

Church of Ireland Youth Department

Seconder: Ms Hilda Connolly

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In 2021, at the tail end of lockdowns and Covid restrictions, I was nominated onto the Church of Ireland Youth Department's Central Board, and have witnessed the amount of 'behind the scenes' work that CIYD do.

I think it is safe to say that on behalf of all the Diocesan Youth Officers across the country, that we would be lost without the team in CIYD – Simon Henry, Steve Grasham and Barbara Swann.

The commitment that the team have on keeping the Diocesan Youth Officers up to speed and up-to-date with training days and retreats to keep us focused and energised does not go unnoticed.

Simon and Steve are always on hand or at the end of the phone if a favour is needed or help with something is required.

Their encouragement, support and help are phenomenal. And they do it without complaining that they might have to travel to the remotest parts of Cork, at the other end of the country, to speak at our annual Confirmation Retreat weekend or our past trips out to Cape Clear Island!

The resources and tools that they make available are of enormous help to us and the youth groups in our areas.

Fuel 1 and 2, are still circulating. This is a Bible study aid on Mark and Luke. The Prayer Booklet, which I hand out at our Confirmation Retreat Weekend.

And more recently, the Exalt app, which is a prayer app, in partnership with Missional Generation. It is a huge hit with the young people especially as they can use their own phones and can use a VR headset to bring certain parts to life.

On reading the diocesan youth reports, beginning on page 280, the level of support is evident and very much appreciated by all throughout every diocese.

I can only speak on behalf of the young people in Cork, Cloyne and Ross, with regards the opportunities they have achieved through CIYD funding and events, but I am pretty sure that it would be agreed by other dioceses too.

Some of these opportunities are:

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1. The Youth Mental Health First Aid Training, which is imperative for our young people, especially after the previous few years. And I know that many of the DYOs and youth workers availed of this very informative and intense training but said it really equipped them in an area that they might have been nervous to deal with.
2. The Youth Forum in Dublin City North Hotel at the end of January, is one of the highlights of the year for some of our young people. The luxury of sleeping in a nice hotel bed instead of the usual church hall floor probably entices the group too! But our group really look forward to meeting with people they have met the previous years, but also to be given the chance to voice their own ideas and opinions on the theme and their beliefs and views on their church life and journey. This triennium's theme of mental health and their faith journey is of particular interest as it is a very common thread among our young people.
3. The Aurora Course in Christian Youth Leadership, which trains and develops youth leaders in their leadership skills and Christian development. Two of our youth leaders completed the last Aurora Course, which they hugely benefitted from, but they were enabled to complete this course by being granted funds by CIYD from the Young Leaders in Ministry Fund
4. And last summer a small group of over 18s came on board to help CIYD's Connect Café at Summer Madness, which is a venue specifically for youth leaders. Another huge opportunity for some of our Cork people, especially seeing as some of them had never gone that far up the country before and actually thought they would need their passport! They are still talking about Summer Madness and the links and friendships they made through it, meeting other youth leaders in the café and swapping ideas and stories. And not to mention the Big Top experience, with the very entertaining and enthusiastic host Simon Henry and many other inspirational speakers. Despite the fact that they were there to help out and work, they really benefitted from it and enjoyed it. Thank you to CIYD for encouraging and making it possible for them.

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And on that note, we would like to take this opportunity to also thank our President Bishop Pat Storey, our Chairperson Mrs Brigid Barrett, and all the members of our Executive Committee and Central Board and again the staff of the Church of Ireland Youth Department, Simon, Steve and Barbara.

And not forgetting the youth leaders and Diocesan Youth Officers for their trojan work and commitment to the young people of Ireland.

Your Grace, I am pleased to second the report of the Church of Ireland Youth Department.