conference was held in the Tipperary Institute of Education.

Tommy Walshe, President introduced Moya Breen, Director of Business, Tipperary Institute who officially opened Conference and then went on to give a presentation on the Institute.

Barnie Callaghan, CEO, Gaisce – The President's Award then delivered the Keynote Address. Gaisce – The President's Award is one of Ireland's best kept secrets. It was established in 1985 and celebrates its Silver Jubilee this year. He went on to explain what Gaisce is, its aims which are Community Involvement, Personal Skill, Physical Recreation and an Adventure Journey. There are three awards – Bronze, Silver and Gold.

The Award is a fully accredited member of the London based International Award Association – an umbrella and standards body for similar Award schemes in 129 countries throughout the world.

The key principles of the award are: - Non-competitive, Voluntary, Available to all, Flexible, Balanced, Progressive, and Marathon – not a sport, Personal Development and be Enjoyable.

He went on to outline the Outcomes and Award requirements and concluded with two quotes from Robert D. Putnam.

'Our national myths often exaggerate the role of individual heroes and underestimate the importance of collective effort'

and

'A society of many virtuous but isolated individuals is not necessarily rich in social capital'.

After a short coffee break the Conference was addressed by Ciarán Flynn, General Secretary, ACCS who was introduced by Antoinette Moynihan, PACCS.

His address was 'Lessons in Parenting' - Our Ideas – their lives.' He spoke of messages from research and what they actually tell us. He queried where the messages for schools were in this research and how best to serve the student. The school should provide an environment for its staff to be honest and fair, have a personal interest in the student, a sense of humour, be available as a confidant, be encouraging, get the best out of you, be a good listener, friendly and welcoming and instil a passion for the subject.

He showed a picture taken in a school from a school concert and in it every child is smiling. In the background is a piece of art which is a present from the 6th year students who are leaving the school. This shows the continuity within that school.

He concluded by speaking of the co-operation between ACCS and PACCS and the working relationship with NPCpp and the PPEF.

The first series of workshops began at this stage. 'Project Maths' was chaired by Shane Scanlon, NCCA and 'Mental Health for Teenagers' by Bernie Carroll, Resource Officer for Suicide Prevention, HSE.

After lunch the Workshops were repeated, thus giving all attending an opportunity to attend the workshop of their choice.

Motions were then taken. Theresa McSweeney, Honorary Secretary, chaired this session. The standing orders were read and adopted, roll taken, the Standing Orders Committee and the tellers appointed. Standing Orders Committee were:- Gerard Horgan, Mary Murtagh and Pat Herlihy and the tellers – Kay Herlihy and Sandra Boylan.

After a short break for coffee the remainder of the motions were taken. There were fourteen motions in this session, twelve were carried and two defeated.

Standing Orders were suspended at this time to decide on further motions which were received after the deadline. The proposer of two of the motions addressed conference but the vote to have them debated was narrowly defeated.

Conference was addressed at this stage by Tommy Walshe, President of PACCS. He spoke of our theme – Embracing the future' and how we involve our founder members. Eileen Aiken had opened the Friday evening session. John Murphy – our Auditor continues his support to PACCS as do all our previous members. Our Standing Orders Committee were all past presidents of the Association.

He went on to speak of our new Website which, co-incidentally, was launched in Cashel ten years ago by a former President, Pat Dwyer. He asked people to visit the website and gave a 'short taster' but said people would have to log in to see and appreciate the rest of the site. He spoke of the co-operation with NPCpp and ACCS – both of whom are attending and addressing our Conference.

Our exhibitors, as always, continue to support us and while we have received continued support over the years from Tipperary Institute, Waterford Institute and for the past couple of years, NPCpp, we have new people here to-day and all are welcome.

He referred to our Workshops, Project Maths (Shane Scanlon, NCCA) and Bernie Carroll (Resource Officer for Suicide Prevention, HSE).

One of our members from the Executive is due to retire this year – Anne Leamy – and he spoke of her input into PACCS and in introducing PACCS to Ann McBride, Tipperary Institute. Ann and the Institute has been a continuous supporter of PACCS since this introduction.

He concluded by introducing the Executive who joined him at the podium. He wished to say that while he may be out there as President, it is with the help and the hard work of the Executive that PACCS operates.

Tommy had been introduced by Marie Buckley, Assistant P.R.O., PACCS Executive.

Jim Moore, President, NPCpp then addressed the conference. His address was 'Going forward after 25 years' and covered the vision and mission of NPCpp. He spoke of the background of the Association, which was established twenty five years ago. He outlined its structure and the Strategic Plan. He also spoke of the Plan of Action, Future structures, Education for the future and the PPEF. The role of parents within these structures was also covered. He concluded by quoting:

'Never underestimate that a small group of thoughtful committed people can change the world, indeed it is the only thing that ever has.'

Connie Carolan, Hon. General Secretary then introduced the incoming Executive for ratification.

Dublin:

Teresa McSweeney, Rosmini,
Tom Harbison, Rosmini,
Julie Kilroy, St. Colmcille's, Knocklyon
Catherine Riordan, East Glendalough
2 to be decided

Southern Region:

Marie Buckley, Ballincollig,
Antoinette Moynihan, Kenmare
Nora Irwin, Youghal,
Ann Duncan, Kenmare

Mid West:

Tommy Walshe, Moate
Marion Gilligan, Gallen
1 to be decided

North East:

Margaret Moore, Ashbourne
Carole Trodden, Ashbourne
Mary Curtis, Kells

West:

Catherine Sides	Gort
Leona McCormack	Gort
Catherine Cronin	Gort

South East:

Margaret Molloy, Gorey
One to be decided

North West:

2 To be decided.

The election of President was the next item on the agenda and Tommy Walshe was re elected. He was proposed by Teresa McSweeney and seconded by Catherine Sides.

Tommy accepted the nomination and said he would be delighted to continue in his role as President.

Open Forum:

Aidan Farrell, State Examinations Commission,
Joe Moran, ASTI,
Clive Byrne, NAPD,
Jim Moore, NPCpp,
Michael Gillespie, TUI
Ciarán Flynn, ACCS

took questions from the floor. The moratorium of middle management appointments, WSE and the decision of the Teacher Unions not to engage in aspects of this, and re setting of times to take Leaving Certificate subjects due to illness or bereavement were among the items raised the relevant people responded to the questions. The session was chaired by Tommy Walshe, President.

Connie Carolan then closed conference. She thanked everyone for attending and paid tribute to PACCS Executive, who she said were a joy to be involved with. She also thanked our Past members for their continued support. This year PACCS has six new members which bodes well for the future as this is almost a third of its members.

PACCS were joined by the Delegates, Observers and Guests at a Banquet in the Anner Hotel. Music and dancing concluded the 26th Annual Conference.