

Marc McKeon

MY HERO is my father, James McKeon. He was born on March 17th 1962 in the house where he grew up. He met my mother in 1984 in the Longford Arms Hotel and married her in 1986. He met my sister in 1992 and named her Alison, then my other sister in 1994 then finally me in the year 2000. My father is important to me because he is always calm under pressure and always has an ingenious way of fixing things. My hero overcame the death of his sister when she was one, then when he was older all his aunts and uncles—then finally his mother. My favourite quote of his is "that's how it goes". I chose my father because he inspires me to be a better son, farmer and person.

Evelyn Reynolds

MY HERO is Jennifer Howitt Browning. Jen successfully overcame an enormously difficult challenge when at the young, innocent age of nine she was paralysed. She was involved in a serious accident in which she broke her back, became paralysed and was wheelchair bound. Up until that point in her life she was very active as she played soccer for her local club. In 2004, she won a gold medal in Athens for the USA Special Olympics basketball team. In 2009 she married the love of her life, Mike Browning. Her determination led her to succeed in every aspect of her life. I chose her because despite all odds, she surpassed all expectations.

Aoife Shanley

MY HERO Dónal Walsh, was born outside of Tralee in county Kerry where he lived with his mother, father and sister. He loved to play rugby with his friends and even got to meet some Irish Rugby players including Paul O'Connell. He also had a big interest in music. Unfortunately Dónal died from cancer on May 12th, 2013. Dónal was diagnosed with cancer at a young age. He worked hard in the days at the end of his life to help young sufferers of depression realise that suicide is not the answer to life's problems. Even when he was in a lot of pain he managed to touch a lot of people's lives including mine and that is why he is my hero. As Donal moved onto his final journey and reached "God's highest mountain" he spoke to the priest that gave him his last rights: *Dónal* "Father, Father Pdraig, what is it like on the other side?" *Fr Pdraig*: "Dónal I'm not sure but I can tell you it will be a better place because you are there. Why Dónal are you afraid?" *Dónal* "No Father just a little nervous". Celebrities, activists and many people talk about suicide awareness but Dónal seemed to take it to another level. He could have felt sorry for himself in his dying days or did nothing, but instead he did good for other people. He was a completely selfless person and he inspires me everyday

Orla McGowan

MY HERO is Elisha Brennan the Meath Rose of Tralee 2015. Elisha Brennan now a medical student is from Meath. She won the Rose of Tralee, this year. She also has twin siblings. The reason why I picked Elisha as my hero is because when she was in Leaving Cert year she started to feel down in herself and soon found her school work slipping. It was about half way through the year when she went to the doctors, and after numerous tests she was diagnosed with cancer. She battled through both the mental and physical side of the cancer and won! It took a great deal of courage and belief to overcome this difficult prognosis of cancer. She described losing all her long blonde beautiful hair, and how that she was in the stage of her life that looks and image was everything. However, she didn't let it get her down she just continued on, not letting anything stand in her way of achieving her goals. A quote that I liked from Elisha is: "I have a keen interest in working with children and I'm involved with the RCSI paediatric society. I have also volunteered for the Irish cancer society, and I plan to partake in a volunteer mission with a local parish in Lourdes". Elisha is my hero as even though she was faced with a huge hurdle in her life she overcame it and went on to achieve enough points in her Leaving Cert to study medicine and then this year she won the prestigious Rose of Tralee. I admire her for having the courage to fight on and never give up!

Leona McLoughlin

MY HERO is my Dad Terry McLoughlin. He grew up in Dromad with three brothers and one sister. He always makes the best out of tough situations. He mostly works on the farm but always makes time to help you out or to go out for family dinners. He's always looking out for others. He's very busy between the turf and the harvest. On winter nights he is in-and-out of the house with the farm. He's quite the joker too. My dad always says: "if you start something then don't do a half job on it". My dad has always been there for me no matter what. He's always up to something—I don't think he ever stops. My Dad taught me that working hard can make anything possible.

Tara Doyle

MY HERO is my Dad, born on the 15th of September 1975. He grew up with three brothers and 8 sisters on a farm. When I was about six, I got my tonsils out. My Dad was there with me through the whole thing holding my hand and telling me it was going to be okay. A big challenge my dad had to face was when his father passed away. I was only four weeks old when it happened and we lived over in England. A saying my Dad says is: "If you can't get over it, Get over it". He means a lot to me and always helps me whenever I need it the most.

Aoibhinn Reynolds

MY HERO My hero is Irish Showjumper Bertram Allen. He was born on August 1st 1995 in Co Wexford. At eight years old he started horse riding and then at the age of sixteen he moved to a yard in Germany to pursue his career. He has ended up staying there since. At the age of nineteen he has been ranked at No 5 in the showjumping industry, that makes him the youngest person ever to be in the top 10. He has been awarded "The Young Sports Star of the Year". A motto of his is: "Keep everything simple and do not complicate things"

Tanya Boyle

MY HERO is my granny Rosaleen Costello. Her maiden name was Nugent. She was born on April 28th 1943. She lived in Bornacore where she reared three daughters. She also had four grandchildren three girls and a boy. She died after a long hard battle against illness in February of this year is greatly missed. My nanny was known for her kindness she would never turn down a visitor even if she was rushed. She would always have the time to make someone a cup of tea. There is an old woman who lived in our area and she had no family, my nanny visited her everyday and considered her to be a part of her family. My nanny would never complain or give out even through a tough time. My granny would always say: "A granny's job is to spoil her grandchildren". When you hear the word 'HERO' you would think of someone who has saved a life or done something extraordinary. You can be a hero by simply standing by a loved one or being strong during a tough time. This is why I chose my nanny because she always stood by me and the rest of the family. She was always strong during tough times, and anyone who met her was lucky, and we were lucky to have her in our lives.

Margaret O'Carroll

MY HERO is my grandfather, John Morgan. Papa was born in Dublin on the 24th of August 1939. He was originally from Britain, but his parents got married in secret and ran away to Ireland. My grandfather has a lot of siblings and his family didn't have a lot of money. Papa is very wise, knowledgeable, likes to work, and is very studious. He works in law and is a barrister. Papa's family was very poor, so he made a successful insurance company and paid for his siblings to go to college, and eventually he went to college and studied law. When he was getting his Masters in Theology, he couldn't attend most of his classes because he was working a lot. Two weeks before his theology exam he started studying and he got first class honours. They couldn't give it to him because he didn't attend the classes, so Papa challenged them and got what he wanted. He inspires me and I look up to him. Everything he talks about is interesting and I love getting into conversations with him.

Nina Greene

MY HERO is my Granny, Nonna. She was born in Dublin and has two sisters. She spends most of her time in her garden. She loves all chocolate and always has a secret stash hidden somewhere which really annoys Grandad. Everything she does is good. She is a really good cook and makes really nice dishes. She's excellent at sewing too and used to make all their clothes. She even made Mam's wedding dress, veil and headpiece. She nags a lot at me and my cousins about our manners and being on our phones but we find it funny because she's so hard to take seriously. She had six children who were all within the same age gap and she'd often be left alone with them while Granddad was away in America. "Waste not want not" is such a typical thing for her to say. She is a great person who stands out in every way.

MOHILL

Raithna Duffy

MY HERO. Annie Conan was born on the 4th of June 1921, she lived 94 great years and she was my grandmother. Nanny was born in a cottage in Borna-coola and lived there all her life, where she reared 9 children with her husband John P Duffy. My Nanny was the apple of the Duffy families' eyes. All of her grand-children's fondest memories are in that little cottage that she was reared in. She had a heart of gold and a pan of boxty always to give. When my Nanny was 13 her mother unfortunately passed away after battling cancer for many years. My Nanny left school to care for her father. Whenever it was one of her grandchildren's birthdays or any special occasion Nanny would always sign off the card with "Lots of love, Nanny Do xxx". The name stuck over the years and that's how she is known within the Duffy family. My Nanny always worked hard and never gave up. She always kept positive and never let anyone down. She was loyal, wise and kind. And I am forever honoured to call her my Grandmother.

Shannon Flynn

MY HERO is my father, Peadar Flynn. Daddy was born in Longford town. He was born fifteen minutes before his twin brother Joseph. Daddy married my Mammy, Linda and as well as me, he also had my sister Fionnuala, and my brothers Peadar Jr and Liam. He is one of my role models. He's calm when it comes to difficult situations. As well as volunteering and helping people, he has a big passion for agriculture, animals, cars, his Honda 50 and Dukes of Hazzard! Daddy is my hero because he is caring and an inspiration to me in living life to the full. No matter what else he does, he will always be remembered for being the best dad ever.

Sorcha Quinn

MY HERO is my mum. She was born in Surrey, England. She has one brother and one sister. She then met my Dad and they got married in 1999. I chose my mum as my hero because she always puts others before herself. She is genuinely a very kind person and she has always looked out for me. She gives me advice when I need it, she gives me food when I'm hungry and she drives me crazy at times but I'm glad to have her as my Mum. Her Dad died earlier this year. It was hard for her to get through it but she did. She read a poem at her Dad's funeral which described what type of person he was. She was dreading it, having to read it out in front of so many people while she felt upset. She still did it though which was very brave of her. I don't see her as just my mum, I also see her as my friend. A friend I'll never lose.

Niall Keegan

MY HERO is my father Gerry Keegan. He works as a FAS worker cleaning up the village and making sure that the local GAA pitch is marked. He married my mother who came from the nearby parish Aughavas and had four children my two brothers, my sister and me. My father works very hard at everything he does. He tries to keep the farm running and never stops until 8 o'clock in the evening. Even though he works on his own he never complains. He inspires me to be something like him one day and carry on the family name.

Shane Tierney

MY HERO is my father, Michael Tierney. He was born in Dromard, Longford. He has six brothers, Seamus, Noel, Dennis, Thomas, Joe and Dominic and two sisters Breege and Bernadette. He works hard on the farm regardless of whether it's cold or wet. He goes to work with the lorry at half six in the morning 'til about 7 o'clock in the evening. When he comes home he goes straight to the farm to look after the cattle. With all the working he is still able to go to one's football games and fix one's bike. My favourite quote of his is "God bless us and save us said old Mrs Davis". He is a good role model to me because he works hard to put food on the table and he really cares about his family.

Louise Cafferty

MY HERO Fr Peter McVerry was born in 1944 in Belfast and grew up in Newry. He studied in Abbey Christian Brothers' Grammar school in Newry. He was ordained in 1975. He was working in a school in Summerhill but gave it all up to help the poor and homeless. In 1983 he opened the Arrupe society which was later renamed the Peter McVerry trust. Fr Peter McVerry has a lot of important qualities. He is: Helpful • Kind • Generous • Selfless • Supportive • Caring • Considerate • Understanding. My favourite quote that Fr Peter McVerry said was: "In a community that loves one another, there should be no-one poor (unless all are poor), there should be no-one lonely, no-one sick or alone without visitors, no-one in prison who has been abandoned and written off. There should be no-one rejected or marginalized." I think Fr Peter McVerry and all the people who work with him are truly amazing.

Conor McGuinness

MY HERO is called David Attenborough. He's been working with the BBC for over sixty years as a zoologist and as a narrator for multiple documentaries about the natural world. Although he's 80 he is still travelling the world to see its wonders, despite the difficulties involved. He also has a difficult time at the start of his career getting a job. He once said: "It seems to me that the natural world is the greatest source of excitement, the greatest source of visual beauty, the greatest source of intellectual interest. It is the greatest source of joy in life it makes life worth living." His voice is class, his profession as a conservationist admirable, and his job is my dream job.

Éabha Kenny

MY HERO Owen Carron, was born in 1953 in Enniskillen, county Fermanagh. In the 1970's he qualified as a school teacher. He was an Irish Republican activist and a member of Parliament from 1981-1983. In 1982, Owen was arrested but was granted bail to contest the next by-election. He skipped the election and went on the run from the British. He moved to Co Leitrim. He was found, arrested and went to jail for two and a half years. He left his life behind in Northern Ireland. He set up a new life here, as he couldn't go back to the north. He settled down, has a wife and children and grandchildren. He was formally principal of Carrigallen NS.

I chose Owen as my hero because he has lived such an inspirational life. He stood up for what he believed in, and was willing to go to jail for what he believed in and hence became a local hero to a lot of people.

Voices of the students

Some students in Third Year English, from Mohill Community College wrote about the people who inspire them — people that they would consider as heroes. Here are some shortened extracts from their much longer pieces. *Myra Reynolds*

Orla Bohan

MY HERO is my Granny. She was born in 1929 she is 86 years of age. She had eight children. She loved baking and minding her children, she also helped on the farm; I go to see her most weekends. A difficult event my Granny has overcome was when her son died when he was only a year old. Also when Granddad died a few years ago this was a very difficult time for her. My Granny always says "Ah sure that's life, just got to get on with it". This is why I choose my Granny as she just keeps going no matter what life throws at her. She is a very inspirational woman.

Rachael Kiernan

MY HERO is my mother, Nicole Kiernan. She was born in Dublin, the oldest of 3 boys and a girl. She met my Dad and married him in 2000. She works as a primary school teacher. Her best quality is that she is a kind mother. She helps me with my homework even when she's busy doing her own school work. She listens to my problems even when she's busy. A difficult challenge my mother overcame was the unexpected death of her mother in 2007 and in 2009 the unexpected death of her father as well. It took her and her brothers a long time to get over their loss. My mother inspires me to be a better person every day.

Lauren Galligan

MY HERO is Paralympic Jennifer Howitt Browning. A young girl Jennifer loved sports, especially football. One year she was attending a summer camp in San Francisco, when she had a serious accident which left her paralysed for life. She was 19 years old when the accident happened. She overcame the fact that she would never walk again and began playing basketball for the US Paralympian team. She is admirable because she overcame the thought of never walking again to become captain of the basketball team. She is a great example of showing anything is possible.

Grainne Reynolds

MY HERO is my Nana Mary Cissie Duffy. Her maiden is Kilkenny, and she was born on July 10th 1929, meaning she lived through World War 2. She has six children, and is a wonderful mother and grandmother. She bakes bread, tarts and keeps her garden very well. When Granddad died that was a very tough time for her, but she overcame it and has managed to battle on with her life keeping strong every step of the way. Nana always says: "Ah sure its as old as meself", anytime you admire anything she's wearing, whether she got it today or yesterday. Nana also uses a wide range of synonyms, my favourite being: "its far from your A -- you wont sit on it". I choose my Nana as my hero as she doesn't let her age hold her back and she's always in good humour. If every 86 year old is as healthy as she is they're very lucky. They say nobody's perfect but Nana in my eyes is quite perfect indeed.