

Spring 2011 Edition

# Links



The Magazine from The Schools' Business Partnership



## In this issue...

Nagle Community College, Mahon 'switch on' to Bord Gáis for Skills @ Work

It's 'Time to Read' as Ballina Beverages and Scoil Íosa embrace SBP's pilot programme

Inver College gains teacher development from Bose GP

# Welcome



*Germaine Noonan*

Hello everyone,

I am delighted to be announcing to you that the Schools' Business Partnership is **expanding in Ireland**. The Department of Education & Skills has provided financial contribution to

allow us recruit companies to work with 40 more schools. The schools have been chosen by Department officials, the School Completion Programme National Team and ourselves. It is a very exciting time for us and this expansion is as a direct result of requests from schools to be involved in our programmes. We will achieve this over the next 2 to 3 years.

Any company who may be interested in setting up partnerships in other sites should contact our team to see if there is one of the new schools located in their area. It is a great opportunity for businesses in Ireland to expand their involvement also and provide further volunteering opportunities for their employees.

More good news: **Minister for Education & Science, Mr Ruairi Quinn TD** has accepted our invitation to be guest of honour at our annual Mentoring event which will take place May 6th next at the Clock Tower Conference Centre in Marlborough Street and it will undoubtedly be a great occasion for all the mentors and students finishing up their 2 year programme. I look forward to seeing you all there.

We have great news from Donegal where leading company **Pramerica** have joined SBP and have partnered with Mulroy College in Milford. Also, a word of congrats is extended to **Abbott** in Ireland as they were fittingly honoured recently in London where they won the Newcomer Award at the European Employee Volunteering Awards 2011. The company was commended for its

employee volunteering efforts with respect to its innovative science education programmes - Abbott Family Science and Operation Discovery, and its participation in Business in the Community Ireland's Schools' Business Partnership programme. Abbott has 5 partnering schools in Longford, Sligo, Santry & Citywest (Dublin) and Cork.

The pilot **Time to Read Programme** is past the half way mark and many of the children and their parents and the volunteers have had visits to the local library to see why it is a great resource for communities in Ireland. Parents, teachers and volunteers have remarked that the programme is having a positive effect with one parent saying "He read every day over Christmas, he didn't pick up the DS (Nintendo) once".

Jiri Kukucka from the Czech Republic spent three days with our team getting a first hand insight into SBP in Ireland and you can read about this on page 4. They will launch SBP in the Czech Republic next month and their focus is on the science agenda.

Finally, I know the companies and schools that we work with are reaching the final stages of this year's programme with wrap ups, etc on the horizon! Enjoy this time of the year and reflect on the great work and impact that you are having on the social inclusion agenda in Ireland and beyond. Our evaluations will shortly reach your inbox and I just want to encourage you to complete them so that we continuously improve what we do and how we do it! Thanks in advance for your feedback!

*Germaine Noonan*  
**Programme Manager**

**For further information  
on The Schools' Business  
Partnership, please visit  
[www.bitc.ie/sbp](http://www.bitc.ie/sbp)**



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## Skills @ Work Photos: Mock Interview Session



*Mock interviews in Origo (part of The Slisk Group): Donna Reilly, Origo HR, interviewing Idris Oyeniyi from St. Joseph's Academy, Kildare.*

## Front Cover Photos

### Top Row Left to Right:

1. "Dressed to impress" the TY students at Davis College, Mallow, with employees from Aviva Insurance, Cork, at their mock interviews in February.
2. Students from Killarney CC learn the tricks of the trade at the Marks & Spencer Site Visit
3. Colaiste Mhichil CBS, Limerick students visit Analog Devices as part of the Skills @ Work Programme

### Middle Row Left to Right:

1. Tom Harrington, Team Leader, Dulux with 5th years from nearby North Presentation SS, Cork
2. "Cashing In" Students from Larkin CC, Dublin on a site visit to Marks and Spencer, Mary Street, get a hands-on experience of working in retail
3. "Fire Ahead": Students from Carlow VS find out how the fire officers enter a premises at Carlow Fire Station as part of Carlow County Council Site Visit.

### Bottom Row Left to Right:

1. "Race Day": Jeff Kelly, Irish Life & Permanent having a formula 1 day with students from Patrician College, Finglas at the mentoring social event in Inchicore.
2. Students from St Colman's, Midleton ready for their Site Visit at Abbot in Cork
3. A student from Deansrath CC, Dublin 22 meets his Cadbury Ireland mentor for the first time.



*Lorraine Ryan, from Curragh PP School being interviewed by David Wright HR Manager, Horse Racing Ireland.*



*Edel Fahy, Aviva coordinator interviewing Flavia Florinda Brad from Galway CC at the Skills @ Work Mock Interview Session.*

## BITCI Member's Education Initiatives

*The following is a snapshot of education initiatives offered by some BITCI member companies*



### ESB launch DVD on Sustainability for Primary Schools

ESB has developed a DVD for use in primary schools. It is a resource tool to engage primary students on issues relating to:

- Climate Change & the Environment
- Renewable Energy and ESB
- What Individuals Can Do to Help the Environment

Aimed at students from 3rd to 6th class, the DVD incorporates video clips and games and explains the issues in a clear and accessible way.

For more information on the DVD (which is accompanied by an explanatory booklet), email [schools.sustainability@esb.ie](mailto:schools.sustainability@esb.ie)



### Houghton Mifflin Harcourt

Global education leader Houghton Mifflin Harcourt recently partnered with the Educational Disadvantage Centre on a pilot literacy programme with City Quay Primary School in Dublin. The project, which used the medium of art to support writing tasks, was designed to promote literacy development in the context of educational disadvantage in Ireland.

Under the supervision and instruction of a visual artist and art education specialist, 35 HMH volunteers acted as mentors to a class of 9-10 year olds as they worked through elements of the visual arts curriculum over an eight-week period. The weekly creative sessions incorporated traditional art mediums such as drawing and painting and also included the creation of a 3-D Christmas Village installation. The project culminated in an exhibition at HMH's global innovation headquarters in Dublin.

The project is part of a long-term commitment to employee volunteerism and local community involvement at Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. For further information on HMH, visit [www.hmhco.com](http://www.hmhco.com).



### Ulster Bank

#### MoneySense for Schools

MoneySense for Schools™ is the largest free financial education programme for secondary schools in the island of Ireland.

It has been developed in consultation with teachers and features four modules which take students through a range of topics on banking, borrowing and running a small business. All modules use case studies, videos and interactive quizzes to make learning about finance fun.

Ulster Bank are running a series of free teacher seminars, to grow awareness of our MoneySense for Schools programme and the benefits it offers. With eight countrywide seminars to choose from we hope that you can join us to discover why MoneySense can help you bring finance to life in your classroom. See the table below for a seminar near you!

Booking your place is easy, simply call (01) 6084509 or email [moneysense@ulsterbank.com](mailto:moneysense@ulsterbank.com)

To find out more about the MoneySense for Schools programme visit [www.ulsterbank.ie/moneysenseforschools](http://www.ulsterbank.ie/moneysenseforschools)

For more information on joining the BITCI network, visit [www.bitci.ie](http://www.bitci.ie)

TOWN	DATE	VENUE	TIME
Letterkenny	21/03/11	Mount Errigal Hotel, Letterkenny	7-9PM
Dundalk	22/03/11	Crowne Plaza Hotel, Dundalk	7-9PM
Athlone	29/03/11	Sheraton Hotel, Athlone	7-9PM
Galway	30/03/11	Radisson Hotel, Galway	7-9PM
Waterford	05/04/11	Ramada Viking Hotel, Waterford	7-9PM
Limerick	06/04/11	Clarion Hotel, Limerick	7-9PM
Cork	07/04/11	Maldron Hotel, Cork	7-9PM
Dublin	13/04/11	Maldron Hotel, Cardiff Lane, Dublin	7-9PM

## ‘Czeching out’ SBP Ireland

*In the article, Jiri Kukucka from the Czech Republic shares his experience of his three days with the SBP team getting a first hand insight into SBP in Ireland*



*Jiri Kukucka with SBP Coordinator, Fedelma O'Farrell at the Sisk Site  
Visit to the new Mater Hospital in Dublin*

I have always wanted to visit Ireland, which remained one of the last European countries on my list. I could not believe that I would have the opportunity to visit and as a business trip!

The reason for my trip to Ireland was a visit of the School Business Partnership – a successful project inspiring a group of people in the Czech Republic and two companies – Bayer and IBM – to launch a very similar initiative called ‘Science is Future’.

Science as a school subject has a poor image in the Czech Republic and there are few young Czech people who would aim for a career in science. The project ‘Science is Future’ aims to increase the attractiveness of science and technology in schools and show the students that a career in this field has a promising future.

My three days in Dublin were full of interesting meetings with people from the BITC Ireland and visits to Skills@Work and Mentoring sessions. My aim was to learn about the Schools’ Business Partnership with the hope of transferring the best practices to the Czech Republic.

*“Therefore the project ‘Science is Future’ aims to increase the attractiveness of science and technology in schools”*

The first day was devoted to the real SBP experience. SBP Programme Manager, Germaine Noonan picked me up in my hotel in the morning and we visited the ESB CV and Interview skills workshop at Pobalscoil Rosmini. Afterwards, we attended an unforgettable Site

Visit at Sisk’s new Mater Hospital. The visit offered a fantastic view of Dublin City from the 7th floor of the site. That afternoon, I had the opportunity to meet with participants from the Diageo Mentoring Programme before attending a Go-Karting social - an integral part of the Mentoring programme schedule! We finished the full day with a tour of the Guinness Store House – I could not have missed the most famous attraction in Ireland of course!

The Schools’ Business Partnership coordination and administration was the focus of my second day. I spent invaluable time with Germaine discussing a range of topics including SBP history, funding and documentation. I also met with BITCI CEO Tina Roche and SBP Administrator Ciara Murphy.

During the final day of my stay we visited the premises of AVIVA insurance group with the students of Mercy College, Goldenbridge.

The entire stay in Dublin was not only extremely interesting and helpful for the Czech project, but on the top of it, it gave me a lot of motivation for the future! Here I have to express thanks to all people who devoted their time to show me some part of work they do and especially to Germaine Noonan for her time, care and support during my visit.



## Kostal Supports Practical Learning

*In this article, Ryan Kennelly, teacher at Abbeyfeale Vocational School, Abbeyfeale explains how practical learning is supported at Kostal Ireland GmbH.*

Kostal Ireland GmbH are linked with Abbeyfeale Vocational School, Abbeyfeale and first commenced the Skills@Work Programme three years ago. Each year the Company Co-ordinator, Nuala Hoepfner endeavours to expand and improve the programme, always taking into consideration feedback received from the students and teachers who previously participated. This year, Nuala suggested that the engineering students meet with design engineers, technicians, toolmakers and operators in the workplace and benefit from a very practical demonstration of CAD technology which is part of their school curriculum. The results of this opportunity were so positive, their teacher Ryan Kennelly had this to say about their experiences.

**Eileen Fitzgerald  
SBP Coordinator**

Every year as part of the Leaving Certificate Vocational programme and with the help of the Schools' Business Partnership Programme, the students of Abbeyfeale Vocational School are given a tour of Kostal Ireland, which is located near the school. It has always been an informative and hugely beneficial visit. This year it was even more beneficial as the students interested in engineering were taken on an additional visit to the company and shown the manufacturing facility in detail.



*Students from Abbeyfeale VS with their teacher Ryan Kennelly at the Kostal Ireland GmbH Site Visit*

As part of the tour, the students were first taken to the CAD Design Laboratory. They were shown how components are designed and tested using the latest CAD software. This tied in with what the students are doing at school and strengthened their appreciation for CAD as a means of designing and testing new ideas. We were taken through the steps by a Senior Design Engineer who also explained the different routes that can be taken to study engineering.

*"This year it was even more beneficial as the students interested in engineering were taken on an additional visit to the company and shown the manufacturing facility in detail"*

Once we had seen the components being designed and tested, we were then taken to the production floor to see these designs come to life. We were taken to each workstation to see the component being made. The students could see first hand the manufacturing processes - for example, injection moulding, soldering and component assembly. Up to this students had only read about such processes and viewed them on computer.

The experience was very useful and students gained a real understanding of production processes, the products and enjoyed meeting the staff of Kostal.

## Nagle CC 'switch on' to Bord Gáis

*In this article, Diane Beckingham, Cork Regional Coordinator with The Schools' Business Partnership highlights the thriving relationship between Nagle CC and Bord Gáis.*



*Students from Nagle CC, Mahon 'switch on' at the Bord Gais site visit*

The eagerly anticipated site tour to Bord Gáis's impressive Gasworks Road Head Offices took place for the Transition Year boys of Nagle CC just before Christmas. It is becoming a highlight of the year for Transition Year students and spoken of in legendary terms by those who have gone before them!

The warm welcome and hospitality extended to us, once again, excelled this year. Bord Gáis set the tone perfectly by inviting us all into their superb canteen for breakfast, as soon as we arrived. It's a great start to the day and ensures the boys are met informally, are relaxed, well-fed and watered! The students are split into groups, each with an employee volunteer acting as tour leader and are given a quiz sheet to fill out as we tour the facility. The questions are very cleverly designed so that they have to listen carefully to what is being said

and look for clues along the way. Students then saw first-hand, day to day activities in the areas of IT, Stores, Control Room and Drawing Office. Employees in each area took the time to explain the role/function of their department and what they themselves do and how they came to be in their job. It is fascinating for the students to see the many diverse functions within the company and the range of careers within them. It really gives them a powerful insight into the working of a company and what jobs may be available to them.

At the end of the tour we once again reconvened to the canteen where the fabulous chef, Gerry Daly and his team, provided a sumptuous lunch for us all. The quiz sheets were collected and verified and the boys were thrilled when prizes were given to those who had the correct answers. However, everyone went home happy

as Bord Gáis kindly distributed goodie bags to each and every student. Another very happy and memorable site tour was concluded, with a bunch of very contented boys leaving with lasting favourable memories of Bord Gáis and its committed employees. The Skills@Work programme will continue to run throughout the year for the boys.

In February, employees from HR visited the school to provide the students with CV preparation tips and guidelines as well as assistance with interview presentation and etiquette which will hopefully assist them in the future. They will also shortly be conducting one-to-one 'mock interviews' with the students, which will give them a chance to hone their interviewing skills and receive feedback from the professionals.

The strong relationship built between Nagle CC and Bord Gáis is thriving each year and producing tangible mutual benefits, as Caroline O'Connor, CR Manager succinctly comments: *"The Schools Business Partnership Programme continues to produce positive and real benefits for students and Bord Gáis. It provides our staff who assist with the programmes with a positive experience and the opportunity to give something back to their local community but most importantly, it helps students recognise the value of education and learning as they consider and make plans for their future."*

## Errigal College Banks on Success

*In this article, student Andrews Aziz Opoku from Errigal College, Letterkenny shares his experience of the Skills @ Work Programme with AIB, Letterkenny.*

My name is Andrews Aziz Opoku from Errigal College in Letterkenny. My school is very fortunate to be linked with AIB, Letterkenny on the Skills @ Work Programme. At the start of the programme we were visited by Mark Crawford and some other staff from the AIB branch in Letterkenny. They enlightened us about the bank and also told us in groups how each of them got to where they are so far. This motivated me and I have ever since been serious with my school work.

Nearly quarter of the way through, I went to Glenveagh National Park as part of a site visit with my year group. At Glenveagh I identified some management qualities from Tres Connighan, Head of Visitor Services, Sean O Gaoithen, Head Gardener, Pat Vaughan, District Conservation Officer from the park who spoke to us of their typical day at work. The site visit to Glenveagh was not only a day of relaxation, it's actually made the theory in my business study at school more practical particularly the management section.

Midway through the academic year, my school was visited again by the AIB team. They informed us about CV and Interview Skills. I was amazed at how they interacted and were so friendly with us. They shared with us their first experience of an interview, what is expected from an applicant and an applicant's attitude. After this session and the Mock Interview, my communication and



*Andrews Aziz Opoku second from right in the back row with his fellow students at their Wrap-Up session with Mark Crawford, Retail Manager, AIB, Letterkenny (Back Row left) and Danny McFadden, Business Teacher (Back Row right).*

listening skills were sharpened and my confidence was boosted as well. The staff from AIB are very supportive people to have. I was presented with a certificate from AIB and I believe it is an achievement to be proud of.

In addition to the skills and great experience that this programme exposed me to, I have also been challenged to work harder in order to take advantage of the wide range of career opportunities such as: Managing Director, Marketing Manager, Auditor or even an entrepreneur.

On this note, I will finally, on behalf of all the students at Errigal college, say a big thank you to all the AIB staff in Letterkenny, especially Mark Crawford, Rachel MacNamara and John Bowe for making the programme so enjoyable and inspiring. I would also like to extend a thank you to

the staff of Glenveagh National Park for the V.I.P treatment we received on our site visit. I couldn't forget our teacher Mr McFadden who worked hard to allow us to have such a great experience. Thank you sir. I feel now, very, very challenged to reach my ambitions.

AIB Letterkenny have been in partnership with Errigal College for over four years and in this time they have shown dedicated and active support for all of the students that have participated on the programme each year. This link has developed and flourished with every successive year with a deepening relationship that has brought about great success locally and at national level with the students in Errigal College winning second place in the AIB 'Build a Bank' competition.

**Elaine McFadden,**  
SBP Coordinator



## In their own words Vistakon & St Enda's

*In this article, St. Enda's, Limerick students Chloe and Charlene and Vistakon Quality Specialist, Margaret Clohessy describe their experience of the Skills @ Work Day in the Life session. Listen to the full interview with Margaret by clicking [here](#).*

**St. Enda's students Chloe and Charlene share their experience of the Day in Life session.**

We went to Vistakon for the day with most of our class. First we were given visitor cards to clock in and out. Then we were taken to a Resource Room and Eleanor and Aine showed us all the products they make.

They told us how they had started in the business. A lady named Margaret came in to talk to us. She told us how she also went to St. Enda's and how she started at Vistakon straight after her leaving cert. She also said that Vistakon has helped her improve her skills. They gave her time and helped her to go to night college to improve her skills. She started at the bottom end of the company but now with all the help and training she is a Quality Specialist. She advised and encouraged us to go to college and then apply for a job. She told us how hard it was for her without a degree and a range of skills and qualifications.

We found this speech helpful as it made up our mind to go to college. She also told us how other people in her class went to college and that she was disappointed that she didn't. After Margaret was finished we were given a tour of Vistakon. The building is really big and a lot goes on. When we got back to school we were all talking about how much of an impact Margaret's talk had on us.

**Quality Specialist explains why she became involved in the Day in the Life Session in an interview with Eleanor Walsh, SBP Assistant Manager.**

**How did you feel when you were asked to speak to the fifth years students of St. Enda's Community School about a day in your life?**

**Margaret:** Delighted really that you would be asked to do something like that to represent the company, to speak to students that have no full experience of the work field - just delighted to do it.

**Were you nervous?**

**Margaret:** Yes, you would be nervous. I did a few of these sessions before where I was working with students and you never know how they are going to take you when you first do it; whether they are going to take in the information that you are saying or whether they'll be tuned out. After a few minutes you get a feel for what they are like and then there is no problem after that.

**What would have been your main message to give to them?**

**Margaret:** My message is to stay in school really and stick it out. There were three of us that did the presentation and Sean and Connor had both gone to college. I hadn't and had done a secretarial course and only went back to college in 2007. I told them to give it your all in your secondary school years and if you want to stretch yourself and expand when you get older you'll have that as a

base. My main message would be stay in school, stick at it, and give yourself that chance to do it at the beginning rather than later, like I did myself.

**Did the students interact with you Margaret:**

We did lunch with them, which was great because it was like that you had come out of the classroom environment, so we sat around and chatted and spoke to some of them about what they wanted to do and I was quite taken back by some of them – they had great ideas of where they wanted to go and thoughts of college; for such young people they had great ideas and great intentions. I enjoyed what we did with them.

**What was your overall impression of the day?**

**Margaret:** I think it's great giving the students the insight into the backgrounds that people have when they go into places of work and that not everyone has a college education, some go back like I did and do it later on, so it's not all done straight after school. It's great interaction for the kids to get out away from the school and to see as many industries as they possibly can and meet people like that.

**Would you recommend this programme to a colleague?**

**Margaret:** I think that everyone should take the opportunity to do it because you never know you might inspire somebody.

# Mentoring

## Cisco & Ringsend: A 'Network' to be Proud of!

*Cisco Systems, based in East Point Business Park, have been a long-time partner to Ringsend Technical Institute which lies on the Liffey, nestled between the O2 and the Aviva stadium in Lansdowne Road. SBP Coordinator, Breda O'Sullivan describes the fantastic partnership.*

Over the years, the company has developed a very strong relationship with the school, offering beneficial support and advice through a mentoring programme to senior cycle students. In 2009, it was decided that all 21 students in 5th year would be involved in the mentoring programme, with all mentors working with the whole group in year one before being allocated one or two students to mentor more closely in 6th year.

The programme began in October 2009, with a number of activities which provided the opportunity for the mentors and students to get to know a little about each other. These activities included a session on "Qualities Valued in the Workplace" and a very interesting site visit to Cisco Systems where the students got the opportunity to see where their mentors worked and also met, through the medium of video-conferencing, some other Cisco employees working in Cork and in Reading, U.K. The students were amazed to see how video-conferencing has allowed Cisco employees to be involved in meetings with their colleagues based all over the world, without ever having to leave their offices.

In September 2010, as the students returned from their summer break, the paired mentoring programme began. The 12 mentors were allocated a student or a pair of students to mentor directly. The use of



*Ringsend students at the 'Qualities Valued in the Workplace' Session with Morris Rudden, Account Manager, Public Sector in Cisco Systems*

technology has been a central element of the programme and has resulted in mentors and students using 'Webex' accounts to share information and schedule appointments, and 'Flip Cameras' to record mock interviews. They are also working together to prepare PowerPoint presentations to be shown in May 2011.

*"The use of technology has been a central element of the programme"*

Capturing their feedback at the end of 5th year, the students were extremely positive about their experience. The highlight in year one was most definitely the video conferencing, with one student commenting, "I liked when we went over to Cisco Systems and seen what they do everyday, I liked the video conferencing". They also welcomed the opportunity to see how technology has become

a central part of the working environment, commenting "It was very interesting to see all the different types of stuff they used and how they linked it to the internet".

It has been a real pleasure to work with the employees of Cisco Systems, many of whom are in their third, fourth or fifth year of mentoring, and to witness their enthusiasm and the energy they bring to the mentoring programme. Similarly, the staff and students in Ringsend Technical Institute who embrace the opportunity and celebrate the partnership and its importance to the school. It is always exciting to sit down with company coordinator, Maurice Rudden and school coordinator, May Nolan to plan out the programme each year. This is definitely one 'network' that Cisco Systems and Ringsend Technical Institute can be very proud of!

## Musgrave Mentor Wins Prestigious Award

*Maria Kidney, a Musgrave mentor on the Schools' Business Partnership Mentoring Programme with Ursuline College was honored with the Cobh Person of the Year Award 2010.*

*SBP Coordinator, Diane Beckingham explains why.*



*Mentoring Volunteer Maria Kidney receives Cobh Person of the Year*

Maria was nominated for her outstanding voluntary work. She founded the Friends of Londiani, ([www.friendsoflondiani.com](http://www.friendsoflondiani.com)) a now registered Charity organization, set up to help the people of the Kipkelion District of Kenya to have an improved quality of life based on Kenyan values and to work in partnership with the people of the Kipkelion District to develop and complete sustainable community projects.

The projects are implemented through partnerships based on the local communities self-identified needs in the areas of health, education, water provisions and sanitation. The importance of cooperation is evident in the work of the charity and its sustainability is apparent through the involvement of the communities and their ownership of the projects. Maria spoke of her appreciation of the hard work

of all the volunteers both here and in Londiani and how important it is to have a community working together. Friends of Londiani regularly runs volunteer projects which enable Irish volunteers to experience the community development projects in Kenya.

*"As a mentor, it is a privilege to work with a student" Maria Kidney*

Maria received her award at a reception hosted by the Cobh & Harbour Chambers. Maria exemplifies the spirit of volunteering, as she is also a volunteer mentor on the Schools Business Partnerships' mentoring programme. The mentoring programme provides one-to-one mentoring of a student by a company employee. Musgrave Retail Partners Ireland, who Maria works for, became involved with SBP in 2007, and linked with

Ursulines School in Blackrock. A terrific relationship developed between the two, with Musgrave Retail Partners running a Skills at Work programme for the girls every year and then further developing the bond by running the mentoring programme for selected 6th year students over this academic year. Maria meets with her student approximately every three weeks and the one-to-one support she gives helps the student prepare for the transition from school to further education or employment; assists with career investigation; develops self esteem, confidence and interpersonal skills. Students and mentors are also encouraged to have fun together and Musgrave Retail Partners treated the girls at Christmas to a great afternoon out bowling and then pizza.

"As a mentor it is a privilege to work with a student on the challenges they are having, aiming to create an environment where they will be empowered to make their own decisions, improve their self esteem and believe in their own abilities and skills. It is amazing to listen to the students, and be part of this key time in their lives as they face their future and all that it will bring. I think it is a two way relationship where we both learn from each other."

Through all Maria's hard work, enthusiasm and dedication it is easy to see why she was named Cobh Person of the Year and it couldn't be more deserved.



## Invaluable Insights from Bose GP

*Paddy Comiskey is the Principal at Inver College. In this article he explains the invaluable insights on communications and leadership the staff of Inver College received from Bose as part of SBP's newest programme Management Excellence for Teachers.*



*Paddy Comiskey  
Principal, Inver College*

As a result of the Skills @ Work Programme, established in 2005, when Bose GP and Inver College were linked through the Schools Business Partnership Programme, strong bonds have been established between the three organisations.

Approximately 120 students have benefited

directly from the programme in these years.

As LCA Year Head and programme co-ordinator, within the school at the time, I remember the first contact between the organisations. On the initial visit to Bose GP, I was surprised at the number of past students and their parents working in the various departments. As the programme developed, the staff from Bose GP came into the school to assist students in areas including Curriculum Vitae Presentation and Interview Skills.

The site visit to Bose GP where the students get a tour of the manufacturing area and a demonstration of the sound systems produced was the highlight of the year. The quality of the systems, the attention to detail in their manufacture, the management of the plant and the research and development in the pursuit of excellence explained how Bose are at the cutting edge of sound technology. The students could sense this, which strengthened their faith in the programme. To see a corporation at this level take time and effort to give something back to the community is indeed refreshing and of great value to our school. The students greatly appreciate the time spent with them.

At the invitation of the Schools Business Partnership Programme, Bose GP and Inver College agreed to participate in the SBP Management Excellence for Teachers Pilot Programme in 2010.

At a planning meeting we all discussed topics / needs within the school for the MET. Leadership and Communication were chosen. The team from Bose, Managing Director Pat McAdam, HR Manager Pascal Roche and Administrator Mary McNally prepared a presentation for the staff of Inver College based on their own journey of how finding themselves in a challenging position of having to cut costs and restructure in order to ensure sustainability for the plant, a new leaner system evolved, based on communication and teamwork. The restructuring freed up space, where new product lines could be manufactured. This was achieved over a period of time and is still ongoing.

A local hotel was chosen for the venue and following the presentation to the staff, two break out discussions took place and the information gathered from these recorded. The day was a huge success and the thought-provoking style adopted by Pat and his team opened eyes to alternative methods and the need for change in order to achieve success.

In the busy school environment it is easy to get lost in the immediacy of every day. The impact of participating in MET has led to the formation of a strategy group chosen from within the school staff to target areas of difficulty within the school and propose change in order to find resolution. The group are managed by the Positive Behaviour and Support Service and the changes implemented to date have greatly enhanced the school and are a work in progress. The whole idea of space utilization has also been re-visited and large areas of previously underused locations in prime areas have been brought back.

Further liaisons have taken place with the Business Partnership Programme and Bose GP for a further session in the current year. I would like to take this opportunity to thank both parties for their help and interest in our school and look forward to the Inver College that will emerge from the evolution.

## It's Time to Read at Scoil Íosa, Ballina

*Time to Read is a wonderful opportunity for volunteers to provide one to one reading support to primary school children. In this article, Fania Ellison, SBP Regional Coordinator shares her experience of the pilot programme with Ballina Beverages and Scoil Íosa, Ballina.*



*Volunteers from Ballina Beverages with pupils from Scoil Íosa, Ballina at a recent Time to Read session*

Being involved in the Time to Read pilot programme as a BITCI coordinator has been a great experience so far. What is so exciting about this programme is that it seems to be a win-win solution to the issue of reluctant and emerging readers. The children are clearly enjoying their reading sessions with their volunteers, and the volunteers are also finding it very rewarding.

Those of us with schools in the pilot have been involved from the very beginning of the concept and it has been great to have been part of the design process when it comes to implementation! For example, our subteam held consultative sessions with principals last year to see whether a volunteer reading support programme would be useful in national schools. All the principals we canvassed thought it would be an excellent idea, and they gave us huge insight into the

children they felt would benefit most from the input, and what would work with this age group.

In Ballina twelve children from Scoil Íosa, and twelve employees at Ballina Beverages are taking part. Each week the volunteers go down to the school and for an hour they read with the children in a cosy resource room. They usually have a bit of a chat before the reading starts and then again at the end of the session. The volunteers are finding that, after ten weeks of meeting up, the children are now very relaxed with them and chat about their families, school and hobbies, as well as discussing the stories they are reading and choosing books together.

Parents and teachers say that the children are really benefitting from the one to one attention they receive from their volunteer. The school staff feed back that

the children are gaining all sorts of added benefits from the sessions: verbal skills, increased self esteem and the building of another relationship with an adult.

At the support session with the evaluator of the pilot, Dr. Eithne Kennedy, a national expert on child literacy, one of the class teachers reported: "The whole class has gone mad on reading since Time to Read started". She had noticed that, not only had the six children in her class who were in the pilot started using the class library more, but so had the rest of their classmates.

The volunteers and teachers are keeping detailed logs of the reading progress and what the children are saying about the programme which will all be used in the evaluation process.

It is really heart-warming to hear the feedback that this programme is generating. On the recent workplace visit to Ballina Beverages - where the children were treated like visiting dignitaries, shown all around the plant and given a huge tea party in the staff restaurant, one of the children said to me: "I want to work here when I'm big". Then when one of the volunteers said that when she hands over the reading sessions with her two children to a colleague in a few weeks time that "I will really miss my two!" I felt that the programme was exceeding our expectations and would hopefully be part of our future national literacy strategy.

## Diary of a MEP Principal

### Instructional Leaders Take Time 'To Stand And Stare'

*Denise Kelly has been a school Principal in Co Dublin VEC for 2 years. Denise was a teacher for 14 years before being seconded to the SLSS where she was a Regional and then the National Coordinator for Transition Year. She worked in Spain for 7 years as a Teacher Trainer, Deputy Principal and Principal of International schools. She returned to Ireland 2 years ago. Denise is participating the Management Excellence for Principals series 2010 / 2011 in Dublin.*



*Denise Kelly  
Principal, St. Finian's CC*

'The unexamined life is not worth living'. So says Socrates and as a secondary school Principal in Ireland I have never had less time to examine mine!

I have always felt that there are lessons to be learned from the private sector so I felt MEP would have

something to offer. Having Dave McMullen, Diageo point out that the role of Principal in a school the size of mine is akin to being a CEO of a small/ medium company helped put things in perspective! I found myself hoping that all CEOs have staff as hardworking as mine to run their companies.

Small numbers and a very experienced facilitator made for an excellent morning with Diageo in Guinness's store house in Dublin on Time Management.

As often is the case, the networking with other Principals was as valuable as the workshop. The opportunity to 'reflect' that Germaine Noonan of The Schools' Business Partnership provides for Principals through MEP is an essential one. At the end of that session I felt surprisingly affirmed in my practice, albeit that it led to the scary conclusion that in this role there actually isn't enough time to do the job.

The second MEP session on Performance Management informed this debate. Many of the principles transfer easily from private to public sector. The facilitator, Justin Kinnear, is someone with International experience in the business world and the breadth of his knowledge and understanding

is evident in the anecdotes and examples he draws from.

Contributions were welcomed and a lively, reflective morning ensued. On days like this it is good for our professional 'health' to be reminded that core values should drive everything we do and it was fascinating to learn that the private sector in Ireland is no better at measuring performance or following up with consequences than we are in education. Mind you, the recent Banking debacles prove that point very succinctly!

### Management Excellence for Principals

The Schools' Business Partnership's (SBP) Management Excellence for Principals Programme has been embraced by hundreds of principals in the post primary sector since it's inception in 2003. It is the only initiative that SBP offers to all post primary schools in Ireland. MEP's aim is to harvest the potential benefits of sharing information and experiences of business leaders with educational managers. Three topics are delivered: Leadership, Performance Management and Time Management. The series is sponsored by Cornmarket Group Financial Services Ltd.

In 2010 / 2011 the Management Excellence for Principals series was brought to Cork, Dublin, and Galway as well as a series for Deputy Principals in Dublin and Limerick. 10 companies are delivering a total of 15 sessions over the year to 58 principals and deputy principals. Companies involved for the 2010 / 2011 series include Centocor, Coillte, Diageo, IML, Musgrave, Cornmarket, Intel Shannon, Ulster Bank, VHI and Vistakon.



## In your view, what is the main benefit of participating in SBP for your company?

*In this feature, Company Coordinators share their views on the benefits of participation in the Schools' Business Partnership.*



to progress." **Peter Hetherington | Technology & Innovation Leader | Pfizer Ringaskiddy**



Pfizer, Ringaskiddy are linked to Deerpark CBS, Cork



"The benefits of Elavon partnering with our local schools are manifold. But the main benefit is to our staff and the students. We get a chance to give back to the local community in a meaningful way by sharing our time and expertise with the students in an interactive, friendly way in their classrooms. They love to come to our company for a site visit and tour and in turn we go to the school to deliver presentations on Sales Techniques, Business Etiquette, CV and Interview preparation and we conduct mock interviews to prepare them for future job hunting and life after school. As we have two offices in Ireland, we have the opportunity of working with Arklow Community School and St Kilians in Bray, the relationship between Elavon and the schools gets stronger every year." **Maria Carroll | European Resourcing Officer | Elavon**



Elavon are linked to St. Killians CS, Bray and Arklow BNS.



"I see the business/education link as an essential partnership which underlines our commitment to enhancing benefits from the Corrib project to our local community. Whilst equipping the students with essential skills required for their working life, it also provides personal and career development opportunities for our employees - which are key elements of a balanced working environment. Our experience has been hugely positive." **Fiona Togher | Community Investment Advisor | Shell E&P Ireland Ltd.**



Shell E&P Ireland are linked to Colaiste Chomain, Mayo



"We are now in our 3rd year in partnership with Crana College in Buncrana, and without exception every year it has been a pleasure to meet the groups of pupils, and it's the appreciation that they have of each session, be it the company visit where they are given the experience of the industrial workshop environment, right through to the interview and CV preparation workshop which is reward for us. Each of us here at Inishowen engineering who have an input into the programme feel that we have made a contribution to how the pupils will consider their education and the possibilities and benefits associated with completing their education." **Josephine Noone | Administrator | Inishowen Engineering**



Inishowen Engineering is linked with Crana College, Buncrana

# Meet the... Company Coordinators



"The School's Business Partnership provides our Company with the opportunity of working directly with students, helping them gain a better understanding of entering the workplace. This is achieved through CV, interview and objective setting workshops that are run

by élan staff. Students are invited on-site and get to meet staff and understand what is involved in their jobs through 'day-in-the-life' presentations. The programme is thoroughly enjoyed by students and Company participants each year." **Nicola Bardon | Senior HR Associate | élan Corporation**



élan Corporation is linked with St. Aloysius College & City Quay NS



"Our business Bord na Mona PowerGen operates a 118MW peat and biomass co-fuelled power plant as well as a newly built 116MW distillate oil Peaker plant both on the Edenderry site. Our links with Oaklands Community College go back several years but from 2010, we have participated in

the Business In The Community schools partnership programme with Oaklands. During 2010, students from the college have visited and toured the plant, met many of the plant staff as well as recently participating in role interviews. Bord na Mona have a considerable pipeline of projects stretching out over the next 10 years in Renewable Energy, Water Technology and Resource Recovery. It is in the interest of the company to highlight the areas of potential employment in the future in order to give some guidance to students in their choice of career path with the hope that there will be a future employment opportunity for these students who have the required skill set to match our business needs." **Tom Egan | Plant Manager | Edenderry**

**EDENDERRY POWER LIMITED**

**BORD NA MÓNA**

Edenderry Power Limited is linked with Oaklands CC, Edenderry



"The main benefit for Integra in participating in the Schools' Business Partnership is the opportunity to tap into the great sense of community that the school has in the locality and surrounding region. People feel great pride in the local and national achievements of the school,

be it in the classroom or on the field of play, and it is wonderful to be involved with the school at this level." **Matt Treacy | HR Business Partner | Integra**



Integra Life Sciences is linked with Tullamore College

"Sharing the world of work with students and letting them see the great opportunities there are available, particularly if they study maths, is core to IBM's education strategy. Personally I find it really rewarding to have the opportunity to do something so worthwhile and outside of my normal day-to-day job." **Sinead Kinsella | HR Administrator | IBM**



IBM is linked with St. Aidans CC Cork



"There are many benefits for Analog Devices taking part in The Schools' Business Partnership. I believe it is a valuable way for employees to make a real difference in the lives of young people. We as a company view it as a very meaningful way of giving back to the local community.

Employees enjoy the interaction with the students; it is a real change from their day-to-day roles. Our employees value working for a company that supports this type of volunteering within the community. This type of Partnership also provides Analog Devices with the opportunity to enhance both the image and reputation of the company." **Carolyn O'Callaghan | Recruitment Specialist | Analog Devices**



Analog Devices is linked with Colaiste Mhichil CBS

## The Schools' Business Partnership

Adding value to the Department of Education & Skills 'School Completion Programme' The Schools' Business Partnership aims to positively impact on educational inclusion and address key issues in areas of educational inclusion in Ireland. The programme does this by matching one school with a large local business and engaging in various programmes. The number of schools currently matched nationally is 163. Through the Schools' Business Partnership a menu of programmes has been developed to address key educational issues for these schools across the country. Marks & Spencer Ireland have been the lead sponsor of the Schools' Business Partnership since its inception - a remarkable commitment.

### Lead Sponsor

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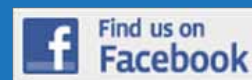
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Find Business in the Community Ireland on:



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