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Is léchran do mo chosa do bhriathar; is solas do mo chosán é. Ps 119 v 105



Ireland

NEWS FROM SCRIPTURE UNION IRELAND

Inspire

2015

"YOUR WORD IS A LAMP TO MY FEET"
PSALM 119:105

FAITHFEST

- DUBLIN DIOCESE
PARTNERSHIP

NEW

4 SU INTERNS

"The best retreat we have ever had"
with Adventure School Retreats at Ovoca Manor

CONTENTS

ON THE COVER:

- "The best retreat we have ever had" 17
- Faithfest - Dublin Diocese Partnership 20
- NEW** 4 Scripture Union Interns 22

NEWS:

HOLIDAY CAMPS & CLUBS

- 2014 Update & Greystones CSSM 2
- News from the Border Counties 4
- Easter Camps 6
- The Blessings of Family Week 7

OVOCA MANOR

AUTHENTIC YOUTH

ALPHA - YOUTH

- Prayer Spaces in Schools 12

PRIMARY & PARISHES

- The Pentecost Project 14
- The Cairde Programme 15

FEATURES:

- Adventure School Retreats at Ovoca Manor 16 - 19
- Faithfest Retreat 20 - 21
- 4 New SU Interns 22 - 24



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Welcome!

An Open Door...

God is in the business of opening and closing doors for mission! The Scriptures have a number of references of how God can open doors that no one can shut (Rev 3:1), open doors of faith (Acts 14:27) and open doors for effective work or ministry (1 Cor 16:9).

In my fifteen years in leadership with SU I can honestly say I have been truly amazed and humbled at how our God should choose to open so many doors during this year. Doors that in times past were clearly shut to engaging with children and young people from backgrounds and communities outside our circle of influence!

I am thinking specifically of schools and students from the many Catholic Colleges who have participated in Authentic Youth and Adventure retreats at Ovoca Manor. I am humbled by the great commitment of teachers and parish workers who seek to use our resources and facilities for events like Cairde Days or Faithfest from disadvantaged areas like Sean Mc Dermott St or East Wall and Tallaght. I am genuinely surprised (but perhaps I shouldn't be) by the desire for Biblical and Spiritual input from these groups and above all by the amazing positive impact the experience of a retreat or camp has been for these young people. This 2015 Inspire Magazine is packed with

stories, poems and testimonies of how God is clearly at work and I hope you find much encouragement and reason to rejoice.

I am very conscious and grateful for our many faithful partners in this ministry especially our dedicated Volunteers who serve on our camps and missions, our Board members, our prayer partners and the many people and donors who generously support us financially. To each one of you I say a heartfelt THANK YOU.

The New Year is one of increasing opportunities for a ministry like Scripture Union to reach out and impact the lives of thousands of young people across Ireland who seek purpose and meaning in life. We are indeed privileged to point them to Jesus!

Every Blessing



Jim Donnan
General Director

To keep in touch with all our latest news and events, log on to www.scriptureunion.ie and subscribe to our regular e-newsletters and prayer diary, and 'like' Scripture Union Ireland's Facebook page.



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friends and family - for additional copies please also email

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CAMPS & CLUBS



UPDATE:HOLIDAY CAMPS & CLUBS

God wonderfully blessed the Camps and Missions ministry of Scripture Union during the past year. We ran a wide variety of activities catering for children aged 9 - 12 years and teens, as well as a Family Camp, Parenting weekends and non-residential Holidays Clubs in Greystones and Border Counties. Many camps were fully booked and all enjoyed a wonderful and safe holiday while having the opportunity to explore the Bible and experience the love of God.

- Jim Donnan



“ The most exciting dimension of this year was the ministry impact in the lives of nearly 2000 children and young people and also the amazing commitment, generosity and creativity of our volunteer Leaders and Teams. ”





GREYSTONES CSSM

This is the 118th year of this two weekly mission in Greystones, Co Wicklow which was blessed with not just glorious sunshine but with an amazing number of nearly 700 young people who registered.

Alison Gill provided wonderful leadership along with her team of 50 volunteers from all over Ireland and some from the USA. A real encouragement was the higher number of local team members! The wonderful team of local volunteers provided hospitality and catering and many thanks goes to Audrey Evans and Jane Gibson. Hillside Evangelical Church very kindly provided the base for the two weeks and Ian Horner and Ken Gibson led the daily team devotions, which is a positive dimension of this mission for the team members.



In addition, events took place at St Patricks Church Hall, Presbyterian Church Hall, YWCA and Nazarene Community Church. The team had the opportunity to speak at various local churches including Delgany Church of Ireland, Holy Rosary Catholic Church and Greystones Community Church. St Patricks Church of Ireland had a special 150th celebration and Alison and the CSSM team were invited to participate, speak and sing at this special event.

“ A real encouragement was the higher number of local team members ”

For information on Scripture Union's Camps Programme and to book visit www.scriptureunion.ie

Border Counties Holiday Clubs

Every year my spirits are lifted as I visit some of the SU Border Counties Holiday clubs taking place in Cavan, Monaghan and Donegal. It is such a joy to see children and teens from local rural villages come to these clubs, hear Bible stories and have a great week of fun and friendship.



The Glaslough Club (Monaghan) was led by Peter Hanna and Jessica Grey and their super charged team from Bangor. What is also wonderful is that a local lady from the Catholic Parish Clare Mc Kenna coordinates a lot of the venue and raises funds along with support from the local clergy. About 50 children and young people arrived each day.



The Killesandra Club (Cavan) was enjoyed by 52 young people ranging in ages from 3 - 16 years and a team of 13 led by Ruth Hooks and Keith Hooks. The club was held in the Church of Ireland Hall and is very strongly supported and coordinated by the local minister Rev Ali Calvin.

The theme focused on the 5 Cs on the High Seas: Choose, Change, Call, Commitment and Challenge. They also used Christianity Explored for Youth with the older group.

“ The Club was a great success with God’s presence felt day after day ”

It was really positive to see young people coming back and benefiting each year and also running a programme with the older teens who were interested. The Club was a great success with God’s presence felt day after day and encouraging progress in faith with returning participants.

“ A real positive was the team dynamic who worked well together and were intentional in building relations with the young people. ”



The Convoy Club was attended by 52 participants ranging in age from 5 to 14 years. There were 22 leaders and the three main leaders were: Tim Crothers, James Geddis and David Campbell. The team once again were mainly from Bangor NI area and a transition taking over from David Robinson who had led it for a number of years.

It was encouraging to have the use of a range of facilities like Presbyterian and COI halls along with the Catholic Church hall. In addition the Presbyterian Church provided the accommodation and catering facilities. The main Bible focus was from the book of Daniel and they used parts of Alpha for Youth course for older teens. They also used SU material Space Academy. A real positive was the team dynamic who worked well together and were intentional in building relations with the young people throughout the week.

- Jim Donnan





ADVENTURE CAMPS

The exciting Weekend Adventure Camps run for Primary Schools are a wonderful opportunity for these children in their class grouping to have a positive residential experience at Ovoca Manor and some quality Bible teaching. In all, eight weekends were run this year requiring great leaders and teams.

“ We had great leaders and teams and without whom this ministry could not happen ”

of activities including: Drama workshop, Photography, Sports, Creative writing and Band, as well as the on-site activities such as the Jacobs’s ladder and Archery. They provided a Christian Bookstall with “Science & God” being the best seller.

TEEN CAMPS

The Easter and Summer camps for 10-12s, 13-15s and RAW for older teens are always popular and always open to new ideas and programmes. We had great leaders and teams without whom this ministry could not happen.

It was wonderful this year to see the 13-15s camp led by Len Carolan draw almost 50 campers who enjoyed a great diversity

Tom Tate, youth worker from Dun Laoghaire Presbyterian Church, taught the campers from Ephesians, with the theme of Identity, and how we can find it in Jesus. There were talks every morning with discussion groups in the evening. All the campers were given a booklet which had the discussion group questions in them, with further Bible studies for the camper to engage with after camp had finished.





FAMILY WEEK By Jim Donnan

A real highlight of this year's camp ministry for me was certainly the Family Week Camp. In my 25 years of attending Family Week this was certainly the best experience, especially from a ministry perspective. The leadership team headed by David and Grace Percy and Bruce and Fern Mullen did a superb job and a real team effort.

There were in total 153 campers and 22 team leaders. It was wonderful to see new families, one from Poland and another from Germany. It was also such an encouragement to see all the families gel so well together with many new friendships made.

The guest speaker was Pat O'Sullivan, the pastor of New Life church in Clondalkin. Pat was truly led by the Holy Spirit and his talks were more than teaching, they were rooted in deep, often painful, personal experience and they clearly ministered into the hearts of many. The prayer ministry time after each session was powerful and many were touched by God!

“ The spirit of God was so evident during these times as many young people were on their knees in prayer before God ”

Another great highlight was the number of older teens and the impact of the all age late evening worship sessions called 'Soul Down'. The spirit of God was so evident during these times as many young people were on their knees in prayer before God.

“WOW we all loved it and I am under pressure from all to book in real early next year, well done to everyone involved. You all made each of the FW1 folk and all of our extended family really welcome.”





Ovoca Manor is Scripture Union's Retreat and Adventure Centre located just outside Avoca in Co Wicklow

2014 has been a year of opportunities, continued growth and consolidation at Ovoca Manor. Paul encourages us in Ephesians 5 'to make the most of every opportunity' and we have been reminded that there is no question of whether the opportunities will come, but will we make the most of them when they do. Whilst we may not have taken all the opportunities that have come our way we have certainly seen how God can work through the volunteers and staff that have been serving at Ovoca Manor when we do.

Just over 5000 people have been welcomed in to Ovoca Manor during the year, some for the first time and many for a return visit. We have seen continued growth in our mid-week schools retreat programme, with our busiest autumn term ever.

In 2012 we had just over 200 students attending a mid-week retreat and this has grown close to 1600 in 2014.

What excites us most is the level of engagement and interest there is in the faith based elements that form part of an adventure retreat. One of our instructors was sharing a story with the retreat team about a group of girls who had just completed an activity session and they were so engaged with the subsequent spiritual discussion that they didn't want to move onto their next activity!

We continue to be blessed with beautiful surroundings and wonderful facilities in which to welcome people to Ovoca Manor. The new footpaths that were introduced last year are incredibly popular and it's lovely to hear a happy bunch of people using one of the free activity zones. Looking forward into 2015, work will begin on developing the junior assault course, improving the dining room and some of the communal areas in the Manor house.

Our prayer is to run with the opportunities God grants us in 2015 and that many more children young people and families get to come away to Ovoca Manor and have a brilliant, God centred time away in Co Wicklow.

- Nathan Norris, Centre Manager



Want to keep in touch with everything that's going on at Ovoca Manor?
Visit our Facebook page or visit www.ovocamanor.ie





Authentic Youth Retreat Team has the pleasure, honour and privilege to go into schools throughout Ireland each year. It is something that has developed from being a support to CU's, to class workshops, to full day retreats. And it has taken a lot of years to get to where we are. I couldn't be doing what Authentic Youth are doing without the work of the previous SU youth workers, and to them I am very thankful to the paths they paved in order for Authentic Youth to have an impact on so many young people.

Having Vito as an intern last year really highlighted how amazing our opportunities in this country are. Coming from America, it took Vito a while to adjust to the fact that he can openly talk about God and his faith in a school context. He was so used to not being able to do so, that it was a real eye opener to myself with regards to the opportunities we have.

It's encouraging to Scripture Union to have a school call for Authentic Youth to deliver a days retreat at some point throughout the year and to specifically ask to talk about 'What it means to be a Christian.'

authentic youth

The more I work with SU, the more I realise that having a retreat team is an absolute gift. What SU does in schools is empowering. Authentic Youth get to speak into the lives of thousands of teens every year to encourage them to walk further with God.

The most difficult bit of the job is not really knowing or being able to quantify what impact we have on individuals or schools but we know that we do even though we cannot see the fruit of our work. Our daily prayer is that God's words are remembered and we've encouraged or challenged a young person in their faith journey.

My sense is that youth today don't see faith as something immediate. They feel that they have time to decide and with that comes a sense of lethargy with regards to God. They would rather find out later if God is real or not to them. There is no sense of urgency, no deep hunger for more... and put Authentic Youth in the mix where we are young(ish) people who are encouraging these other younger people to make up their minds. There are so many opinions and options out

Established in 2005, Authentic Youth is the name of Scripture Union's secondary school retreat team.

there that it's difficult for a young person to know who is speaking the words of Truth. School groups are continually amazed by how young our interns are yet so real about



“The more I work with SU, the more I realise that having a retreat team is an absolute gift. What SU does in schools is empowering.”

is our sole Irish member and is a local from Wicklow. The work of the interns makes our roles even more worthwhile. We couldn't do it without them so we are indebted to them. Please keep them and myself in your prayers this year as we communicate God's love and hopefully empower young people of Ireland to make the right choice and follow God.

their faith. I think this brings freshness to what we do, something the students can relate to.



**- Jude Barry
Authentic Youth
Manager**

This year, we've been blessed with a multi-cultural team of 4 interns. Zola and Sazi are from South Africa and are volunteers with SU SA and Elodie is from Switzerland and has been volunteering with SU there. Owen

For more information on Authentic Youth school retreats visit www.scriptureunion.ie or email jude.barry@scriptureunion.ie

ALPHA

ALPHA - YOUTH

YOUTH
FILM
SERIES

Alpha

“Alpha reaffirms the faith I have towards God. I enjoyed the lessons given by Alpha and I feel that their intention of bringing people my age closer to God is successful.”

- Alistair, Dublin

Join hosts Ben Woodman and Jason Ballard as they travel the world unpacking the basics of the Christian faith.



**For more information on Alpha - Youth
email Jonny at jonny@alphaireland.org or phone 085 - 7083538**



2014 WAS AN EXCITING YEAR

Overall 47 Alpha - Youth Courses were run in 28 Secondary/Comprehensive schools in 11 counties around Ireland. This involved 1,239 students and approx. 100 volunteers. The average age was 16 years.

But, it's not all about the numbers...

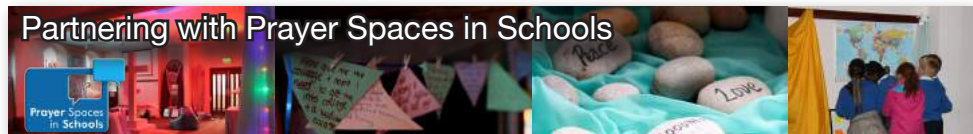
On the one hand we are constantly humbled at what God is doing through this ministry but we have been seeking wisdom recently about using the right strategies to give genuine opportunities for discipleship. One such strategy is to empower local youth workers and volunteers to partner with their local schools. Examples of this include Neil Douglas, youth worker from Crinkin COI, who runs Alpha - Youth with a team in a local

Bray school. The same is true for Amanda O'Shea from Trinity Church Network as well as youth workers from the churches in Dun Laoghaire and Catholic lay volunteers in Wexford, Tullamore and Kildare.

We have also turned our attention to parish life and how we can help at a grass root level. There are many rumblings across Ireland of lay volunteers wanting to establish disciple-making ministry. It has been a privilege to facilitate training days in Donegal, Monaghan and Newry with people that are excited about reaching this generation of young people.

Alpha is ultimately only a tool but what if this tool could be the catalyst for many effective youth ministries in Ireland.

- Jonny Somerville
National Co-ordinator



Partnering with Prayer Spaces in Schools

I was asked to attend a Chaplain's Conference in Kilkenny. I shared about Prayer Spaces in Schools and facilitated an Alpha - Youth workshop using the New Film Series that was released earlier this year. During the talk I guided them to

www.prayerspacesinschools.com

where the chaplains can get information and ideas on how to set up prayer spaces in their schools. I gave them some feedback on my experience with Prayer Spaces; how they appeal to students

and how effective they are in schools. Some students shared with me how they connected with God for the first time through prayer spaces. Others expressed how the prayer spaces allowed them to be honest with God.

It is hoped to introduce Prayer Spaces as part of the Ember Leadership Programme at Ovoca Manor and Faith Development Programmes for Secondary Schools.

- Annette Evans
Alpha - Youth Midlands Worker



Primary Schools & Parishes

By Grace Deegan - Co-ordinator



2014 has been a whirlwind of exploring, piloting and experiencing God do incredible things, big and small. The German theologian Meister Eckhart said of a new beginning:

And suddenly you know: It's time to start something new and trust the magic of beginnings.

This past year has brought with it many new developments that I am grateful beyond measure for. Let me tell you about two very exciting ones...

THE PENTECOST PROJECT

One of the highlights of my time in Scripture Union to date was the Pentecost Project. This project brought life and joy to a wider initiative happening during the feast of Pentecost in the Christian calendar. 'Together in One Place' was an event during the week of Pentecost, centered on Scripture and Ecumenism for all churches in the greater Dublin area. Scripture Union was asked to develop a project that engaged primary aged children in schools during this event.

Due to an existing partnership in Tallaght, we decided to work in this area, working across four DEIS 1 schools. 260 children were involved; 11 classes all together. Each class designed and narrated their own class comic book based on Acts 2. What made this project unique and appealing was not only the sheer excitement of designing a comic book but getting to work with the well-known children's



author and graphic illustrator Alan Nolan who worked with them over a series of five workshops. The workshops involved a comprehensive overview of Pentecost and a class led project around their interpretation of the events. This used their imaginations involving characters like talking mice, fierce roman soldiers and passionate followers of Jesus. The winning class had their comic published, attended an exhibition evening and a display of all their work as well as providing copies of their comic for everyone in their entire School.



PRIMARY

There was also a class party for every class that participated.



CAIRDE RETREATS

Cairde Retreats (primary school retreats) are a wonderful part of our work with children. These retreats have seen the relationships between schools, parishes and Scripture Union blossom. Working with children in 5th class for a day retreat in Ovoca Manor we then follow on with 'It's Your Move' in 6th class.

During 6th class they also attend an overnight in Ovoca Manor. These retreats are developing with clear topics that this age-group are facing. The parish/church can then continue this work on through local faith based youth work beyond primary school. We are excited to

see more schools participate in Cairde, placing value in a programme that meets the holistic needs of children and provides them with confidence, team work, spiritual development and fun to take with them from primary school onto the next stage of their lives.

- Grace Deegan
Primary & Parish Co-ordinator

The Principal of East Wall School had this to say about their Cairde experience:

“ The trip to Ovoca was simply fantastic. The pupils were immersed in the beautiful natural environment of the Manor and this freedom had such a positive impact on them. I thought the spiritual message they received was communicated in such a natural, practical and meaningful way and the two messages of a sense of purpose and the power of our words were so in tune with the lives of children and teenagers today. ”

- Niall Heneghan
Principal - St. Joseph's Co-ed. Primary

For more information on Scripture Union's work with Primary School aged children email Grace Deegan at grace.deegan@scriptureunion.ie



“...the combination of discussion and activity allows students to engage with the Bible passages with more than just their minds.”

ADVENTURE SCHOOL RETREATS AT OVOCA MANOR

FEATURES



School retreats at Ovoca Manor continue to grow at an exciting pace! In 2012 we had 577 students coming through the gates, 2013 saw greater than a 100% increase to 1211 students and in 2014 we've seen another fantastic increase to 1650 students through the Manor gates.

An increase in numbers sounds very inspiring, but even more exciting for us is the reality that behind each number is a person - and each one of these young people have been given an opportunity to explore and hear about the love of God.

So how is this done? And what does an



Adventure Retreat at Ovoca Manor look like?

Both our day retreats and our overnight residential retreats include a stimulating combination of: Outdoor Activities, Multimedia Presentations, Discussions and Reflections. As a team we are particularly focused on continuing to develop the concept of "Spiritual Debriefs" - This is the idea of using the Outdoor Activities



around the Manor grounds to bring Bible truths to life by guiding a discussion about the Outdoor Activity the students have just completed.

For example - we often use the Low Ropes Activity Session to teach about God's Grace or an Archery Session to help students gain more of an understanding about Sin and Perfection. The combination of discussion and activity allows students to engage with the Bible passages with more than just their minds.

It has been exciting to hear of the impact that this is having. This autumn one of our

instructors, Jasper Chisnall shared that after a Low Ropes Session based on the theme of Grace - where the only way to complete the challenge was for the students to receive a free gift, the group asked not to do more activities but wanted instead to continue the discussion about God's Grace and how it impacts our lives. That's what it's all about - fun activities that bring about opportunities to share about God. Often difficult Biblical truths can be communicated in a non-threatening and tangible way through the outdoors as young people are intrigued enough to ask the questions themselves rather than being preached at.

It is this aspect of Ovoca Manor's Adventure Spiritual Retreats which makes us a unique setting for schools to bring their students to. Some recent feedback from St. Conleth's College was: "It has been received as their best retreat in 6 years in the school..." We hope and pray that this exciting mix of Outdoor Activity and God will continue to challenge the students in a way that will lead more young people to saying yes to God.

**- Steve Mcilhenny
Activities Co-ordinator**

“...the group asked not to do more activities but wanted instead to continue the discussion about God's Grace and how it impacts our lives”



**Sean Mallon Chaplain at
Mt Anville said this:**

All I can say to you is THANK YOU! Thank you for having AMAZING people work for Scripture Union!

Thank you for opening Ovoca Manor to youth and putting such a great space to great use! Thank you for the professional, kind, caring, efficient & FUN staff you have working in Ovoca Manor!

Thank you for reaching out to Africa and bringing Sazi & Zola to Ireland! Merci Beaucoup for Elodie and her SMILE! Thank you for Jasper, Owen, and Steve! Thank you for the always upbeat and ever-so-helpful Mairead in the office at Ovoca Manor!

Thank you for Catherine in the kitchen and for all the other men and women who helped to make our 6th year retreat – In the words of our own students... the best retreat we have ever had!

“ In the words of our own students... the best retreat we have ever had! ”

If that doesn't clarify it enough, let me just say how impressed I was myself with the experience of an overnight Ovoca Manor Retreat. We were treated with absolute kindness and respect and delicious food – and MOST IMPORTANTLY – the JOY of the LORD! You have a great team working there, led by Steve – a true gentleman – and filled with the Holy Spirit.

We look forward to next year already!



FAITHFEST

In partnership with the Dublin Diocese

We have experienced such wonderful partnership over the last few years. This year we are celebrating a new retreat with the Dublin Diocese. Faithfest has been a brilliant event for secondary school students run a few times during the year. This retreat was dreamed up by the Faithfest working group and we were delighted to work alongside them to bring it to life. Thirty young people came to Ovoca Manor for a 3 day retreat in exploring faith, what it means to be a 'misfit' and called by Jesus. The young people's enthusiasm was a strong indicator that this retreat will now be an annual event and will grow in numbers. Some young people told us they learned that God is always there, he loves us no matter what and used words like breath-taking, family, different and fun to describe their experience.

- Grace Deegan

Our Faithfest Retreat

After nearly a year in the planning and for some of us several years of dreaming, we headed off on a very wet Tuesday afternoon on the 28th of October in a bus from Clonliffe College. As we have run FaithFest events in Clonliffe some of the young people from different parishes knew each other already and were keeping seats for one another on the bus. Everyone was ticked off the list and off we went. It was quiet enough on the way down in the bus and after a pickup in Tallaght of two more for our gang we headed to Wicklow.

The walk up the hill with the suitcases was tough but the view from the Manor at the top was worth it. We were so organised that we arrived an hour early!! Even so we were made very welcome and everyone settled into their assigned rooms and made up their beds. The weather had lifted and we were able to go for a night walk which was a little scary but great fun and we ended up at a bonfire lit by one of the team members. The sky was full of stars and we sang songs and laughed. If you're happy and you know it stomp your feet! Right into a huge puddle!!

The three days were full of chat, fun and laughter. We flew like birds on zip lines, listened to Dan and Grace sharing about a





feeling of not belonging, being a ' misfit', we climbed high to the leap of faith!!, targeted our sins in archery, played weird hockey with the smallest ball in the world! We ate wonderful food and stayed a while in the prayer space.

“ We laid on the floor allowing the music from Without Walls to flow over us and bring us into God’s presence. ”

We made really good friends and faced our fears. Some of us got hardly any sleep.

We discovered that we belong to each other and to God and that even though we may feel like we don’t fit in we are God’s misfits and sometimes it’s good to stand out from the crowd. We enjoyed every minute. Roll on next year!!

Thank you Scripture Union for giving us this opportunity and for valuing the faith of our young people.

**- Mairin Keegan
Parish Pastoral Worker
Aughrim Street Dublin**

A young girl Darina from Dublin’s Inner City composed a wonderful lengthy poem to communicate her experience and here is an excerpt:

**Another talk was given on how we
forgive and accept people
How God loves and cares for us and
we show forgiveness towards others
Really helpful songs were sung
There we all stood swinging side to
side
It somehow felt like we were all
united on the inside.
Being fed like kings again we all had
something to take
Be it a memory that will not be
forgotten
Or a quote that will stand by people
no matter what will happen
Or a new friend whom you will have
great story’s to share.**



4 NEW SU INTERNS



ELODIE

Who are you and where are you from?

Hey! My name is Elodie and I'm 20. I'm from France, but I've been living in Switzerland.

Why did you choose to intern with SU Ireland?

After school I decided I wanted to do a Gap Year. I choose SU because I volunteer with and love SU Switzerland and wanted to help an SU overseas

What excites you most about the year?

I love to be able to work with lots of different people groups, I've learnt loads because of the diversity. I also really enjoy the maintenance side of this Gap Year. We painted a whole room in the Manor and it's so encouraging to see the change, we can be proud of our work :)

What challenges have you encountered this year and how can people be praying for you?

To live with 3 other people was really challenging at the beginning but I learned a lot about myself and how to show love throughout tension and difficulties.

Furthermore I'm learning how to trust God in every situation even when it seems impossible. But God is good and he's taking care of me and I've been really blessed this year so far!



ZOLA

Tell us about yourself?

Hey, My name is Zola Nyembezi and I come from Kwa-Zulu-Natal in South Africa.

Why did you choose SU Ireland?

The news of the Internship came at the right time for me; I was going through a rough time in my spiritual walk, I felt like I was stuck and I was looking for a way to grow closer to God. I was working with SU back

“ I really have a passion for working with young people that want to stand strong in their faith. ”



home and my Regional director had mentioned it, I literally applied 2 days before all the applications had to be in. It was really the first time that I felt God giving me such a clear answer to prayer.

Any highlights so far?

Having the freedom to speak about my faith and the journey God has taken me through, to young people like me, is exciting. I really have a passion for working with young people that want to stand strong in their faith.

How can we pray for you?

Being far from home is never easy; in my case it was the first time I have ever lived without my mom. Pray for strength and courage as I continue on with the last 6 months.

OWEN



So you're an Irishman?

Yes! I'm Owen O'Neill and I'm From Wicklow Town.

How did you hear about the Internship?

I originally heard about the SU Internship through a good friend of mine from my church,

and after visiting the manor, especially seeing the new high ropes courses, I decided OM was where I wanted to spend the next 10 months!

“ ...seeing the new high ropes courses, I decided OM was where I wanted to spend the next 10 months! ”

What have you enjoyed doing?

It's been great getting to work with the kids on the weekend camps. I still remember the excitement I felt coming to Ovoca Manor for the first time when I was in primary school and the fun I had! So I really can't wait to take more of a lead role in 2015.

What has challenged you?

For me, school retreats are the most challenging. I get nervous standing up in front of young people that are not that much younger than me and telling them about my life and the experiences I've had. I get so caught up in what they're thinking while I'm speaking and find it hard to feel comfortable in front of them, so that's something that people could be praying for. But that's the great thing about a challenging internship. I'm getting to build up this confidence now with a team who will be honest with me and encourage me.



Sazi

Who are you and where are you from?

Hello everybody my name is Saziso Minenhle Ngcobo and I'm from Pietermaritzburg, South Africa.

Why did you come all the way to serve with SU Ireland?

I came to share with the young people of Ireland what God has done in my life, and also to allow God to teach me through this year and develop my relationship with him. I wanted to serve with an organisation that helps young people to know God and how to walk with Him. God made it possible for me through SU SA and our regional director Mr Garland Sam. During my Trendsetter year I heard about the SU Ireland Internship and it was something that grabbed my heart and it became clear that God was leading me to apply. I remember at a prayer event hearing God whisper to my heart saying "Yes I want you to go". The rest is history, God paved the way!

What excites you the most about this year?

One thing that really excites me are days we wake up knowing there is a retreat to facilitate. I love having conversations with the young people and telling them my story and then after seeing them open up to us with what's happening in their lives and how they hope that their situation can change. This excites me because you can see their hunger for God and His help.

“ I wanted to serve with an organisation that helps young people to know God and how to walk with Him ”

What challenges have you encountered this year and how can people be praying for you?

I have been challenged with how I communicate my testimony to young people. Sometimes I find myself relying on my own strength and I would appreciate prayer as I seek to lean and trust in the Lord at all times and His way.

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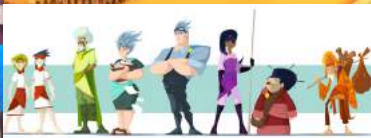
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