

Líofa

Nollaig 2015

December 2015

Minister's Message

Dear Friends, I would like to thank you all for the support that you have given to Líofa over the past year. During Seachtain na Gaeilge in March Líofa succeeded in achieving 10,000 sign-ups and we are now approaching 20,000. I did not imagine four years ago that we would exceed our target as quickly as this and am very pleased with the interest people have shown.

Líofa had a busy year in 2015. The Líofa Book Club was launched in March which was very successful. The Children's Book Club is underway in schools at present. 100 people, both young and old, went to the Gaeltacht in the summer and over 800 people attended the intensive courses, and Líofa had its official GAA launch in September.

I like to see the language spreading out into different areas of life and Christmas is a great example of this. We can now celebrate the arrival of Christmas with our children by going to one of the Cultúrlanna to see the switching on of lights and meet Father Christmas. Plenty of other events are taking place in other Irish language centres as well of course.

Líofa officers ran an Irish language workshop in schools recently and a joint workshop with the Ulster Scots Agency in libraries. In the new year they will visit GAA clubs to give introductory workshop to the Irish language. You will see dates and places on the Líofa website and on social media before long. Why not make it a new year's resolution? Learn Irish; don't talk about it, just do it!

I would like to wish you all a happy Christmas and a fantastic new year.



Culture Minister Carál Ní Chuilín
An tAire Cultúir Carál Ní Chuilín

Focal ón Aire

A chairde Gaeil, Ba mhaith liom mo bhuíochas a ghabháil libh uilig as an tacaíocht a thug sibh do Líofa le bliain anuas. I rith Sheachtain na Gaeilge i mí an Mhárta d'éirigh le Líofa an 10,000 a bhaint amach agus muid anois ag tarraingt ar 20,000. Níor shamhlaigh mé ceithre bliana ó shin go n-éireodh linn chomh gasta seo agus tá lúcháir orm gur éirigh.

Bhí bliain ghnóthach ag Líofa in 2015; lainseáladh Club Leabhar Líofa i mí an Mhárta, club ar éirigh go geal leis, tá Club Leabhar na bPáistí ag gabháil sna scoileanna faoi láthair, cuireadh 100 duine idir óg agus aosta síos chun na Gaeltachta sa tsamhradh, d'fhreastail thar 800 duine ag na dianchúrsaí agus rinneadh Líofa a lainseáil tríd CLG i mí Mheán Fómhair.

Is deas liom an teanga a fheiceáil ag leathadh amach i réimsí éagsúla an tsaoil. Mar shampla, is féidir linn anois theacht na Nollag a cheiliúradh lenár bpáistí ach muid gabháil chuig na Cultúrlanna le lasadh na soilse a fheiceáil agus bualadh le Daidí na Nollag. Agus bíonn tréan imeachtaí eile ag gabháil sna hionaid eile Gaeilge ar ndóigh.

Bhí na hOifigigh ag Líofa ag réachtáil ceardlann Gaeilge sna scoileanna le tamall anuas, agus comhcheardlann lean An Ghníomhaireacht Ultaise sna leabharlanna. Sa bhliain úr beidh siad ag tabhairt cuairt ar Chlubanna de chuid CLG le ceardlann a thabhairt mar intreoir don Ghaeilge. Tchífidh tú dátaí agus áiteanna ar shuíomh Líofa agus ar na meáin shóisialta roimh i bhfad. Déan rún na bliana úire dó mar sin. Foghlaim an Ghaeilge, ná labhair faoi, tabhair faoi!

Ba mhaith liom Nollaig mhaith a ghúí oraibh uilig agus bliain úr iontach lena cois.

Irish Language Award won by Slí na Gaeltachta

Líofa was nominated for an Irish Language Award at the Aisling Awards in November. The team don't mind not having won however, as the standard of nominations for the Irish language award was so high. The amazing author Myra Zepf was there due to the excellence of her writing and her work with children as well as Liú Lúnasa for the work they do in the youth and drama sectors. Well done Fáilte Feirste Thiar and Forbairt Feirste for creating the Irish-language in West Belfast tourism app, Slí na Gaeltachta, that won first place. Download the app now and visit the Gaeltacht Quarter!

<https://itunes.apple.com/sg/app/gaeltacht-quarter/id835850802?mt=8>

Gradam Gaeilge bainte ag Slí na Gaeltachta

Ainmníodh Líofa do Ghradam Gaeilge ag Gradaim na hAislinge i mí na Samhna ach ar an drochuair níor éirigh linn, rud nach miste linn áfach ó tharla caighdeán na n-ainmniúchán a bheith chomh hard agus a bhí. Bhí an sár-údar Myra Zepf ann as feabhas a cuid scríbhneoireachta agus a cuid oibre le páistí, agus Liú Lúnasa lena taobh as an obair a dhéanann siad in earnálacha na hóige agus na drámaíochta. Maith sibh Fáilte Feirste Thiar agus Forbairt Feirste as an aip turasóireachta don Ghaeilge in Iarthar Bhéal Feirste, Slí na Gaeltachta, a bhain an chéad áit. Déanaigí an aip a íoslódáil anois agus tugaigí cuairt ar an Cheathrú Ghaeltachta!

<https://itunes.apple.com/sg/app/gaeltacht-quarter/id835850802?mt=8>

School Workshops

The last few months have been very busy for our Líofa officers who have been visiting Year 10 classes in schools across the north to talk about Líofa. We were delighted to be invited to work with pupils in a large number of schools in every county in the north, from rural Fermanagh to Derry city and from South Armagh to Belfast.

The Líofa officers worked with the pupils to discuss various aspects of the Irish language, including the Irish language all around us here at home and around the world, career opportunities in Irish and taking their Irish to the next level – GCSE. We also discussed the benefits of attending Irish-language courses in the Gaeltacht areas and how they can apply for a full bursary to attend one of the summer courses in Donegal through the Líofa Gaeltacht Bursary Scheme.

The Líofa officers were very impressed with the positive attitude and commitment to learning Irish that they saw in every classroom throughout the north. We hope that they continue on their journey towards fluency!



Ceadlanna Scoile

Bhí oifigigh Líofa an-ghnóthach le roinnt míonna anuas; thug siad cuairt ar ranganna Bhliain 10 i scoileanna ar fud an Tuaiscirt le labhairt faoi Líofa. Bhí lúcháir orainn go bhfuair muid cuireadh le hoibriú le daltaí i roinnt mhaith scoileanna i ngach contae sa tuaisceart, ó cheantair thuaithe i bhFear Manach go Cathair Dhoire agus ó Ard Mhacha Theas go Béal Feirste.

D'oibrigh oifigigh Líofa leis na daltaí le gnéithe éagsúla den Ghaeilge a phlé lena n-áirítear: an Ghaeilge mórthimpeall orainn anseo sa bhaile agus ar fud an domhain, deiseanna gairme as Gaeilge agus an dóigh lena gcuid Gaeilge a thabhairt go dtí an chéad leibhéal eile – GCSE. Chomh maith leis sin phléigh muid na buntáistí a bhaineann le freastal ar chúrsaí Gaeilge sna ceantair Ghaeltachta agus an dóigh a dtig leo cur isteach ar sparánacht iomlán le freastal ar cheann de na cúrsaí samhraidh i nDún na nGall trí Scéim Sparánachtaí Gaeltachta Líofa.

Bhí oifigigh Líofa an-tógtha leis an dearcadh dearfach agus leis an tiomantas maidir le foghlaim na Gaeilge a bhí le sonrú i ngach seomra ranga ar fud an tuaiscirt. Tá súil againn go leanfaidh siad ar aghaidh ar a dturas i dtreo na líofachta!

Conchubhar Ó Muadaigh, Harry Connolly, Minister Carál Ní Chuilín, Dean Ó Sluagháin at the Aisling Awards 2015

Conchubhar Ó Muadaigh, Harry Connolly, An tAire Carál Ní Chuilín, agus Dean Ó Sluagháin ag Gradaim na hAislinge

Gaeltacht Bursary Scheme 2016

The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure will soon be welcoming applications from Lófa participants to attend an Irish language summer course in the Gaeltacht. Keep an eye on your inbox as you will get the application form in January 2016.



Scéim Sparánachta Gaeltachta 2016

Cuirfidh an Roinn Cultúir, Ealaíon agus Fóillíochta fáilte roimh iarratais go luath ó rannpháirtithe Lófa le freastal ar chúrsa samhraidh Gaeilge sa Ghaeltacht. Coinnigh súil ar an bhosca isteach mar gheobhaidh tú an fhoirm iarratais i mí Eanáir 2016.

Father Christmas at the Katesbridge Cumann Gaelach Christmas Party.

Daidí na Nollag ag cóisir Nollag Chumann Gealach Dhroichead Cháit.

Home and Away

Home: Santa

I'm called Father Christmas but I have many other names as well. I came to Ireland to learn Irish a few years ago. I came for a holiday initially but it wasn't long before I fell in love with the country. I decided to live in Katesbridge in County Down since I often saw on the weather forecast that it is the coldest place!

The old stories are what I enjoy most about the Irish language, stories from folklore and mythology. I love to hear how Cú Chulainn got his name and how Fionn Mac Cumhaill met his wife. When I lived in the North Pole it was very difficult to find elves who could speak Irish but I don't have that problem anymore!

I am able to do my work a lot more effectively now as a result of the Irish language. Nearly 50,000 children are attending Irish-medium schools and they all write to me in Irish. I had a translator working for me in the North Pole for a long time as well but he left me in a fix when Irish was made an official language in Europe! Off he went to Brussels and I haven't heard a thing from him since.

I heard about this campaign for the first time when I was sitting having a drink one Sunday in 2012 in a local pub in Belfast. I heard a noise outside and it turned out to be Lófa's second annual celebration in Custom House Square. I really liked the sounds of the language and I made up my mind to learn it.

I gCóngar agus i gcéin

I gcóngar: Santa

Is mise Dadaí na Nollag ach is iomaí sin ainm eile orm fosta. Tháinig mé chun na hÉireann a fhoghlaim na Gaeilge tá traidhfeal de bhlianta ó shin anois. Is ar saoire amháin a thagaim ar dtús ach níorbh fhada gur thit mé i ngrá leis an tír. Shocraigh mé cónaí a dhéanamh i nDroichead Cháit i gContaí an Dúin ó tharla gur minic a d'fheicinn ar thuar na haimsire gurb é sin an áit is fuaire.

Is iad na seanscéalta an rud is mó a bhfuil dúil agam ann faoin Ghaeilge, scéalta ón bhéalóideas agus an mhiotaseolaíocht. Is breá liom cluinstitín faoin dóigh a bhfuair Cú Chulainn a ainm agus faoin dóigh ar casadh a bhean chéile ar Fhionn Mac Cumhaill. Nuair a bhí mé i mo chónaí ar an Phol Thuaidh bhí sé iontach deacair agam síogaí a aimsiú a raibh Gaeilge acu, ach níl an fhadhb sin agam níos mó.

Tá mé ábalta mo chuid oibre a dhéanamh i bhfad níos éifeachtaí anois mar gheall ar an Ghaeilge. Tá ag tarraingt ar 50,000 páiste ar scoileanna lán-Ghaeilge agus iad uilig ag scríobh i nGaeilge chugam. Bhí aistritheoir ag obair agam ar an Phol Thuaidh ar feadh i bhfad fosta ach d'fhág sé san fhaopach mé nuair a rinneadh teanga oifigiúil san Eoraip den Ghaeilge. D'imigh se leis chun an Bhruiséil agus níor chuala mé é beo ná march ó shin.

Many Irish language events take place in Newry and in Newcastle. That's close enough to where I am and I really try to attend them all. It's difficult to do that in winter as I spend a lot of time working from home, skypeing with the elves and working on the computer. The internet is making a great difference to my work these days.

'The falling of the drone beetle on an autumn night' is my favourite Irish language expression. That's the same as saying that unexpected things sometimes happen, so expect them. You can read hope in that sentence.

I would advise anyone who is trying to learn Irish to get a friend or two and do it together. We succeed much better in the company of friends.

Away: Tony Óg Ó Dubhthaigh

I'm Antaine Ó Dubhthaigh. I am 24 years old. I'm currently living in New Jersey but I am originally from Belfast. I am an Irish language teacher in New York and Drew Universities.

It was my father who expressed an interest in Irish on my behalf at first! I started my education at an English-language school in Belfast when I was very young, but my family spent a period living in Donegal. When we returned to Belfast my father decided to build on the Irish that I had acquired in Rann na Feirste and he sent me to the best school in Belfast! Bunscoil an tSléibhe Dhuibh!!

It really lifts my heart to see people starting to learn Irish after they have left school and are making their way in the world. It's hard to start learning the language when you have other things to do: children, jobs, bills etc. and I have great respect for those who do so.



Chuala mé fán fheachtas seo don chéad uair nuair a bhí mé i mo shuí ag fliuchadh mo bhéil Domhnach amháin in 2012 i dteach tábhairne áitiúil i mBéal Feirste. Chuala mé gleo amuigh agus cad é a bhí ann ach an dara ceiliúradh bliantúil ag Líofa i gCearnóg an Chustaim. Thaitin fuaimeanna na teanga go mór liom agus chuir mé romham í a bheith agam.

Bíonn tréan imeachtaí Gaeilge ag gabháil ar aghaidh ar an lúr agus i gCaisleán Nua, atá cóngarach go leor don áit a bhfuil mé, agus déanaim gach iarracht freastal orthu uilig. Is doiligh sin a dhéanamh sa gheimhreadh mar chaithim cuid mhór ama ag obair ón bhaile, ag scaidhpeáil leis na síogaithe agus ag obair ón ríomhaire. Is iontach an difear a dhéanann an t-idirlíon do mo chuid oibre na laethanta seo.

'Titfidh cearlamán oíche fhomhair' an friotal Gaeilge is fearr liom. Is ionann sin agus a rá go dtarlaíonn rudaí nach mbíonn súil leo in amanna. Bí ag dúil leis an rud nach bhfuil súil leis. Is féidir an dóchas a léamh ar an abairt sin.

Mholfainn do dhuine ar bith atá ag iarraidh an Ghaeilge a thabhairt leo cara nó beirt a aimsiú agus é a dhéanamh le chéile. Is fearr i bhfad a éiríonn linn i gcuideachta cairde.

I gcéin: Tony Óg Ó Dubhthaigh

Is mise Antaine Ó Dubhthaigh. Tá mé 24 bliain d'aois. Tá mé i mo chónaí i New Jersey faoi láthair ach is as Béal Feirste ó cheart mé. Is teagascóir Gaeilge mé ar Ollscoileanna Nua Eabhrac agus Drew

Is m'athair a chuir suim sa Ghaeilge ar mo shon i dtús ama! Thosaigh mé amach ar scoil bhéarla i mBéal Feirste nuair a bhí mé an-óg, ach chaith an teaghlach seal inár gcónaí i dTír Chonaill. Ar philleadh go Béal Feirste dúinn bheartaigh m'athair tógáil ar an Ghaeilge a fuair mé i Rann na Feirste agus chuir chuig an scoil is fearr i mBéal Feirste mé! Bunscoil an tSléibhe Dhuibh!!

Tógann sé mo chroí daoine a fheiceáil agus iad ag toiseacht amach ar fhoghlaim na Gaeilge i ndiaidh daofa an scoil a fhágáil agus iad sa tsaol mhór. Tá sé doiligh toiseacht amach ar fhoghlaim na teanga agus

Tony Óg Ó Dubhthaigh in San Francisco
Tony Óg Ó Dubhthaigh in San Francisco

I would say that I didn't have enough time for the language when I was at school. My friends and I did not speak Irish together when we were in the playground. That hindered our Irish language development in my opinion. We did come around, however, and I think that young people nowadays are more mature as regards the language than we were. There are involved in the community groups out there who are functioning solely through Irish. These groups provide social opportunities for young people to use the language and Irish is no longer associated only with the classroom.

All of my jobs since leaving university have been Irish-language related and I am extremely lucky that I work through the medium of Irish on a daily basis. Not many people are able to say that they are able to do their favourite thing as a job! I am now living in the United States, teaching Irish to Americans. I am getting a taste of the world's languages, culture, food and music in New York as a result of Irish.

I am now teaching and helping with the teaching of Irish in two Universities in America as part of the Fulbright programme. There are many opportunities to speak Irish here in New York and there is a strong Irish language community over here. That community is scattered throughout the country and groups like Daltaí na Gaeilge do a lot of work for the language.

I regularly attended Cumann Chluain Árd's classes in Belfast before I moved to America. I have a class out here as well and there are new Irish language events/conversation circles here every other week!

Irish serves as a link between the present and the past. I am a Gael and we all have Irish as a gift and as a tool of cultural expression and I feel that we should give that gift to the next generation. It is important for me to give the tremendous opportunities that I got as a result of Irish to other young people in the future.

Just like the great wheel of life, progress in learning is always up and down regardless of how long you have been at it. I know people who stopped after one of those slow periods, and I know that they would be on top of things again had they only waited another few weeks! My advice would be to push through the slump!

rudáí eile idir lámha agat, páistí, poist, billí srl agus tá meas mór agam orthu siúd a dhéanann sin

Déarfainn nach raibh meas go leor don teanga agam agus mé ar scoil. Níor labhair mé féin agus mo chairde le chéile i nGaeilge nuair a bhí muid sa chlós súgartha. Chuir sin bac ar fhorbairt na Gaeilge ionainn dar liom. Tháinig muid in aibíocht de réir a chéile agus sílim go bhfuil an mhuintir óg inniu níos aibí i dtaca le teanga ná mar a bhí muid féin. Tá grúpaí pobail amuigh ansin anois ag feidhmiú ar bhonn lán-Ghaeilge. Cuireann siad deiseanna sóisialta úsáide fail do dhaoine óga agus ní shamhlaítear an teanga leis an tseomra ranga amháin níos mó.

Bhí mé ábalta mo chuid oibre uilig a dhéanamh go dtí seo mar gheall ar an Ghaeilge agus tá an t-ádh dearg orm go mbím ag obair fríd an Ghaeilge ar bhonn laethúil. Níl mórán amuigh ansin ábalta a rá go bhfuil siad in inmhe an rud is fearr leo a dhéanamh mar phost! Tá mé anois i mo chónaí sna Stáit Aontaithe, ag teagasc na Gaeilge do Mheiriceánaigh. Tá mé ag fáil blaiseadh ar theangacha, ar chultúr, ar bhia agus ar cheolta an domhain i Nua Eabhrac mar gheall ar an Ghaeilge.

Tá mé anois ag teagasc agus ag cuidiú le teagasc na Gaeilge ar dhá Ollscoil i Meiriceá mar chuid de chlár Fulbright. Is iomaí sin deis labhartha anseo i Nua Eabhrac agus tá pobal láidir Gaeilge amuigh anseo. Tá an pobal sin scaipthe fud fad na tíre agus tá grúpaí ar nós Daltaí na Gaeilge ag déanamh obair mhór ar son na teanga.

Bhí mé go rialta ar ranganna Chumann Chluain Árd i mBéal Feirste sular bhog mé go Meiriceá. Tá rang agam amuigh anseo anois fosta agus bíonn imeachtaí úra Gaeilge/ciorcail chomhrá anseo dara gach seachtain!

Is ionann an Ghaeilge agus an nasc sin idir an t-am seo agus an t-am a chuaigh thart. Is Gael mé agus tá an Ghaeilge againn uilig mar phronntanas agus mar uirlis léirithe féiniúlachta agus mothaím gur cheart an uirlis sin a thabhairt uainn chuig an chéad ghlúin eile. Tá sé tábhachtach dom na deiseanna iontacha sin a fuair mé mar thoradh ar an Ghaeilge a thabhairt do dhaoine óga eile amach anseo.

Ionann agus an saol, tig sealanna ar an fhoghlaim. Is thuas seal thíos seal a bhíonn an dul chun cinn i gcónaí, is cuma cá fhad atá tú ag gabháil di. Tá aithne agam ar dhaoine a stop i ndiaidh ceann de na tréimhsí malla seo, agus fios agam dá bhfanfadh siad tamall de sheachtainí eile go mbeadh siad thuas arís!