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***Press Release 6th May 2021***

**ENTERPRISING STUDENTS FROM KILKENNY ALL SET FOR THE VIRTUAL NATIONAL FINAL**

A formal presentation by the Cathaoirleach Cllr Andrew McGuinness took place recently whereby specially commissioned Jerpoint Glass was presented to the Kilkenny finalists in advance of the National Student Enterprise Programme Final on Friday 14th May. For the second year, the Student Enterprise Programme National Final will take place virtually with approximately 80 finalist teams logging in all over the country. The 2021 virtual National Final will be broadcasted live from Croke Park via the Student Enterprise Programme Facebook and YouTube channels and will be publicly available.

In the Senior Category of the competition, Tara McGuire of Presentation Secondary School will represent Kilkenny with her mini-company ‘Slates by Tara’. Tara designs and sells decorative hand painted artwork on 100-year-old recycled Blue Bangor slates. In the Junior Category, the finalists are Noah Cahill, Ian McDonald and Thomas Deegan from Coláiste Éamann Rís, Callan with their business ‘Parcel Trust’ which manufactures high-quality secure outdoor storage boxes designed particularly with online deliveries in mind.

In the ‘Most Creative Business Idea’ competition which is open to senior students, Rachel Brennan of Loreto Secondary School is the finalist with her Covid-19 related business idea “Counting after Covid”. Rachel’s idea involved the development of customised framed money box containing imagery to motivate people to save for trips, adventures, etc. post Covid.

Meanwhile, Mark Srouji also from Coláiste Éamann Rís represents Kilkenny in the ‘My Entrepreneurial Journey’competition at Intermediate level. Mark interviewed Anne Neary of Ryeland House Cookery School as his case study and also outlined his entrepreneurial journey having set up a business called “Mark’s Productions” making themed table centrepieces. Mark is no stranger to the National Finals; last year, himself and his twin brother Evan were successful in winning a Special Merit Award in the Intermediate Category of the main Student Enterprise Programme.

Cathaoirleach Cllr Andrew McGuiness congratulated the county winners and said “our national finalists are excellent ambassadors for the programme and we want to wish them the very best of luck at the Nationals Final taking place on 14th May. The Student Enterprise Programme is aimed at fostering a more enterprising culture for start-ups and to encourage more young people to start a business. By participating in the programme, students develop practical business experience and learn what it is really like to identify a business idea and set up a business”.

Fiona Deegan, Head of Enterprise with Local Enterprise Office Kilkenny acknowledged the support provided by the schools involved saying: “thanks to the support and back-up provided by all of the second level schools who participated this year with a total of 538 students from 15 schools taking part throughout the County. We would like to acknowledge the advice and encouragement of the teachers involved, particularly this year, as remote learning became the new school classroom environment”. She added “the programme encourages more students to consider entrepreneurship as a future career choice, with Local Enterprise Office Kilkenny on hand to help.”

The enterprise education initiative is funded by the Government of Ireland through Enterprise Ireland and delivered by the 31 Local Enterprise Offices in local authorities throughout the country. Further information on the Student Enterprise Programme is available from www.studententerprise.ie and by searching **#studententerprise** on social media.

ENDS

**For further information, please contact Local Enterprise Office Kilkenny**

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**National Finalists**

**Senior Level**

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| **Award** | **Business**  | **Student(s)**  | **School**  |
| **Winner** **1st Senior Category**  | **Slates by Tara:** Handmade slate art for indoors and outdoors made with recycled 100-year-old Blue Bangor slates.  | Tara McGuire | Presentation Secondary School  |
| **1st Creative Business Idea Senior Competition** | **Counting after Covid:** Customised framed money box containing imagery to motivate you to save for the things you want to do after Covid such as going on trips, adventures and doing other activities.  | Rachel Brennan | Loreto Secondary School |

**National Finalists**

**Intermediate Level – My Entrepreneurial Journey Competition**

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| **Award** | **Business Details** | **Student(s)**  | **School**  |
| **Winner** **My Entrepreneurial Journey Competition** | Mark interviewed Anne Neary of Ryeland House Cookery School and also outlined his entrepreneurial journey having set up a business called ‘Mark’s Productions’, making themed table centrepieces for different occasions. | Mark Srouji | Coláiste Éamann Rís |

**Junior Level**

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| **Award** | **Business Name**  | **Student(s)**  | **School**  |
| **Winner** **1st Junior  Category** | **Parcel Trust:** High-quality multi-functional secure outdoor storage boxes for online deliveries.         | Noah Cahill, Ian McDonald, Thomas Deegan | Coláiste Éamann Rís |