

# NEWSLETTER

## UPDATE FROM THE CEO

Welcome to our May newsletter, it is wonderful to write this as the warmth of Summer finally appears in Wicklow. It seems like no time at all since the last newsletter was published but a lot has been going on in St. Catherine's in this time.

Firstly, I want to note the retirement of two brilliant, long-serving members of our team - Joy Mulligan and Siobhan Loughlin. Both have left indelible marks on the organisation in their time here and will be sorely missed. There are features on them both in this issue and I thank them sincerely for their huge contribution to the culture and fabric of St. Catherine's in their years with us.

We have had a series of HIQA registration renewal inspections at our centres - Woodbeg, Ballylusk Cottage & Apartment, and most recently Haughton Lodge. I am delighted to inform you that all inspections went extremely well and were compliant on all fronts. This is testament to the hard work and commitment of our staff on a daily basis - from frontline team members, to local management, auxiliary supports and our wider operations team. Well done to all involved in bringing about such a great outcome!

I also want to acknowledge that the individual supported in an emergency placement at our Brambles respite centre has recently moved to their permanent long-term placement and we wish them the very best for the future and hope that they thrive in their new home.

Finally, I am very happy to share pictures of the first work at the Kilcoole site below as enabling works get underway. A lot of work has gone into this project behind the scenes in recent years so to reach this stage is a great milestone. I look forward to sharing more of these with you as the project moves forward.

*Michael*



## KILCOOLE NEXT STAGE

Work is now underway at the Kilcoole site that will house our future Adult Day Services, Respite and Administration/Training buildings. The project has taken a long time to come to fruition and it is great to see the work finally begin. The pictures show the entrance road being constructed to the site which will allow St. Catherine's Special School to start their building and see SCA follow in the not too distant future.

Project Manager Ken MacAvoy of 3CS Project Management says 'The road will be complete to allow construction traffic by the end of June and the Tender documents for the ADS building are in final production to issue by the end of May'.

This is a great milestone to see achieved and we look forward to updating you on more as the project progresses.



## Interview with Padraig Rushe

**Director of St. Catherine's Association and Chairperson of the Board of Management of St. Catherine's Special School where SCA is patron**



### **How did you become involved with St. Catherine's?**

Back in 2014 and just prior to retiring from Bank of Ireland I became aware of the financial issues facing the Association through my daughter Jennifer, whose son Cass now attends the School. I subsequently joined the Board of the Association and very quickly became immersed in the significant challenges facing the company. From the outset it was very clear that St. Catherine's had an excellent reputation within its community for the quality of its staff and the services they provided but that relationships with some key stakeholders were strained. It was also clear that once the issues were dealt with the organisation had a bright and exciting future and I felt that I could assist in some small way in making that a reality.

### **What have been the standout achievements over the past 10 years?**

First off, I think that society in general has had an awakening of sorts when it comes to the disabilities sector. By that I mean that people are now more aware of the need to accommodate everyone in as inclusive a manner as possible. The Government recognises that it needs to do more to enhance the lives of people with disabilities and enable them to reach their full potential. We have a Minister for Disabilities, changes are being made (though not nearly enough) so we are moving in the right direction.

From a St. Catherine's perspective I believe we have 'right sided' the organisation and now have a strong management team and staff supporting the children and young adults under our care. Services have been expanded, and we have just commenced the construction of a new 'St. Catherine's campus' in Kilcoole and hope to see our new school construction get underway on this site this Summer. This development has been many years in the making but is now a reality and will underpin the Association and School for the next 50 years and beyond!

### **As our Special School celebrates its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary what challenges lie ahead?**

Over fifty years ago some visionary people saw the need to establish a school to cater for the educational requirements of children with intellectual disabilities. Getting the School recognised and registered with the Department of Education in 1975 was a magnificent achievement. Now in 2025 we are about to embark on a significant expansion of the School which will see classrooms increase in size and number and structured and equipped to meet the specific needs of our pupils. This will be a new and perhaps somewhat daunting experience for our pupils and staff. The overall management of this process presents its own challenges and once complete transitioning from the Kilmullen Lane and the EDC locations will require adept handling. Staffing numbers will increase and as is well reported recruitment is a major issue across the sector and indeed the wider educational community. I believe we need to continuously agitate for a more harmonious and seamless service from the Departments of Health and Education in order to get the best possible outcomes for our community.

Finally, can I just say that St. Catherine's is an amazing place. The dedication and devotion of our staff in caring for all of the wonderful people placed in our care is truly inspirational. Long may that continue.

## Mental Health First Aid Training

SCA recently held Mental Health First Aid Training delivered by Qualtec. This course equipped learners with the knowledge and awareness on a range of mental health illnesses enabling them to recognise common signs and symptoms - *"The content was delivered well and the instructor was very engaging. Course provided a good insight into mental health and the importance of breaking down stigma relating to mental health."* Well done to everyone who participated. **If you would like to complete this training please email [training@stcatherines.ie](mailto:training@stcatherines.ie) to book on to the next course.**



# Happy Easter!



## CORU Registration for Social Care Workers



I am happy to report the number of staff beginning the registration process has significantly increased. SCA have had a Peace Commissioner on site to support staff in their registration process. Please be reminded that if you are employed as a Social Care Worker you are required to register with CORU before **30/11/25**. For further information on the registration process please visit [social-care-worker-guidance-notes-s91-1.pdf](#)

Unless you are a new graduate who has just qualified you should register under the Grandparenting Section 91 route. To be eligible:

- You must be able to demonstrate having 2 years practice in the previous 5 years on the date of application.
- Hold an Approved Qualification (click here for List [Social Care Workers - Coru](#))

**OR**

- Hold a qualification that the Social Care Worker Registration Board deem to be suitable (click here for list [Sufficiently Relevant Qualifications - Coru](#))

**OR**

- Hold a Schedule 3 Qualification (click here for list [Schedule 3 Qualifications - Coru](#))

**OR** (if you do not hold any of the above)

- Employer's Opinion of Competency. This is a form your Line Manager needs to complete for you (you must have minimum of six months service with SCA for this to be completed)

**OR**

- If you cannot provide any of the above, a pathway known as an Assessment of Professional Competence is available. The Assessment of Professional Competence requires applicants to undergo an assessment of their professional competence. More information on this can be found [Assessment of Professional Competence - Coru](#).

If you require any support with your application process please contact Linda Minchin at [lindaminchin@stcatherines.ie](mailto:lindaminchin@stcatherines.ie)





## Joy Mulligan Retires

Joy retired from SCA in April 2025 after 29 years of dedicated service. Not everyone gets the recognition of being known only by their first name. Madonna, Beyonce and our Joy! Joy started with us in 1996 and has worked in many different parts of the organisation. Joy worked in both the School and the Association and is known by many, past and present. Joy was a wealth of knowledge, unfailingly positive and helpful and could tell you a lot about the history of SCA. Joy had many well deserved celebrations before she finished up. Joy has been a big part of SCA and will be missed by everyone.



— HAPPY —  
*Retirement*

## Staff News & Updates

### A Warm Welcome

Arlene Quinn (Meadow View), Sophie Ormonde Cummins (Adult Day Services), Mihaela Silivestru (Adult Day Services), Aaron Bennett (Haughton House), Sorica Nolan (Ballylusk), Emma Quinlan (Haughton House) and Lucia Luka (Family Liaison Officer)

### And a Fond Farewell...

Sandra Farrell (Potters club), Eoin Buckley (QCT), Siobhan Loughlin (Bird Hill), Caoimhe Deegan (Meadow View), Ryan Slater (Fairwinds), Joy Mulligan (EDC), Tony Murphy (Glenview Heights) and Leisha Connolly (Woodbeg)

### Baby News

Congratulations to Aisling White and her husband Stephen who welcomed baby Finn on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of April.

Congratulations to Glenn Phelan and his partner Cassi who welcomed baby Max on the 1<sup>st</sup> of May

## National Workplace Wellbeing Day – 30th April 2025

To celebrate **National Workplace Wellbeing Day 2025**, each location was provided with a hamper containing fruit, healthy treats, seeds for planting etc.. hope you all enjoyed!

Please see link below to our Wellbeing Tip Sheet -

[https://www.canva.com/design/DAGl6TeDwKw/UwcEO2Bp84Nk5ukHpjtQRg/view?](https://www.canva.com/design/DAGl6TeDwKw/UwcEO2Bp84Nk5ukHpjtQRg/view?utm_content=DAGl6TeDwKw&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link2&utm_source=uniqueLinks&utm_id=hec2da220ff)

[utm\\_content=DAGl6TeDwKw&utm\\_campaign=designshare&utm\\_medium=link2&utm\\_source=uniqueLinks&utm\\_id=hec2da220ff](https://www.canva.com/design/DAGl6TeDwKw/UwcEO2Bp84Nk5ukHpjtQRg/view?utm_content=DAGl6TeDwKw&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link2&utm_source=uniqueLinks&utm_id=hec2da220ff)



## Recruitment Update

We are holding a Recruitment Day in the Parkview Hotel on **Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> May 2025 from 11am-6pm.** Please let your family and friends know.

### Current Available Positions:

- Social Care Workers (Residential and Respite)
- Social Care Workers (Day Services)
- Quality Compliance Officer
- Deputy Residential Services Manager
- Deputy Respite Services Manager
- Behaviour Support Specialist
- Staff Nurse

## Social Media

Please follow SCA on our Socials:

If there is any content you would like shared on our Social Media please contact Laurissa on ***socialmedia@stcatherines.ie***



## Employee Referral Scheme

Would you like a €500 voucher? Do you have a friend or family member who shares our culture and values and has the right qualifications and skills to apply for any of our exciting opportunities? If you do, then please let HR know and we will be happy to reward you if your referral is successful in joining the SCA team (T's & C's apply).

## Respite & Residential Family Feedback Survey

Our sincere thanks to all of the parents and guardians who took the time to respond to our Respite and Residential Services Family Feedback Survey for 2024. The response rate was up 34% on the previous year which was fantastic to see – the more input we receive, the more informed we are in shaping our services to best meet the needs of those in our care.

This year, all responses were considered under St. Catherine's core values of compassion, integrity, innovation and dedication. The results are in and show us the two values we performed best in were compassion and innovation with satisfaction levels of 99% and 94% for respectively. This was followed closely by integrity and dedication at 93%.

This survey also gave families the opportunity to suggest areas that we could improve, and we have listened. Over the next number of weeks, local centres will be in touch with new initiatives in response to this invaluable feedback.

Throughout 2025, we will continue to place the person at the centre of all we do, and look forward to continued family engagement to help shape the future of our services.



## FAIRWINDS NEWS

It's been a busy year so far in Fairwinds. We recently carried out a beautiful new and modern upgrade to one of our ensuites, now fully equipped with a fancy light up mirror and wet room style shower. The young men celebrated Autism Awareness Day with hand painted t-shirts and we had cake of course. We have had many group outings including a visit to Glendalough, Avondale, Wells House and the beach.



A big Happy Birthday to Tommy who celebrated his 22nd Birthday in April. This July we're very much looking forward to our yearly outing to Ablefest.

We also look forward to our yearly Summer party set to take place on the August Bank Holiday weekend, everyone's invited!

It's all go!!

## Siobhan Loughlin Retires

In a care working world the role requires a special kind of person, Siobhan Loughlin ticked all the right boxes. Siobhan worked in both respite and residential houses over the years looking after children and young adults. Siobhan had the passion, dedication, attentiveness, empathy and sense of humour needed and worked in SCA for over 20 years. She was always there when needed... Literally 24/7.

Siobhan made the world of difference to everyone who crossed her path. It was lovely to see young people she had previously worked with have a big smile on their faces when they saw her even years later. She was easy going yet one of the strongest team members on the front line; showing positivity during Covid and other difficult times. Siobhan's attitude was 'we'll get there' and we always did. Siobhan was very good at placing herself in the resident's shoes and seeing things from their perspective. Siobhan was easily one of the best. She provided the best quality of life for all those she worked with and will be hugely missed! There is so much more we could say and not enough paper. We all wish Siobhan a Happy Retirement. Love, Bird Hill



**HAPPY Retirement!**

