

# newslocal: special trip

## Special needs children enjoy a week away in County Galway

A NUMBER of young people with special needs from Sligo were among those who enjoyed a recent outing to Kilcuan, Clarinbridge, Co. Galway for a week away from the routine of life.

The group of 14 came from counties Sligo, Leitrim and Cavan on the outing organised by the Sligo branch of IHCPT, the group which brings young people with special needs to Lourdes. Mary Clancy of Rathcormac was the principal organiser.

There in the idyllic setting of the grounds of Kilcormac Castle all the challenges of life were left aside for these few days. They were joined by thirty four volunteers from all parts of the region, giving one, two or three days and indeed a full week of

their time and holidays to spend time and cater for those with special needs. The volunteers spanned all age groups from Leaving cert students to retired persons for whom this week was a most enriching experience also.

Days were spent walking through the gardens and wooded grounds of the Brothers of Charity site, or at the quay at Kinvara, for some, they took in the sites of the arts festival, at other times sharing in occupational therapies indoors. A day was spent enjoying times past at Bunratty Castle and Folkpark, taking in the exquisite Cliffs of Moher and the Burren of Clare. Each night a different entertainment programme was laid on as carer and young people alike danced the night away.

Fr. Jason Murphy, who assisted Mary Clancy with the trip said: "Throughout the week most importantly friendships were formed, not forced but naturally made in time spent together, laughing and joking, sharing each hour together as the week passed quickly by. Prayer and meditation was part of our daily routine to centre ourselves and reflect on the day's happenings.

"For all who spent the week in Kilcuan, it is akin to a retreat, away

from the hustle and bustle of every day life and all that this life in its living throws our way. Of course life presents a lot more challenges to those with special needs and with news of An Bord Snip Nua and economic recession, we can look forward to less funding from Government and greater dependence on volunteerism to enhance the lives of those with special needs".

Fr. Murphy said weeks such as those experienced in Kilcuan could not happen without the generosity of many. "These people give of their time, their money and effort to make it happen. People who give whatever they can to the I.H.C.P.T. on their fundraising night in November and throughout the year. Businesses who donate bread, dairy products, fruit, vegetables, eggs, baking products of all sorts to ease the financial burden of running such a week. I hope that in your giving, you will be rewarded a hundred-fold, giving when it is not easy to give. Long may your generosity continue to enrich the lives of people with needs dependent on us".

• The 14th annual fundraising I.H.C.P.T. social will be held on Friday November 20 in the Sligo Southern Hotel. Music is by Jack Ramsey.



SMILES: Everyone enjoyed the week



→ Fr. Andrew Tully



CLOSE: A great sense of camaraderie was evident



HUG: One of the cares gets a big hug of appreciation.

WELCOME: Fr. Jason Murphy welcomes the youngsters from Sligo.

