

Swiss students bound for Kingdom under North Kerry-Geneva convention

Genevan school heads visit at the outset of new studying abroad programme for international students

By SINEAD KELLEHER

A DELEGATION of deans from five different schools in Geneva, Switzerland paid a visit to schools in North Kerry in recent weeks, as part of plans to bring international students to secondary schools in the region. Student Programmes Ireland Ltd (SPIL) in conjunction with the EL&M of the Education Department, Geneva Switzerland have launched a major study abroad programme for Swiss students coming to Ireland to study English.

As part of this representatives from schools in Geneva, as well as the programme director from EL&M, visited a selection of secondary schools who work with SPIL in Ireland to evaluate them for their students who will avail of the new programme this year. They visited Listowel Community College and St Joseph's Secondary School, Ballybunion. Both schools will welcome students this year.

Each secondary student studying in Geneva is obliged to complete a year abroad to study a foreign language. Each year most students are required to find the destination, schools and accommodation themselves.

SPIL & EL&M have been working on a funded project that will allow students to choose Ireland as a destination for study, but school placement and accommodation are included as part of the programme by SPIL.

The programme has been very well received to date with over 45 Swiss students enrolled to attend secondary school in Ireland in September. It is now hoped to further expand the programme.

The delegation also took time to visit the Swiss Embassy in Dublin and were delighted to meet with Ambassador Benedict Gubler and his wife Clethe.

The group were also delighted to meet with Sean Kelly MEP



Members of the delegation at St. Michael's Secondary School in Listowel with Deputy Principal Liam Hassett.

during their trip to Ireland and discussed the programme and their impressions of the Irish Education System with him.



Community unites at Easter concert

By SINEAD KELLEHER

UKRAINIAN culture was celebrated this Easter as the community in Killarney joined forces with the town's newest residents to celebrate the occasion.

An Easter party took place at the Inisfallen Hotel in Killarney, now home to more than 100 refugees, who invited local families to attend the celebration that brought together the communities and showcased the culture of the Ukraine.

Yevheniia Omelchenko and Alevyana Rutto took on the role of organising the event while the local community took part with donations of celebratory treats for the occasion.

The girls organised a concert to help acquaint local guests with Ukrainian culture and at the same time tell about the Russian aggression that Ukraine is experiencing today.

Eugenia, one of the refugees, says that through cultural diplomacy they wanted to thank all the residents of Killarney for their help to the Ukrainians by hosting the concert and to explain what is happening there today.

Eugene edited all the videos in which guests could see both the beauty of their country and the terrible consequences of the war.

"We wanted to show what country we live in, explain to the Irish why we are here and show what we have

where and why to return. We see that the Irish are madly supporting us, but they are afraid to ask about the events in Ukraine. Don't be afraid to hurt us with questions, we are ready to talk and tell everyone about everything that is happening in Ukraine," Yevheniia says

All the guests were especially moved during the performance of the song "I have no home".

The piano segment was played by amateur musician Timur, who spent two weeks in the basement of the occupied town of Irpin, near Kyiv. He miraculously escaped and is now in western Ukraine.

Timur recorded the video of the piano part on his phone and sent it to Ireland. Yevheniia performed a live guitar part at the concert and Tetyana sang. It turned into a real emotional culmination of the concert and brought together musicians from Ukraine and Ireland.

"For us Ukrainians who found ourselves in Killarney because of the war, this joint celebration with the local community is of particular importance. The first is the ability to express our gratitude for all the help we receive from various local people. Secondly, it is an opportunity to integrate and get to know each other better. We do not want to be a separate alien part of the community," concluded Natalya Krasnenkova.



ABOVE: Some of the performers raising the roof with song at the Inisfallen Hotel.

LEFT: From left, Mary O'Leary, Lisa Ni Muinteoir, Kim O'Doherty Faye O'Carroll with "Bloom" the dog and Mary O'Carroll.

Photos by Tatyana McGough