

# FAMILY MATTERS



You're helping to give Ireland's most vulnerable young people a home

*Like so many others, I've been at home more than usual, these last few months. As I'm over 70, I'm considered vulnerable (although I don't feel it). I like to keep busy, so I've had a hand in putting together this newsletter for you. It comes with my thanks for your wonderful support, and my hope that your generosity will continue.*

SUMMER 2020

A REFLECTION ON OUR TIMES BY FATHER VAL:

## COMING TOGETHER... by staying apart

The Coronavirus has changed the way we live in ways we could never have anticipated. At a time when our courage and resolve has been tested, what have we learned?

During these last few weeks, many of us have felt anxious – especially those who are older or who have on-going problems with our health that put us at greater risk. Mostly, we've been able to retreat into our homes to protect ourselves and others.

From there, we've seen doctors and nurses, working on the front line, making remarkable sacrifices to save lives. They are rightly called heroes.

But many other people are working to make our lives safer.

The cleaners. The supermarket workers. The delivery teams. These are among the most poorly paid and under-appreciated people in society. Until now.

For me, hope comes from seeing people and nations pull together. For too long, wars have divided our

*continued overleaf >>>>*

**SIDE**

Coronavirus - you're helping keep children and young

How you helped Donal feel loved

Michael's story



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world and caused great suffering for families who have had to flee the bombs and bullets. Now we need each other to defeat a common enemy.

It calls to mind Jesus' prayer for unity (John 17:21) *'That they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us.'*

I also think of our boys. So many come to us never having felt safe. Their home – the world they've grown up – is as unsafe and frightening and chaotic as the whole world seems to us at this moment in time.

Over the page, I'll share some of the steps we've taken to continue our work under the restrictions. I'll also share news of some of the boys who you've taken into your heart and supported.

Thank you,



Fr. Val Collier

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SAFE AND WELL, THANKS TO YOU

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## KEEPING OUR BOYS SAFE...

>> Many families across the world have been in lockdown, spending more time together than ever before. With your support, we're keeping the boys who live at Don Bosco Care – and the social care workers who care for them – safe.

It has been a challenging time for everyone at Don Bosco Care. With your support, we're doing everything possible to continue our work, while observing the restrictions that are in place to keep everyone safe.

At the time of writing, no one – staff or boys – has been sick with the virus.

The boys still go out each day for exercise. We're doing everything possible to keep them busy for the rest of the day, with indoor games and school or college work.

We've introduced some distancing within the houses, with boys sitting apart for meals. And of course we're closed to visitors. Yet, our work goes on. The referrals are still coming in. We can't go out and meet boys in their homes, so we're having these first conversations by phone or video link.

**We know children and young people will continue to need Don Bosco Care and you through this crisis, and perhaps even more so, when it finally comes to an end.**

*Now I want to share some news about Donal. Perhaps you'll remember this young man from our letter at Christmas, which was an emotional time for Donal.*

## You helped Donal feel loved

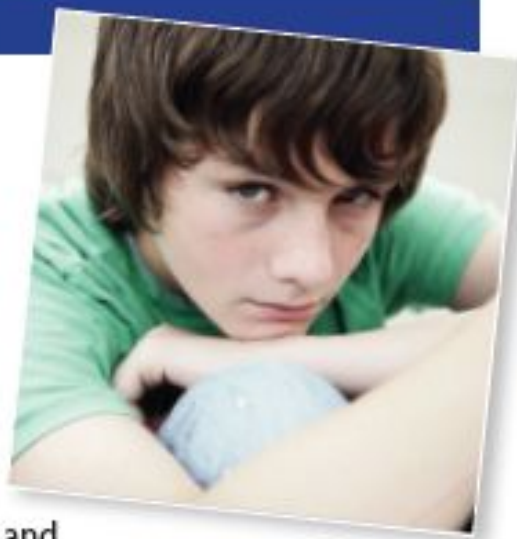
"You are just going to throw me out like everywhere else," said Donal, when we first met him. He was 14 years old and he'd had 16 previous placements with foster families or residential care. They'd all broken down.

Donal may not have believed in us, but we believed in him. With your support, the team built a relationship with him step-by-step. And at Christmas, there was a moment of transformation.

Before giving out Donal's present, our volunteer Santa talked about

what a fine young man he is.

Donal was moved to tears and, realising he has love and support he can count on, he hasn't looked back. After years out of education, he's studying for his junior certificate. After that, he plans to do an apprenticeship in carpentry.



You were there for Donal when he needed you. Now he's got a bright future ahead of him. **Thank you for your wonderful support.**

## THANK YOU for everything you give us...

... your thoughts, your prayers and your generous support.

>> Your survey answers last year have guided and inspired us. Here are some of the comments you shared.

*"It breaks my heart to hear that so many young boys come from unhappy homes. If they don't have love and care at home what chance have they? Keep up your great work!"* Teresa

*"I hope to put some young boy on the right path for his future."* Ellen

*"All children should be loved and supported. They are precious."* Celine

*"Because Don Bosco Care gives children love, hope and teaching and your results are great. God Bless."* Mary

*"You help boys who haven't had a chance in life. Your work is vitally important."* Lawrence

*I loved reading your reasons for supporting Don Bosco Care. Your goodness shines through.*

## Thank you for giving Michael a home

>> In spring, we introduced you to Michael, a boy who has experienced unspeakable tragedy in his life. He'd just arrived at Don Bosco Care. We were his last chance...

When Michael lost his baby sister, something inside him broke. His home life offered no comfort – his father was in and out of jail. His mum, who loves him dearly, couldn't care for him due to alcoholism.

Michael went from one care home to the next. A string of foster placements broke down. When he arrived at Don Bosco Care, it was supposed to be for six months. Michael wanted to then go back to his family. Sadly, he's discovered that's not going to be possible.

Angry, hurt and fearful, Michael lashed out, but it didn't have the effect he anticipated. We simply asked why he'd behaved like that, and continued to support him.

Michael is starting to put his feelings into words, and finding ways of managing his anger. Thanks to your support, there are promising signs he trusts us and sees his future with us. We hope he'll be able to start school in September.



*There's a long road ahead for Michael. With a gift today, God could help provide him with loving, patient care.*

**Don't miss out on the opportunity to share your thoughts with us today by filling in your special supporter survey and returning it with your gift.**

*Do you remember Paul from my letter at this time last year? He came to live with us after experiencing the most terrible neglect. While he was living at Don Bosco Care, he found happiness helping an older neighbour in the garden, and today he lives on a farm.*

## THE GIFT OF A NEW LIFE...

>> Many thanks to you if you were among the kind people who used our survey last summer to let us know you plan to remember Don Bosco Care in your Will. I'm so grateful.

During lockdown, I've been remembering the day in 1978 I first walked into the empty building that was to become our first home. Through the years, your generosity has given some of Ireland's most troubled children and young people the chance of a real home and a family for the first time in their lives

We wouldn't be here today if it wasn't for the people who left a gift to Don Bosco Care in their Will. At the same time as remembering their own family, they remembered boys who have no one but us.

Your kindness and your values will live on and help change the lives of future generations. Thank you!

If you'd like to know more about how to leave a legacy that transforms a young person's life – giving them love, a family and a home – please call Kevin at 01 833 6009 or email [kevin@donboscocare.ie](mailto:kevin@donboscocare.ie).



### Your beautiful messages lit up Christmas



# IT'S CROSSWORD TIME!

Have you been reading carefully?

Name

Phone

Email

**NEED A HELPING HAND?**  
You might find some of the answers in your newsletter stories.



**Want another challenge?**

When you've finished, take all the yellow highlighted letters and rearrange them to find a great quality of yours (10)

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## DOWN

- 1 Member of the crow family that has distinctive blue and black wing feathers (3)
- 2 Where the 2000 Summer Olympics were held (6)
- 4 Where Father Val finds peace (6)
- 5 The Italian city where St John Bosco spent his working life (5)
- 7 Most capped Ireland international football player (6, 5)
- 8 What Father Val's been doing in the garden (7)
- 9 Germany's capital city (6)
- 10 Best selling Irish author whose latest book is Grown Ups (6, 5)
- 11 Yellow flower used to make oil (9)
- 12 How we'll get through this challenging time (8)
- 15 The French word for five (4)

- 16 Complete St John Bosco's words "It is not enough that you love the young. They must know they are \_\_\_\_\_" (5)

## ACROSS

- 3 Mountain range between counties Limerick and Tipperary (5)
- 6 The planet that's closest to the Sun (7)
- 13 Ireland's longest river (7)
- 14 UNESCO world heritage site off the coast of County Kerry (7, 7)
- 15 The world's fastest land animal (7)
- 17 An important time of year for families and for Michael (see p3) (9)
- 18 A positive feeling we all need right now (4)
- 19 Ireland's oldest city (9)

*Please return your crossword by in the Freepost envelope provided for your chance to win a €25 One4all voucher. Answers will be posted on our website on Friday 10th July.*