



(Back, l-r): Principal Siobhan McAuley, Minister Michael Moynihan, Sean McSharry, Donna Phelan, Naoise O Cearúil TD, Aideen Shelly, Suzanne Shanley, Elaine Kilduff and Joe Price. (Front, l-r) Ben O'Toole, Guiming Zheng, Julieanna Kelly, Cara Lynch and Karen Dunne.

# Minister Michael Moynihan visits 'An Cuan' in Maynooth Community College

by Peter Stones

MINISTER of State at the Department of Education & Youth with Special Responsibility for Special Education & Inclusion, Michael Moynihan TD (FF), visited Maynooth Community College's 'An Cuan' department on Friday, 30th May.

In An Cuan, there are facilities including a kitchenette, outdoor area, sensory room, OT room, a social area and classrooms.

Following a tour of the department,

Minister Moynihan spoke to the CHAMPION about the need for enough places to become available for children by September and how the government plans to meet the ever-growing demand.

"We are on-tour today to hear first-hand what the challenges are in different schools," he said. The Minister also visited Celbridge and Donadea.

"In the last couple of months since my appointment, we have been working very hard with the National Council for Special Education and the Department of Education in relation to making sure that we have

places for every school child in September.

"We are opening 400 extra classes right across the country at both primary and post-primary level.

"We have a number of issues in relation to our special schools and we are opening five extra special schools in the country this year.

"We are working hard and we understand the need, concern, and the challenges that parents are facing and we will give not everything we have got to make sure we meet that need not only in the coming year but in the future."

## "I was looking for inspiration and my mother had just gotten me a big book by Joni Mitchell"

by Peter Stones

BACK in February, Niamh Murray (who goes by Niv, pictured right) spoke to the CHAMPION about the launch of her debut Extended Play (EP), which took place in Whelan's in Dublin on 7th of March.

On that night, Niv released the first single of her debut EP, God Knows, which received massive praise from the audience.

This Friday, Niamh will release the second single of her debut EP electronically, as Mitchell's Blue will be available to listen on music streaming platforms from Friday, 13th July.

When speaking about how the last few months have been, Niv highlighted the hectic schedule that comes along with balancing her singing and songwriting with her full-time job as a school teacher.

"Life's been good and I'm constantly busy. I'm either sending emails, going to gigs, or doing marketing campaigns, but it's good to be busy."

Niv also informed the CHAMPION about how she gained the inspiration to write her second single and how it stemmed from a past personal experience.

"When trying to write this song, I was looking for inspiration and my mother had just gotten me a big book by Joni Mitchell that contained her self-portraits, art, and poetry.

"The book was sitting in front of me at the piano and I just started writing the song.

"The song is about lost love, I suppose a nostalgic love about somebody you could have gotten with a long time ago and you're thinking back on that again, maybe with regret, but it's definitely a personal missed opportunity that I had."

Finally, Niv took the time to tell the CHAMPION about her writing process and what motivates her to write.

"Well, the process for this EP has that I am recording, releasing, recording, releasing, and the reason for this is that I am working with a producer called Matt Winston and it's the process that works for both of us.



"Each song kind of has its own twist to it, I think that Mitchell's Blue is a little bit more soft-rock, whereas God Knows would've been very much folk.

Then, the third single on the EP, Clonliffe Road, takes a lot of inspiration from The Pogues and that type of Irish folk background, I'm influenced a lot by Irish trad and Irish folk, so that kind of streams through everything.

"I write about my personal experiences and I have at times, tried writing a more generic song and it just doesn't feel natural to me.

"I listen to random songs and random genres, making my Spotify a complete jumble of stuff. Even if the music is not the genre that I am writing in, I get little motifs and ideas from different genres and different artists.

"Usually, something will happen, I could take a line from a song and I will know that I have a song, so I will let it simmer into my mind and then I sit down at the piano one day and let it fall out."

Check out Niv's EP through the following URL: [www.spotify.com/NIV](https://www.spotify.com/NIV)



ABOVE: Katherine O'Hagan, with school community dog Vixen; Minister Michael Moynihan and Naoise O Cearúil TD.



RIGHT: Aideen Shelly and Minister Moynihan TD.

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