

LEITRIM YOUTH THEATRE CO (LYTC) Carrigallen

Celebrate 10 years since formation



Maura Williamson

LYTC CARRIGALLEN celebrated 10 years since their formation with a performance of a play entitled "Outside the box" written and devised by Maura Williamson, Yvonne Heijeman and LYTC cast last April at the Corn Mill Theatre to two packed audiences.

It all started in September 2004 when newly appointed Arts Officer Caoimhin Corrigan, who had a keen interest in youth theatre wanted to set up groups in Leitrim. Carrigallen set the ball rolling and advertised their first enrolment evening where two parents and two students turned up with 18 members enrolling the following week. The first two parents Helen Corcoran, and Becky Thomas assisted drama facilitator, director, and playwright, Maura Williamson for many years giving workshops and bringing performances to stage. Two other groups hot on their heels were Carrick on Shannon facilitated by Catherine Simon and Manorhamilton facilitated by Declan Drohan, set up groups.

To date the company has presented 14 productions, dealing with all aspects of life from cradle to grave, well prepared for anything life may throw at those



involved. Carrigallen has a current enrolment of 70 students with two junior and two senior groups. The facilitators now include Mary Blake from Leitrim Village assisted by Aoife Tierney and Lisa McDermott and Maura Williamson. Carrick on Shannon and Manorhamilton have also junior and senior groups enrolled.

In the words of drama facilitator Maura Williamson this is a celebration of beautiful young talented creative, imaginative, shy, ambitious, confident people who came through the doors of LYTC Carrigallen. People often wonder what youth theatre is really about. The focus is to keep balance in giving students the experience of good quality aspects of theatre, and a grounding in all

■ **Helen Corcoran, Becky Thomas and Maura Williamson prepare to cut the cake in celebration of 10 years of the LYTC Carrigallen**

PHOTO BY TONY FAHY

areas of production. Students need to feel safe in a drama workshop. Here they can lock out the outside world and it's demands. They can express their feelings, be accepted for who they are, and feel good about themselves.

Comments from former youth theatre members include:

- "I have experienced the skills, creativity and confidence, which developed through the workshops and productions"
- "I have so many memories, we got a great insight into making and writing our own play within



“The story of Margaret of New Orleans” I was so happy to have been given the opportunity to write and direct my own play with LYTC Carrigallen. Amazing memories”

- “I made life long friends here, improved my confidence, I can honestly say this has been one of the best parts of my life so far” “Productions helped push me out of my comfort zone, felt more confident, and a great sense of achievement”
- “I could not believe it when at that interview all they wanted to talk about was my involvement in youth theatre, the team work, respecting others views, and all the skills I had learned in youth drama applied to the job”

• “LYTC is much more than a youth drama group, it encourages confidence, creativity, a sense of humour, which are all fundamental when developing as a young adult. It is a very important outlet, communicate with new people from other schools, and it a link for collage, drama societies etc. down the road.

- “LYTC has so helped me to speak in public, work as a team, filled with fun and laughter, some amazing memories of LYTC”
- “I so looked forward to LYTC every Tuesday evening, I go there and just be myself, and let go. We were always encouraged to be imaginative and inovative. I hope in years to come this facility there for young people. I made life long friends at youth drama.

■ LYTC members celebrate 10 years of youth theatre in Carrigallen.

PHOTO BY TONY FAH

- It was always an escape away even for two hours away from study, ordinary day demands of life”

This project, running for 10 years could not have been possible without support from Leitrim Co Council, leaders in Arts development, current arts officer Philip Delemare, Arts Council of Ireland NAYD, parents/guardians and LYTC members, facilitators, and assistants who work beyond the call of duty to make LYTC what is today.

May it flourish and provide a wonderful service to the youth of our rural community.