

St Raphael's host one night art exhibition bus and to promote self-esteem

by Kate Donoghue

THE staff and students of St Raphael's Special School in Celbridge put on an art exhibition in the nearby Celbridge Manor Hotel on Thursday, 24th November and there was a great turnout for the event.

Serving a dual function the event showcased the students' creative talents as well as serving as an important fundraiser for a new school bus.

"The whole idea is to promote the pupils' self-esteem," said school principal Kathy Waldron.

"And then I suppose it's a plus that we're fundraising for a new school bus."

"I'm extremely proud and I think it's a great achievement for the pupils as well, it's been a great success and a great turnout."

Students Gabriella Grieve and Robi Husain welcomed the guests to the exhibition and Alan Mahon cut the ribbon to open the event.

"It was really an interactive, creative arts night," said teacher Paula Clooney.

"It's about the students being VIPs. They are artists, every child is born an artist and they're showing how individual and creative they are. It's been such a vibrant night."

On average, students did two pieces of artwork each which were professionally framed and displayed and available for purchase.

"We worked with Images Company from Donegal. They did the framing and set up the exhibition."

"We couldn't have done it really without the support of the team in St Raphael's school and families and community pulling together. The hotel has been very supportive too."

While the main event was the exhibition of the students' work, there was also an auction of some professional work, a variety of stalls and activities and a raffle of donated prizes.

Students from NUI Maynooth volunteered to provide Irish dance and fancy-dress characters. There was also face-painting, a bake sale, a nail salon for children, games and sensory story-telling.

Principal Kathy Waldron said there's still some way to go before they have a new bus but it was a very positive first step.

"For a bus you're talking quite a lot of money," she said.

"But it's a beginning, it's a great start - we're so grateful."



(l-r) Isabelle O'Connor, Eva Roberts, Rianna McElroy, Fred Karimu, Natalie Rossa and Lorna Sexton (From Maynooth Students' Union).



Liam Dutton with his father Paul.



(l-r) Daniel Kiernan with Emma Galvin, Kevin Kiernan, Vimla Frachisse, Aoife Dutton, Tristan Frachisse, Bláthnaid Gibson and Aileen Frachisse.



Kerrie Percival with her husband Ken and children Charlie and Mia.



(l-r) Ashling McNiff with TD Frank O'Rourke, Deirdre Kiernan and her daughter Kate.



ABOVE: St Raphael's Principal Cathy Waldron with Audrey and Aaron Ryan.

LEFT: Marie and Vincent Lernihan with 'Scooby Doo'.