

The Kerryman
July 11, 2018

St Mary of The Angels Beaufort 50th Anniversary 2018

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Saint John of God Kerry Services



ST MARY OF THE ANGELS BEAUFORT 50TH ANNIVERSARY



Wall painting at St Mary of the Angels, Beaufort.



Sheila Fitzgerald, Nora Brosnan, Claire O'Dwyer (back) Catherine Hunt, Liam Healy and Shirley Knight of St Mary of the Angels, Beaufort.

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St Mary of the Angels will continue to thrive for generations to come

CLAIRE O'Dwyer is the General Manager of St. John of God Kerry Services and is based at St Mary of the Angels, Beaufort. She explains that the Golden Jubilee celebrations mark a momentous occasion for everyone involved, past and present, in what is a fantastic resource for people with intellectual disabilities and their families.

"It's a great time for us to reflect on the history and impact the service has had on so many people, and for the families who have entrusted their family members to the service. For us, it's very important to highlight just how far the service has progressed both in terms of the campus, and across the wider county," Claire said.

Services have continued to evolve over the years with recognition that the traditional model of people travelling to a centralised location for either a day or residential service was not in keeping with their needs and did not reflect the geographical need for distributed centres where individuals could avail of services in their own locality.

"We decided this is not the way life should be and thanks to support from local communities and the creativeness of our own team, services continue to be set up right across County Kerry

which enable the people we support to live, work, socialise and be part of their local community," Claire said.

Claire and staff are very proud that the St. Mary of the Angels' campus will soon be registered with HIQA, which reflects its place in the community and in the hearts of the people of Kerry. In terms of supporting men, women and children with intellectual disabilities in Kerry, there is still a deficiency in adequate services available to them. However, the continued vision of the Service is to work collaboratively with other agencies to see how services can best be tailored.

"While funding will always be a huge challenge, the key to our success is the community that embraces our goals and ethos," Claire said.

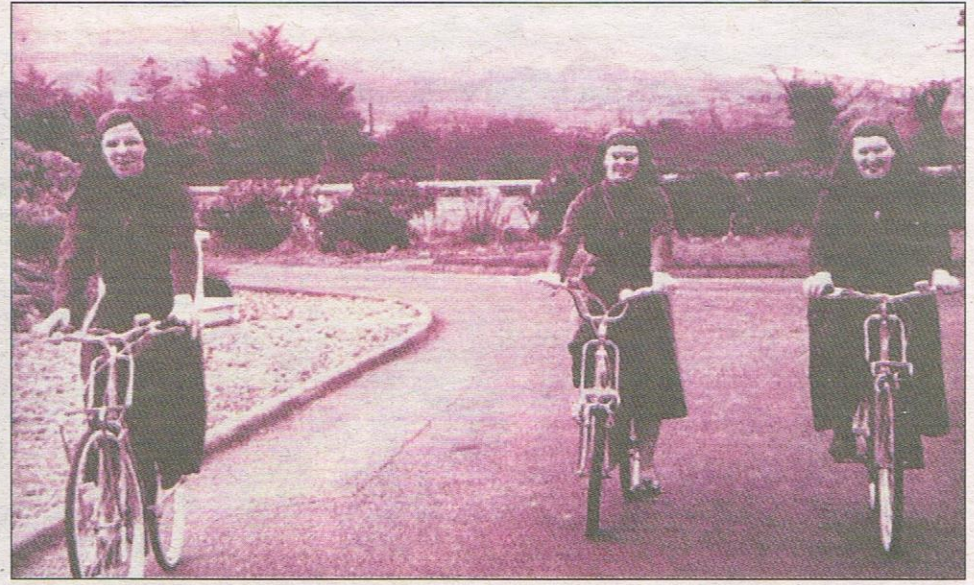
"The community has been a key support in sustaining service delivery over many years across County Kerry. From our perspective we feel we have accomplished a lot over the last 50 years in helping people to realise their full potential. But what matters most is what we do next. St. Mary of the Angels has been a progressive, hardworking and caring service in the past and we will continue to remain committed to our residents and service users for generations to come."



ST MARY OF THE ANGELS BEAUFORT 50TH ANNIVERSARY



St Mary of the Angels, Beaufort.



Sisters at St Mary of the Angels, Beaufort.

A journey of important milestones...

AS St. Mary of the Angels looks forward to celebrating its Golden Jubilee, the story of the past half century is one of progress and care in perfect concord. Central to this journey however has always been the residents and their families. The past 50 years may be a timeline of incremental change and development, but the residents and service users have always been at the core of St. Mary of the Angels and St. John of God Kerry Services' story. This is very much the case today where St. Mary of the Angels is part and parcel of community life with its residents enjoying the full benefits of campus life while also integrating within the communities from which they come. Below is an overview of St. Mary of the Angels and St. John of God Kerry Services.

The start of community integration

During the mid-1990s the community integration model began to grow as a number of residential homes were set up in Tralee. This meant that individuals could now come and live in Tralee and attend their day service from their group homes - a practice which supported further integration within the local community.

The next decade witnessed significant developments to more community based day programmes for service users with the setting up of programmes in Castleisland in 2003, and Kenmare, Killarney and Killorglin in 2005. Breannán Service, as it was formerly known, primarily supported adult men and women with a mild to moderate intellectual disability. Today the community based model continues to thrive.

A timeline of services...

On 26th April 1968, in St. Mary of the Angels, a 60-bed residential facility for children with varying degrees of disability was opened by the Franciscan Sisters of the Divine Motherhood. This was the only such residential facility in Kerry at the time.

In 1979 the then Bishop of Kerry issued an invitation to the Order of Saint John of God to assist in the development of services for adults with an intellectual disability in the county. Brother Cornelius Leen O.H. (a Kerry native, and Brother Celsius Griffin, O.H. (a Galway native) were assigned to Kerry where they secured the

use of a premises in Balloonagh, Tralee from the Sisters of Mercy enabling them to develop a workshop facility which commenced its service with approximately 20 service users.

The 1980s saw the opening of a number of additional Day and Respite Services in Kerry including the opening of the Monavalley Centre in March, 1987. This was a mammoth step towards integrating the Service and its local community. The opening of the centre in Monavalley enabled many service users to return to Kerry from other services around Ireland. Two group homes were also established during this time in Tralee, one in Westcourt, Caherslee, and the other in Racecourse Lawn, Oakpark. In addition, the St. John of God Brothers' Community house, 'Five

Furlongs', Tralee, also housed four service users.

The first of the satellite day services commenced in Dingle in 1995 in a property rented from Udaras Na Gaeltachta. This was later moved to its current location in Tobair Eoin where the centre was officially opened in 1988. Also in 1995, 'Breannán Supported Employment Service' was set up and was initially based in the Monavalley centre. A Social and Recreation programme was also put in place around this time.

In 1986 the Department of Education opened the purpose built St. Francis Special School for day pupils in Beaufort. To this day St. Francis Special School provides an excellent education to approximately 50 children who come from all over County Kerry.



Bishop Denis Moynihan turning the Sod at St Mary of the Angels, Beaufort.

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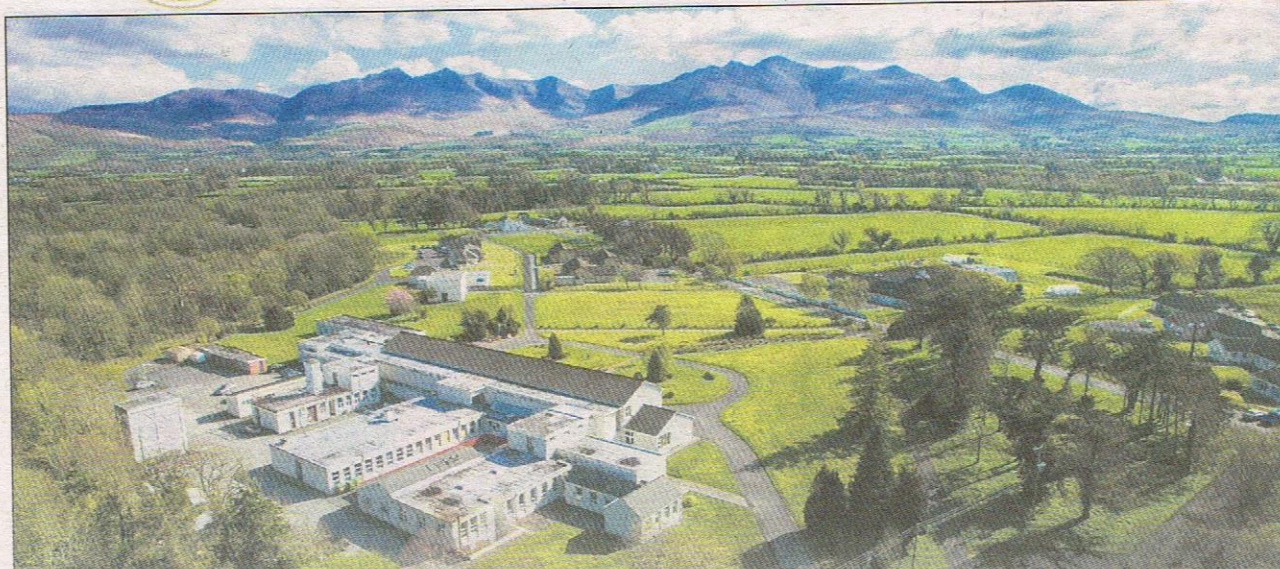
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The amalgamation of services and HIQA Registration

THE year 2005 saw an adjustment for the Order's service provision in Kerry with the transfer of St. Mary of the Angels services from the Franciscan Sisters of the Divine Motherhood to the St. John of God Brothers.

The next ten-years would see the opening of a children's house, The Arches, and the setting up of Supported Living apartments in Tralee. New day services in Tralee and Listowel were also opened with the main aim of providing support to individuals living within their own communities.

Since 2013, Residential Services have been regulated by the State with the introduction of HIQA standards. This is something that has been welcomed as HIQA exists to promote sustainable improvements for the men, women and children attending services and to safeguard people using health and social care services. Adult and Children's Residential and Respite teams work tire-

lessly to ensure that these Residential Services are continuously improved and enhanced. This commitment was rewarded in September 2015 when the first HIQA registration in a Residential and Respite Children's Service was granted in The Arches, Beaufort, Co. Kerry. This was a significant milestone for the Service. In May 2016 full compliance, with no conditions, was achieved in the Children's Services in Abhaile, Listowel, which is also a huge achievement for everybody involved.

Since then these achievements have been replicated across community residential services, including Supported Living in Tralee. In May of this year a decision was taken by HIQA to propose the campus of Saint Mary of the Angels for registration. This was seen as a tremendous achievement by all involved as a huge amount of hard work and effort was put into enhancing the living environment for the men and women who reside on campus.



Services that extend countywide

TODAY, service locations are dispersed around numerous locations in Kerry which now support in excess of 300 men, women and children with in excess of 370 staff supporting these services in the county.

The future is very much about recognising the challenges that lie ahead so that the dedicated team of staff who work in St. John of God Kerry Services can remain a step ahead. This shared

vision ensures that the potential of each individual within the Service is reached.

The five core values of Hospitality, Compassion, Respect, Justice, and Excellence best describe what St. John of God Kerry Services represents. The aim is to continue this work for the men, women and children they support and management and staff are both proud and honoured to serve.



Sr. Mary Rose.



Children enjoying the opening of the hydrotherapy pool in St Mary of the Angels in 1975.

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Launching the St John of God's Kerry Services Golf Classic were Sean Hanly, Michael O'Leary, Angie Kissane, Brendan Brosnan (back from left) Damien McCarthy, Michael O'Sullivan, Helen O'Connor, Liam Healy and Denis Guerin which will be held on the 5th August in Killarney Golf and Fishing Club.

'People understand what we're about and they give us huge support'

FUNDRAISING plays an important role in the St. Mary of the Angels' story as raising additional funds enables the residents to take part in and enjoy extra activities. Leading an active social life is very important for the residents at St. Mary of the Angels. But while State funding is essential in helping with the day to day running costs of the facility, a committed group of people know that more money is needed in order to help residents enjoy more quality leisure time.

For the past 3 years Liam Healy has been head of a fundraising committee of eight people who help make life's simple pleasures a reality for people with intellectual disabilities.

Money is raised through a combination of events like the St. Mary of the Angels Golf Classic (which is taking place on August 10th next), a Night at the Dogs, and the Ring of Kerry Charity Cycle. St. Mary of the Angels also benefits from funds raised through organisations like Tralee and Killarney Rotary clubs and the Kerry Ladies' Vintners Golf Society.

"The money can be put to a wide range of

uses from securing better internet access, to doing up bedrooms, bathrooms, buying a vehicle - anything that allows us do the sort of nice things that add value and comfort to people's lives," Liam said.

Liam added that the Committee derives great fulfilment from the work it does and is very appreciative of the support it gets from the wider community. Other pursuits like attending a concert or enjoying afternoon tea are also covered by money raised through fundraising.

"People appreciate what we're about and they give us huge support for our events. The people of Kerry are great and we'll probably have close to 50 teams in the Golf Classic again this year. This support really motivates us and the people on the front line that look after the individuals who attend our service. Fundraising is crucial for what we want to achieve and the support we receive is greatly appreciated. The Service is also especially grateful to the families who have contributed to and supported St. Mary of the Angels down through the years." Liam added.



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“Where we have community based day programmes, the local community is very supportive”

HELENA Cronin is the Day Programme Manager at St. John of God Kerry Services and she outlined the positive impact of day services which span from Listowel to Kenmare - covering a radius of 101 km and encompassing 15 Day Service locations. Men and women with mild to moderate intellectual disabilities are supported in line with the 'Interim Standards for New Directions', which is HSE National Policy for adults with disabilities.

'New Directions' is about working towards making supports available in local communities, to ensure that people have the greatest possible choices and options about how they live their lives, and how they spend their time. It places a priority on making sure that being part of one's local community is a real option. Day Services such

as those provided by St. John of God Kerry Services strive to support people to develop and maintain life-long skills that promote independence. Skills teaching is supported through the completion of educational and personal development programmes, along with health and fitness programmes.

Lifelong learning is also an important part of the ethos of St. John of God Kerry Services who are proud to offer QQI accreditation for some of their courses. They also enjoy a long-standing relationship with IT Tralee through their 'Skills for Life' programme.

"Day Services are extremely important to the men and women who avail of them. Individuals are supported to be independent through person centered planning," Helena said.

Disability Services are now moving towards a social care led model of service which means the person's social, emotional, health and overall wellbeing is taken into consideration. This 'wrap around' support service is very much welcomed by staff, while local communities where day programmes are located are equally supportive, as are local businesses who offer employment opportunities with equality.

"Without community support we would not be able to progress the range of opportunities available to people with intellectual disabilities. It's all about awareness and understanding and we are lucky to have so many committed and enthusiastic staff working with in our day programmes across the county," Helena added.



James Moriarty with Michael O'Reilly in Chalet 2 at St Mary of the Angels.



Singing Jarvey Ger Healy and friends entertaining residents at St Mary of the Angels.

Special Thanks . . .

This publication was compiled by Kerryman journalist Stephen Fernane and also thanks to our photographer Michelle Cooper-Galvin



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Parents and relatives provide a unified voice for their loved ones

THE St. Mary of the Angels Parents and Relatives Association was founded in 2016 in order to support and enhance the lives of the residents and the quality of their home in St Mary of the Angels. The families and service have a long history of working collaboratively together over the years particularly on an individual basis.

In 2016 the families formed the SMOA Relatives association to strengthen this relationship further and also to provide a platform for families members who do not support the national Policy on congregated settings which plans the development of community living potentially providing residents at St Mary of the Angels (SMOA) with homes in the community as part of the national policy: 'Time to Move On from Congregated Settings'. The group are committed to supporting all families and fully respect the rights of any resident or family who would like to avail of these new services.

Supported by Chairman Jack Fitzpatrick, the association's members are guided by nothing more than their undivided love and consideration for the children and adults in the SMOA campus, and who avail of excellent services which are administered by a great team of staff.

Currently at SMOA there is onsite Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational therapy, Physiotherapy, Psychology, weekly GP visits, sensory rooms and a hydrotherapy pool which families value greatly and regard as essential elements of support for their family member. The family group continue to advocate for improvements to the current services and are a very positive influence in planning for the future of Saint Mary of the Angels with both the local management and the HSE.



Maura Spillane giving a hand massage to Hazel O'Connell in Oaktree at St Mary of the Angels, Beaufort.

Compliance with HIQA requirements is also essential in securing the future of SMOA. The parents group vigorously take part in fundraising campaigns that make this objective a step closer in relation to improving buildings which were originally designed for children. The necessary improvements to the campus would not only help with compliance, but would also enhance the quality of life for its residents.

"Our mission is to improve residents' lives, enhance the grounds and buildings on campus and take all necessary steps to guarantee continued HIQA registration. HIQA inspections have repeatedly praised SMOA for the expertise of staff and the social model of care which maximises residents' capacity to exercise personal autonomy and choice in their daily lives," Jack Fitzpatrick said.

Jack added that providing each resident with their own private bedrooms is a primary goal for the parents and relatives group. Moreover, by reducing shared bedrooms on the entire campus it would be a significant step towards ensuring the satisfaction of HIQA standards and continued registration. Planning permission has also been sought for two additional sitting rooms which would give residents even more privacy during recreational time.

Over €80,000 has been raised by the parents group of which €60,000 has been put towards the extensions to be built in the next two years. In addition, €20,000 was set aside for vital resurfacing works to the driveways on campus, thus enabling residents to traverse easily and more safely around the grounds. The parents' group are also delighted to have been nominated as one of the main beneficiary charities in the 2018 Ring of Kerry Charity Cycle and would greatly appreciate any support.



Our Lady's Grotto at St Mary of the Angels, Beaufort.

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Michelle, Gemma and Tony Foley working in the Hydro Pool at St Mary of the Angels, Beaufort.

'We couldn't manage without the staff at St Mary of the Angels...'

FOR the parents and families of people with special needs the appreciation and thanks for the work St. Mary of the Angels does can't be described in words alone. This invaluable support service has long ensured that comfort and quality of life is paramount to its service users. By extension, this guarantees families peace of mind knowing their loved ones are cared for. The formation of St. Mary of the Angels Parents and Relatives Association has helped consolidate the aims and objectives of families seeking the best for their loved ones - and for the professional staff who look after them. The following is a brief insight from some family members.

Dolly Lawlor's son Daniel has attended St Mary of the Angels since he was 4 years old, he is now 40. "He loves the staff. I ring them every day to find out how Danny is getting on and I tell



Ina O'Dwyer and her son Bernard.



Wole Ajibare, Sarah Potts, Nita Desai (back) Michelle and Sarah O'Donoghue at St Mary of the Angels, Beaufort.

them to 'give him a kiss for me,' Dolly said.

"We have a great parents and relatives group and Jack Fitzpatrick is brilliant - we couldn't do without him. We fundraised recently for tarmacadam for the pathways around St Mary of the Angels and as a group we also share our experiences and thoughts."

Dolly added: "We couldn't manage without the staff at St Mary of the Angels. They are very important and are brilliant to the residents. It's because of the service they provide for Danny that I can rest easy at night."

Ina Dwyer's son Bernard is a resident at St. Mary of the Angels and she describes it as 'a home away from home' for Bernard who has been attending the campus since he was 5 years old. Bernard will be 42 in August and he comes home frequently to be part of family occasions. St. Mary of the Angels is of huge benefit to Bernard and his family.

"He needs 24-hour care and St Mary's is a brilliant back-up service as I wouldn't be able to do it on my own," Ina said.

"The hydrotherapy pool is essential for Bernard and he has all

the services there that he would be waiting a long time for if he was living in the community. I would love to see St Mary of the Angels revitalised and to keep its doors open to parents who are crying out for help. We never want to give our children away but we can't manage on our own, we need places like this to help us. Bernard loves it there and he's got an independent life because of it," Ina said.

Joyce Banbury's brother lives in Saint Mary of the Angels and Joyce is a committee member on the SMAO Parents and relatives Group. Joyce also attends the joint stakeholder's forum along with representatives from Saint Mary of the Angels Management and the HSE.

"When we came together first we really found a voice and I think the staff are happy with this too," Joyce said.

Since the group's formation Joyce has noticed that it is producing greater connectivity between families when it comes to the care of loved ones and the overall success of St. Mary of the Angels as a facility.



ST MARY OF THE ANGELS BEAUFORT 50TH ANNIVERSARY



Tidy towns



Cappanalea outing

Volunteers are a vital part of the St Mary of the Angels story...

HELEN O'Connor has over 30 years' experience at St. Mary of the Angels and she is proud to be part of a wider team of people, many of whom have in excess of 25 years' experience. This wealth of service and experience says a lot about the environment at St. Mary of the Angels where familiarity is important to the residents and their families.

For the past 3 years Helen has overseen the task of attracting volunteers from all walks of life urging them to get involved in helping to enhance day-to-day experiences for residents within their own community.

"We've had numerous volunteers helping us since we started our volunteering initiative. Some volunteers will come for a short period of time, while others will stay longer. It's hugely beneficial," Helen explained.

Having the extra manpower to help with day trips is vitally important as the more people volunteer, the more the residents can enjoy a more fulfilling day out. Once volunteers commit to set days it allows St. Mary of the Angels staff to arrange events in advance, safe in the knowledge they have extra help.

Since the volunteering campaign started Teagasc has sent



24 farmers on site for a day to do various jobs on campus, Dell Computers also sent a group to carry out repair work in the facility, and even made garden furniture for the residents. Other participants have involved residents in local Tidy Towns, walking groups, trips to Dingle, Fota Wildlife Park, fishing, art exhibitions, football matches and concerts. This is just a sample of the social experiences residents have enjoyed thanks to the help of volunteers. Volunteers are a very valuable and appreciated resource and their support is invaluable.

"The volunteers come from across the county which is ideal as it allows St. Mary of the Angels to extend its services to the wider community. Two staff recently visited IT Tralee to talk to students about volunteering but people interested in volunteering can also contact St. Mary of the Angels directly. Moreover, helping residents to enjoy life to its fullest is just as enriching and rewarding for the volunteers.

Volunteers are a vital part of the St. Mary of the Angels story," Helen said.

If you would like more information about volunteering either individually, as a group, or as a service, please contact Helen O'Connor at 087 1338 702.

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Denis Galvin, Hazel O'Connor, Lisa Looney (back) Maura Mannix, Maura Spillane, Patricia Cahill and Breda Healy in Oaktree at St Mary of the Angels, Beaufort.



Angela with Hannah Cahillane, Denis Galvin and Patrick Perryman at St Clare's in St Mary's of the Angels Beaufort.

“It’s looking at the whole of someone’s life that’s important”

NORA Brosnan is Residential Programme Manager and is based in St. Mary of the Angels, Beaufort, since it's amalgamation with St. John of God Services in 2005. There is a long history of both organisations working together over many years prior to 2005 and the amalgamation marked a very natural progression. The similarities in ethos and values of both organisations are supported in this merger.

One of the challenges in rural counties is finding services in local areas. St. John of God Services have established bases across the county, and St. Mary of the Angels recognised the need to bring services to people with new developments in both Cahersiveen and Listowel which were developed by the Franciscan Sisters of the Divine Motherhood. This work has continued to evolve over the years to a point where an extensive network of services is now available for both children and young adults across the county.

Nora explained: “there is a great spirit and determination at St. Mary of the Angels where the main focus is the people we support.”

“Residential services are about striving to

support people to have a high quality of life, reflective of their interests. Life is to live and enjoy,” Nora said.

The commitment to residents is very evident and there is an ongoing focus on improving the quality of activities available with continuous enhancement to the campus. Nora added: “There is no house on the grounds of St. Mary of the Angels where significant work hasn't been completed since 2005. HIQA is the body responsible for the registration of residential services for people with disabilities since 2013. All of our community residential services have reached compliance and have been registered since 2017.”

Nora concluded: “St. Mary's is very much a campus based service and the challenges we face in reaching and maintaining the required level of compliance with regulation is significant. It is also very fitting in the year that we celebrate our 50th anniversary that HIQA is now proposing St. Mary of the Angels for registration which will result in all centres in Kerry being registered. We are very proud of this significant achievement.”





ST MARY OF THE ANGELS BEAUFORT 50TH ANNIVERSARY



St Francis' Special School, Beaufort.

An excellent respite service enriching lives

SHEILA Marie Fitzgerald is Programme Manager for Children's and Adult Services with St. John of God Kerry Services and she explains how important the services in Listowel and Beaufort are in terms of giving families a break.

Abhaile (Listowel) and the Arches (Beaufort) are respite centres for children and adults that plays a major day-to-day role in the Service as the location of each house covers a broad geographical spread which is important for children, adults and their families.

In May of 2016 Abhaile Respite Service was the first Children's Service in the country to achieve HIQA compliance in all areas, while in April 2018 the Arches received glowing praise as part of their HIQA report. Michael Moriarty is the person in charge of the Arches, Beaufort, while Siobhan Keane is the person who oversees the running of Abhaile Respite Service and Ashfield Lodge Day Service - both located in Listowel. Additionally, the wonderful after school service in Cahersiveen, which caters for 8 children, is another welcome addition to the St. John of God Kerry Services.

"The Arches and Abhaile are excellent respite services," Sheila said.

"The Arches links in with St Francis Special School in Beaufort where staff collect pupils from school and bring them directly to the house, while Abhaile links with Nano Nagle School in Listowel. Both services are very warm and welcoming settings and each house

feels like a home."

The children get to enjoy a range of social activities in the community when accessing respite. These events include visits to Kennedy's Pet Farm, Dingle Ocean World, Tralee Bay Wetlands, attending football matches, and visits to the gym. Even within the respite homes themselves activities can vary between basketball, use of trampolines, use of fabulous sensory rooms, hand massage, gardening, art, music, TV and computer access. In 2016 Kerry football 'STAR' Kieran Donaghy paid a visit to Abhaile Respite and Ashfield Day Services in Listowel. It was a lovely visit and some great pictures of the children, adults, staff and Kieran are today displayed in the house following his visit.

"The children are encouraged and supported to develop daily living skills in order to promote lifelong skills. It's all about inclusion and these services are very well run facilities which are a credit to the staff in each location. The houses create a lovely warm and welcoming atmosphere and are designed to benefit both the children and their families. I'm very proud of what these services provide for children and their families," Sheila said.

Ashfield Lodge in Listowel is the location for the Adult Day Service and service users from surrounding areas take part in a range of activities when they visit there each day. The service users enjoy their time interacting with each other and staff before heading home to their families each evening.



Maria Naughton, Thomas Banbury and Mary O'Brien with the bus donated by Thomas' father to St Mary of the Angels Beaufort.



Best Wishes to St Mary of the Angels from

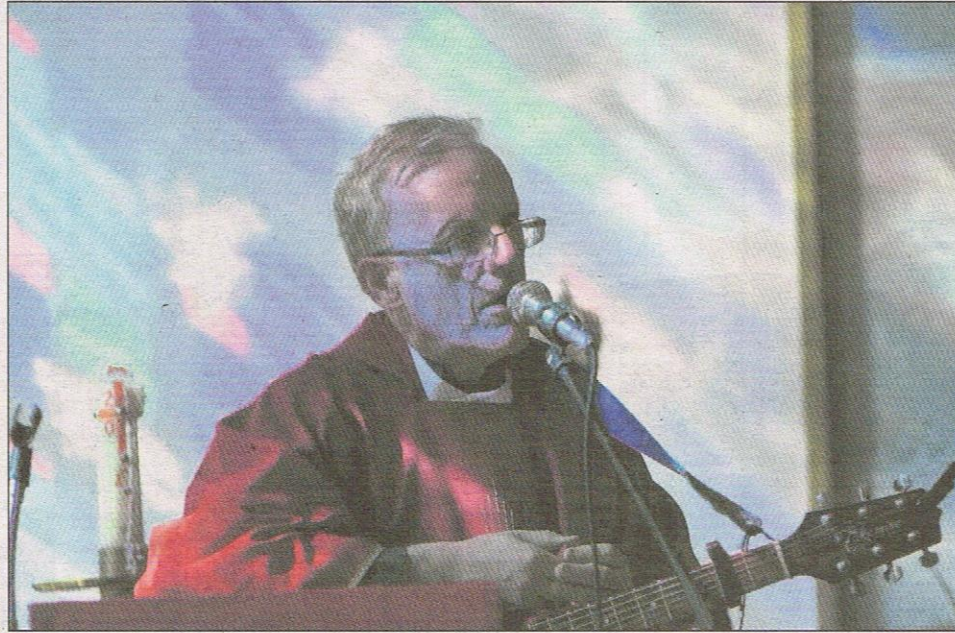
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ST MARY OF THE ANGELS BEAUFORT 50TH ANNIVERSARY



Fr. Derek O'Connell, Chaplain at St Mary of the Angels.

A timeline of significant events...

- 1968 St Mary of the Angels Home is opened providing accommodation for 60 children.
- 1970 Recognition by the Department of Education for St Francis Special School.
- 1975 Gymnasium and Therapy pool opened.
- 1981 Three new chalets in Beaufort: Tallon House, Doyle House and Ballálainn House are opened.
- 1986 St. Francis Special School opens in a new ultra-modern school and campus.
- 1988/1989 Oak Tree Activation Centre opens at St Mary of the Angels.
- 1990 Woodview Day Unit opened.
- 1992 Reeks Lodge Home Support Scheme commences.
- 1993 Silver Jubilee celebrations, and the last nurses' chalet vacated to be used for children.
- 1998 St. Claire's Chalet opens.
- 1999 St. Kevin's Chalet opens.
- 2005 Celebrations to mark the official transfer of St Mary of the Angels services from Franciscan Sisters of the Divine Motherhood to Hospitaller Order of St John of God.
- 2008 Rose Lodge & Woodview refurbished.
- 2015 Residential and Respite Children's Service in The Arches, Beaufort, is the first to be granted HIQA registration.
- 2016 Full compliance, with no conditions, is achieved in the Children's Services in Abhaile, Listowel.
- 2016 The St Mary of the Angels Parents and Relatives Association is formed.
- 2018 St Mary of the Angels celebrates its Golden Jubilee.



I am an Angel

*St Mary of the Angels has been my home since I was five.
Here I grew into an adult in an environment in which I thrive.
A place of peace and tranquillity, unmatched by anywhere else,
To call Beaufort my home, I know I am blessed.
In 1968 this place first came to be,
To care for people who are special, just like me.
All my facilities are here, and there is so much space,
I live life uninterrupted, at my required pace.
Because I am an angel, my wings you cannot see,
but they are clearly visible by my family, who love me.
I don't have an online presence, like most my age do.
I don't have Snapchat, I'm of a few.
I don't have a smartphone or take selfies on a stick.
My fingers are formed a little differently they don't operate that quick.
I need help at the shops when I want to buy things for myself,
Because sitting in my wheelchair I can't reach the top shelf.
The staff who care for me are second to none,
they work round the clock, their job is never done.
They always wear a smile upon their face,
and carry themselves with a caring grace.
Because I am an angel, my wings you cannot see,
but they are clearly visible by my family, who love me.
They know what I want when it's time to eat
and they play my favourite song when it's time for me to sleep.
They know how to calm me when I feel stressed,
and in the morning, they help me to get dressed.
All this they do by reading my mind,
because I cannot speak and I am partially blind.
They seem to know me and my ways,
because they have cared for me all of my days
Because I am an angel, my wings you cannot see,
but they are clearly visible by my family, who love me.
So I can't have an ordinary life, to me that is clear,
it is not my time to move, my community is here.
I wish to continue my days in this haven on earth,
A place that I have lived in, almost since birth.
So while people in elected seats make decisions about me,
my friends and my loving community,
maybe if they sat in my wheelchair and saw a day through my eyes,
maybe they would question their need to try and change my life.
I am an Angel, I know it, my peers are the same.
And fighting to keep my home - my home - will continue to be my aim.
And like any community, St Mary of the Angels should continue to
grow. So please allow more Angels like me to call Beaufort their home.*

Composed by Seán Sugrue
for the residents of St Mary of the Angels, Beaufort.