

## Happy times at Suzanne House

**Suzanne House is Ireland's first respite home for children with life limiting medical conditions.**

We would like to thank our donors - your support has made an enormous difference to the children, and their families, you make the Suzanne House a home away from home respite service.

The latest project is the creation of an accessible playground for the children.

The playground will provide the children with a space in which to savour the outdoors and enrich their senses through touch and feel. It will also give them the chance to play with their siblings and friends. Outdoor activities are vital for the children's socialization and make a huge difference to their time at Suzanne House.

Looking ahead, Suzanne House has an ambitious plan to develop a new living space for the children.

At present, the children's living space is broken into two rooms. With this in mind, the vision is to make an open space which will have four individual spaces for the children, along with a nurses' station, a new toilet and a utility room. The new development will also allow the children room for floor play, music classes and physiotherapy.

We look forward to updating you on the new playground, plans for the new living space and more in the next issue. Thank you again for your continued support, from all at Suzanne House.



Keith, Leon (aged 10) & Ciara



### *Christmas Greetings*

*The Brothers and staff wish to convey their personal greetings and thanks to our many friends and benefactors.*

*May the infant Jesus bless you and yours with every happiness during Christmas and the New Year.*

## Love Thy neighbour

Over 140 tenants of the Saint John of God Housing Association were invited to join our International Neighbour's Day events. Our tenants are all people with an intellectual disability supported and housed by Saint John of God.

The event was a great success. 30 tenants and neighbours turned up for a Coffee Morning and some cakes in Gleann na hEorna, Tallaght in Dublin while in Shankill, Dublin 92 tenants of Elvira Close, Crinken and their families and friends got together. In Shankill the event started with a 'Litter Pickup' around the local park. This was followed by Afternoon Tea, graciously supplied by K.C. Peaches, where our tenants were joined by some of the residents of Saint Joseph's Nursing Home. The day ended with neighbours and friends dancing the afternoon away.

## Brother Fintan Brennan Whitmore OSB

16th June 1952—19th June 2017

Our former Provincial Brother Fintan sadly passed away on 19 June just a few days after celebrating his 65th birthday. A native of Templeogue, Dublin, William Brennan Whitmore entered the Order in 1968. He worked at Saint John of God Hospital, Stillorgan, Co. Dublin before beginning his nursing studies. Brother Fintan studied at the Order's International College, Rome from 1974 to 1976 and then studied for the priesthood in St. Patrick's College, Maynooth from where he was ordained in 1980.



During his terms as Provincial Fintan set himself a goal to make Pastoral Care a priority in the Province. This he did with great success; Pastoral Care teams are now an integral part of training in the services provided by the Order.

As a Hospitaller he was driven by the example of Saint John of God and was imbued by his spirit and proclaimed it at every opportunity. He deeply studied and reflected on the life of our Founder and this he shows so admirably in his writing and publication of the four volumes of the Hospitaller Prayer Series.

May you Rest in Peace.

## HEAR US NOW

Hear us Now is a short documentary based on what real inclusion means to each individual with intellectual disability and their families. Along with the importance of having meaningful work with pay and being afforded the same opportunities with freedom, choice and respect to live independent lives in their communities.

The documentary was put together with the help of the service users, their parents and the support of South Kerry Development Partnership and Kerry Education Training Board. The documentary has already been watched over 200 times on [www.sjogfoundation.ie](http://www.sjogfoundation.ie)



*Clare Rohan enjoying the launch of  
Hear Us Now documentary*

## SOMETHING FISHY IN FENIT

Last Summer kicked off with a bit of sea angling for our clients that use the Dominick Street service in Tralee. Not known for its abundance of easily caught fish, Fenit can sometimes surprise and provide plenty of excitement for hopeful anglers. This was certainly the case for Eugene O'Sullivan when he felt a tug on the line!!! To Eugene's delight, a beautifully patterned Undulate Ray was on the end of his line. Not to harm the fish, Eugene was using barbless hooks. This meant that the hook could be easily removed from the fish's mouth and it could be quickly returned to the sea without putting her (it was a she...) through too much stress.



*Eugene O'Sullivan,  
Catherine Conway  
and Áine Murphy  
with Eugene's  
Undulate Ray*

## Message from the Provincial/Chairman of the Board of Sponsors of Saint John of God Hospitaller Ministries

### Br Donatus Forkan OH

My dear friends as many of you may know the Hospitaller Order of Saint John of God owes its origins to Saint John of God (1495-1550). The first Brothers of the Order came from France to Ireland in 1877 and I am delighted to say we have continued from that day to this, the year of 2017, to serve the society in which we live in the Christian and welcoming manner of Saint John of God.

The year-end provides me with the opportunity to share with you very briefly – I have to be brief as there are so many good things happening it would take several pages to even list them – many of which were made possible only because of the generosity of our benefactors and supporters, for which we are deeply grateful.

Just a flavour of some of the new initiatives that took place in the past year are included in our newsletter.

I hope this gives you an insight into the great things that are happening to help transform lives. Our pursuit of this goal however, would be very limited without your support. On behalf of all of us, especially those who benefit from your generosity I thank you wholeheartedly.

In the words of Saint John of God...

**“What you have done is recorded in the Book of Life”.**

We wish you a peaceful, happy and blessed Christmas. We pray that 2018 will bring you and your loved ones, health, happiness and peace, and thank you.



## IRISH AMBASSADOR VISITS MALAWI OPENING



Ireland's outgoing Ambassador to Malawi Ms. Áine Hearn was joined by her British counterpart High Commissioner Holly Tett in the official opening of the new Saint John of God Centre in the capital Lilongwe. The Centre has a psychiatric hospital, an addiction unit and also manages the outreach programmes directed at children and adults with intellectual disabilities. The two diplomats are photographed at the opening with the Provincial Brother Donatus and two Directors, Brother Michael and Brother Ronan. The Centre was built with donations from all over Ireland as well as support from the Irish government through the Misesan Cara agency.

## SAINT JOHN OF GOD FOUNDATION

The fundraising office of Saint John of God is having a name change. We are now called Saint John of God Foundation.

The goal of the Saint John of God Foundation is to provide a home away from home for children with life limiting medical conditions in Suzanne House, help people with intellectual disabilities live independent lives in the community and provide mental health and well-being services for children and adults in Ireland. For more information go to our new website [www.sjogfoundation.ie](http://www.sjogfoundation.ie) where you can see the ongoing work that your generosity enables us to do in all our services.

## Still REACHing for the Stars after 25 Years

In 1992 the Saint John of God Brothers, through your donations, started the REACH programme. REACH is a 26 week vocational training programme for people recovering from some type of Mental Health difficulty. REACH helps people back into fulltime education or to find a fulfilling job. The training they receive helps them regain hope, confidence and learn some new work skills. Everyone who qualifies receives a certificate from Dun Laoghaire Education and Training Board.

Hundreds of people have graduated from the programme over 25 years and because it has been so successful it has attracted new funding from different sources to keep going.

Hundreds of people have been helped because of the donations made to Saint John of God by our supporters. New programmes are starting today to support people with mental health challenges. These are only possible because of our supporters.

# Meeting The President

In Dundalk, Co. Louth the Blackrock Park Committee and volunteers had their flag raising ceremony on 1st September to hoist their new Green Flag. The flag is awarded by An Taisce in recognition of the environmental management of the park. The group is made up of service users from around Dundalk and family and friends and meets every Thursday morning in the park to carry out important work such as planting, watering and weeding. The group also helped brighten the park in the winter months by painting 160 stones to go around the park's flower garden.

On August 6th the group went on a trip to Aras an Uachtarain and met with President Higgins. Afterwards they went to the Phoenix Park Visitors Centre and Phoenix Park Victoria Walled Garden where they had lunch, a great day was had by all.



The Blackrock Park Committee & Volunteers visit Aras an Uachtarain



Cllr. Colm Markey, Louth County Council, Gabrielle Reneghan, Jackie Hamill, Mairead O'Hare, Donna Cilly & Kelly Delaney



The group with pupils from St Francis National School and St Oliver's National School both in Blackrock village Co Louth

## Leaving a Charitable Gift in Your Will - A Lasting Legacy

Leaving a legacy in your Will to Saint John of God will ensure we are always here to care for those who need us most....



A simple way to help Saint John of God to continue its important work in the community is to leave a gift in your Will. Every gift is gratefully appreciated and no gift is too small.

If you would like our leaflet on how to leave a legacy please contact us by

Email: [legacy@sjog.ie](mailto:legacy@sjog.ie) or

Phone 01 2882231

## TAX RELIEF FORM

Please return your tax claim form so that we can claim from the Government whether you are PAYE or self-assessed

If you change your address - Please let us know  
[www.sjogfoundation.ie](http://www.sjogfoundation.ie)



## EDITORIAL BOARD

John Fleming, Susan Knott, Brother Finnian Gallagher O.H.

All communications to:

John Fleming, Editor Manager, P.O. Box 4, Blackrock, Co. Dublin.

Tel: (01) 288 2231 International: +353 1 288 2231

E-mail: [donations@sjog.ie](mailto:donations@sjog.ie) Web: [www.sjogfoundation.ie](http://www.sjogfoundation.ie)

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