



## An Roinn Coimirce Sóisialaí Department of Social Protection

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### **Minister Burton presents the Young Social Innovators Award for the Challenge: *Making our Country More Inclusive and Poverty Free***

Joan Burton, Minister for Social Protection, today (*Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> May 2011*) presented the award for the Challenge 'Making Our Country More Inclusive and Poverty Free' to Our Lady's College, Greenhills, Drogheda, Co. Louth, the winning team of this Challenge in the 2011 Young Social Innovators Programme (for their project 'Actions Speak Louder than Words').

Speaking at the annual showcase and 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration in Dublin, Minister Burton said: "I would like to congratulate Young Social Innovators on this anniversary and the important role you have played over the last decade in motivating and giving tens of thousands of young people an educational, developmental and real life experience of social innovation and entrepreneurship each year. I would particularly like to congratulate Our Lady's College for their success and the hard work behind it."

Young Social Innovators (YSI) was founded 10 years ago by Sr. Stanislaus Kennedy and Ms. Rachel Collier. Its mission is to raise social awareness among 15-18 year olds in Ireland. YSI provides social awareness education through action and platforms for young people and those guiding them. Working in teams, students identify an issue they believe they could help to change. This issue could affect their school, community, locality or Ireland in general. They study the issue, identify ways of improving or solving it and, where they can, they put their ideas into action.

Minister Burton continued: "The finalists here are great examples of the expression 'Learning by doing'. It gives me great pleasure and hope to see young people tackling a social issue that matters to them and working in teams. I have examined the details of the six projects in this Challenge with interest and they all show immense merit and enthusiasm."

The challenge '*Making our Country More Inclusive and Poverty Free*' focuses on issues of disadvantage or exclusion – including disability, integration, inclusion, reconciliation, minority groups, special needs and intercultural issues. It also includes projects that take as a focus poverty in Ireland; understanding what it is, the causes of poverty and suggestions to address it.

The YSI showcase is an annual event and it is the biggest celebration of social activism in Ireland. It provides an opportunity for young people to show what work they have done in the year to change the world for good. This year, over 5,000 young people have taken part in Young Social Innovators in 2011 in over 350 projects in different counties in Ireland.

The Social Inclusion Division in the Department of Social Protection sponsored the award 'Making Our Country More Inclusive and Poverty Free' for the Young Social Innovators Annual Showcase and Minister Burton presented the winning team with a specially commissioned ceramic sculpture by Mr. Raymond Kinghan.

Minister Burton concluded by congratulating Young Social Innovators on their very important work over the last 10 years and wishing them well for the future. "I look forward to continuing our work together to achieve on our shared goals of the eradication of poverty and amore inclusive society."



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**Notes for Editors:**

**List of Finalists under Challenge 'Making Our Country More Inclusive and Poverty Free' Award**

<b>Organisation Names</b>	<b>Town</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Project Title</b>
Loreto Secondary School	Granges Road	Kilkenny	Taking the Risk out of Children at Risk Issue addressed in project: Campaign to keep open the Fr.McGrath Centre
Mercy Heights Secondary School	Skibbereen	Co Cork	Amazing Grace, improving the lives of children with autism in Skibbereen Issue addressed in project: Awareness of ASD (autism spectrum disorders) and improve communication for people with ASD
Newtown School	Waterford	Co. Waterford	Home Today, Gone Tomorrow Issue addressed in project: Homelessness in the local community
Our Lady's College	Greenhills	Drogheda, Co.Louth	Actions Speak Louder Than Words Issue addressed in project: Deafness
Presentation Secondary School	Ballingarry	Thurles, Co.Tipperary	Young @ Heart Issue addressed in project: Ageism
Ursuline Secondary School	Thurles	Co. Tipperary	Don't Dis-Ability Issue addressed in project: Disability

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