

Write-a-Book Awards 2013



Over 1600 teachers, parents and pupils converged on County Arms Hotel, Birr on Wednesday 15th May last and on The Heritage Hotel Portlaoise on Monday 27th May to celebrate the publication of over 1,560 books by 1622 pupils from thirty two schools in the Midlands in the Write-a-Book project. This project is co-ordinated by Laois Education Centre in partnership with Laois County Enterprise Board and is one which is enthusiastically received by both pupils and teachers in the many schools in the catchment of Laois Education Centre which provides support to the educational partners in the counties of Laois, parts of Offaly and North Tipperary.



The Laois 'Write-a-Book' project which is in its fifteenth year, links the curricular areas of Visual Arts and English, while also prompting integration with practically every other curricular area for teacher and pupil. It is a very valuable tool for teachers as it allows

students engage in the process of writing which includes planning, drafting, editing, re-drafting, publishing & binding. When books are completed, they are swapped with those of other schools, so pupils can experience the writings of other similarly aged children. It gives pupils the opportunity to explore different writing genres, allows them examine language and structure and enables them develop techniques and skills and ultimately see their writing valued.



Guest of Honour on the night, Jim O'Brien author, script writer, poet, and journalist complimented Laois Education Centre on the very valuable project and commented on the efficient organisation of the project. He said the books were a great compliment to all the teachers, pupils and parents involved and encouraged students to continue writing and not to consider this as a once off activity. He also said that it was not just the number of books published that was significant; it was the quality of the work of all involved. Jim entertained all present with two short stories on 'overcoming fear' and 'having a positive approach in life' which he had written especially for the Write a Book Awards and his own version of Cinderella.

Jim Enright, Director of Laois Education Centre said the Write-a-Book project is one of the most exciting, and best supported projects that Laois Education Centre is involved with. Jim explained that the Write a Book Project enables primary school children to become real authors as they create their own books by actively engaging in the processes of writing, composing, constructing, designing, illustrating and presenting their work to a wide audience. Jim went on to say that 'we are honoured this evening to be in the presence of so many fine young writers' and commented on the quality of the books which represented a very diverse range of topics all of which were beautifully presented and artistically illustrated. 'Each year we receive entries from schools that have taken part in this project over many years but I am delighted to report that each year also we have schools that take part for the very first time. This ensures the continuation of the project into the future.' Jim also stated that the Write a Book project is very much in keeping with the National Literacy Strategy and will serve to improved literacy standards in our region.

Jim thanked his colleagues in the Education Centre particularly Yvonne Nolan and Claire Maher who had done enormous work in coordinating and organizing the vast quantity of entries. He thanked Laois County Enterprise Board for their continued support of the project and also thanked the teachers and principals who supported their pupils, read

other class books and helped with recommending merit and highly commended awards. He also thanked the pupils and their family members and had a special word of thanks for the representatives of the Laois Education Centre Management. Finally Jim O'Brien was thanked for his very significant contribution to the success of the evening.

125 Merit awards and 310 highly commended awards were presented over the two evenings by Jim O'Brien and each of the 1622 participating pupils received a certificate of participation as well as a Write a Book pack.