

**Dáil Na nÓg:**

Congratulations to third year student Rachel Kenny who recently participated in Dáil Na nÓg. Dáil Na nÓg is Ireland's National Youth Parliament. It takes place every two years and has five young representatives from each county. The Offaly representatives were Laura Slevin, Karen Maloney, Jessica Smyth, Amelie O'Connor and Banagher College student Rachel Kenny. This year Dáil Na nÓg took place in Leinster House for the first time since it started. The topic for Dáil Na nÓg 2024 was Mental Health with sub-topics of Body Image, School Stress and Mental Health services. During the day the young people debated and discussed these topics in the Dáil Chamber. At the end, a vote took place and it was found that School Stress had carried the most votes, so therefore this will be the chosen topic to be worked on by Comhairle Na nÓg's National Executive for the next two years. Well done to Rachel.

**Banagher Darkness Into Light :**

We are celebrating Ten years of DIL in Banagher this year and urge anyone who can to join us on May 11th in Banagher College to walk together in solidarity from darkness into light.

We will hold our community days in Banagher Post Office on Thursday and Friday mornings from 10am until 1pm each week and in Sexton's SuperValu on Saturday May 4th.

You can also register online.

**Garda Youth Awards:**

Congratulations to second year student Freya Maher who won the Laois Offaly Division Garda Youth Special Recognition Award. It is an outstanding achievement and one that is richly deserved. Freya is a keen horse rider and unfortunately a recent trek took an unexpected turn. A horse spooked and as a result Freya had to take charge of a very serious situation, alert the emergency services and perform lifesaving CPR on the side of a busy road. Thankfully, due to Freya's quick thinking, calmness under pressure and maturity beyond her years the story had a happy ending.

The Garda Youth Award Committee were so impressed by Freya that they created a new category, namely the Special Recognition Award especially for her. She was presented with her award in the presence of her proud family in the Killeshin Hotel in Portlaoise, an event sponsored by Pat McDonagh of Supermacs.

We are so proud of you Freya and delight in your success.

### **Children's Youth Advisory Panel :**

Well done to third year student Ailis Malone who took part in the Ombudsman for Children Youth Advisory Panel discussion in the Senate Chamber on Tuesday 23rd April. The topic was a discussion on the views of children on Ireland's international obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and emerging issues for children in Ireland including AI.

This was a wonderful opportunity for the views of our young people to be heard, and it really is great to see one of our own students right at the heart of it. Keep up the important work you are doing on behalf of your peers Ailis.

### **Successful Day Out for S.T.E.A.M. Team at new LOETB Awards:**

Banagher College had a very successful day at the inaugural LOETB S.T.E.A.M. Programme Showcase, with the highlight being the brilliant victory of the Vex Robotics IQ Team.

The team had a great day out at the awards, where students from across the nine LOETB schools came together to show all the work that they had completed as part of the new S.T.E.A.M. (Science Technology Engineering Arts and Maths) Programme, as well as competing for the top prizes in three of the four strands : Vex Robotics, LEGO League robotics and coding; design through Minecraft, and Podcasting.

The Banagher crew had three Minecraft teams who rebuilt Birr, Banagher and Eyrecourt as accessible sustainable towns – with the Birr team making the list of finalists. Meanwhile, two podcasting teams used the school's 'Bog Pod' Podcast Studio to create walking tour podcasts of Banagher for young people, with the 'Banagher Banter' team making the shortlist for the winner.

The teams got to see their work on the big screen, with MC, Seanie Morris, commending the incredibly high quality of the entries. The big success, however, was with the Banagher College Vex Robotics Team, who brought home the trophy, while winning the top prize of €1000 of S.T.E.A.M. equipment for the school and €500 worth of vouchers for themselves.

### **North Tipp Ploughing:**

Congratulations to Fifth Year Students Robert Duffy and Lee Hogan who excelled at the 59th Annual North Tipperary Ploughing meet in Aglish, Borrisokane recently. Both lads worked with a Two Sod Plough, Robert came second in the Novice Class with Lee second in the U-21 Division.

### **Athletics:**

Well done to TY Student Daniel McDonald, who took home three Gold Medals at the U-17 Offaly Athletics Championships at Tullamore Harriers on Sunday April 21st. Daniel won Gold in the Shot Putt, Long Jump and 100 metres, a massive achievement for a super athlete who thoroughly enjoys athletics

### **Second Year Girls Basketball:**

Well done to our Second Year Girls Basketball Team who are through to the Leinster Cup semi finals following a great 23-19 win over Beechill College (Co Monaghan) on April 18th. Player of the match in the semi-final was: Amber Gohery.

The Second Year Panel was Holly Sexton, Laura Foley, Amber Gohery, Caoimhe Flynn, Amy Kenny, Freya Maher, Isabelle Davis, Maddison Keegan, Emma Byrne, Leila Monahan, Elodie Loonam, Caitlin Cooney, Emma McDermott & Leah Delaney.