

## **MediaBook**

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## Cork programme helps support fledgling start-ups

**BARRY ROCHE**

Budding entrepreneurs are being invited to participate in a business support programme which has already helped dozens of individuals develop their own companies.

The **Greenshoots** Emerging Entrepreneur Programme in Macroom, Co Cork helps people from the county develop business ideas from conceptual stages through to launching new companies.

One former participant is Attila Magyar whose company, Mamukko, made headlines last year after it acquired the sails of the tall ship *Astrid* to create a limited edition of designer upcycled handbags.

**Greenshoots** is hosted by Macroom Enterprise Centre. Enterprise programme manager, Catherine Costello said it continued to offer invaluable advice and experience to fledgling companies.

Participants avail of free shared office space, weekly training workshops on key areas of business development, individual mentorship, business coaching, links with local and national support agencies, guidance from established entrepreneurs and lots of peer support.

The next programme is due to start in February and applications are available at [greenshootscork.ie](http://greenshootscork.ie). The closing date is January 21st.



# Have a shot at Greenshoots

A company that acquired the sails of the tall ship Astrid to create a limited edition range of designer up-cycled bags and a leading provider of cardiac screening in Ireland are two Cork success stories from the **Greenshoots** Emerging Entrepreneur Programme, which is now seeking the next generation of entrepreneurs.

In the first four years since its inception, the initiative has worked with dozens of individuals in Cork, helping them develop their new business ideas from conceptual stages through to launching new companies. A support, training and guidance programme for early stage start-ups, **Greenshoots** is delivered at Macroom E Enterprise Centre and funded by the Economic Development Section of Cork County Council and the Local Enterprise Office South Cork. Start-ups hoping to make their mark in 2015 are now being invited to apply to participate in the next **Greenshoots** Programme, commencing in February.

Among those involved in previous years include Ed Donovan of Advanced Medical Screening, who took part in the first **Greenshoots** Programme in 2010 and is now the leading provider of cardiac screening in Ireland; Derek Binchy of Winner Kayak; Attila Magyar of Mamukko, which sells unique bags worldwide; David O'Brien of The Workshop café; and Kathy O'Connor of Sherkin North Shore, a destination nature and learning venue on Sherkin Island.

For more information on applying for the programme see [greenshootscork.ie](http://greenshootscork.ie).



Picture by Deragh Kene





# Greenshoots seeks next batch of entrepreneurs

**Brian Hayes Curtin**  
[bhayescurtin@corkindependent.com](mailto:bhayescurtin@corkindependent.com)

The **Greenshoots** Emerging Entrepreneur Programme has kick-started many Cork businesses and the next edition starts in February at Macroom E Enterprise Centre.

Cork entrepreneurs and start-ups hoping to make their mark in 2015 are invited to apply, but the closing date is 21 January.

In the first four years since its inception, the **Greenshoots** Emerging Entrepreneur Programme has worked with dozens of individuals in Cork, helping them develop their new business ideas from conceptual stages through to launching new companies, with many establishing themselves.

The **Greenshoots** Emerging Entrepreneur Programme is a support, training and guidance programme for early stage start-ups, delivered at Macroom E Enterprise Centre and funded by the economic development section of Cork County Council and the Local Enterprise Office South Cork.

During each programme, **Greenshoots** participants avail of free shared office space, weekly training workshops on key areas of business development, individual mentorship, business coaching, links with local and national support agencies, guidance from excellent established entrepreneurs and lots of peer-to-peer support.

"The **Greenshoots**

Programme is an exciting breeding ground for creative ideas, business progression and practical hands on advice towards running your own business. We're delighted to be welcoming yet another group of Cork's top entrepreneurs and are looking forward to seeing all the ideas they bring," said Catherine Costello, enterprise programme manager.

Over the course of four years since it began, many success stories have emerged from the alumni group, such as:

- Ed Donovan, Advanced Medical Screening (formerly HeartAid). Ed took part in the first **Greenshoots** Programme in 2010 and is now the leading provider of cardiac screening in Ireland, working with the GPA, Laya Healthcare and Irish rugby.

- Derek Binchy, Winner Kayak. Derek took part in 2011/12 and is now also running two spin-off businesses in Cork – Spike Island Adventure and Neptune Kayak – and employing 15 people.

- Attila Magyar, Mamukko. Attila took part in 2012/13 and has recently made headlines after his company acquired the sails of the Astrid Tall Ship to create a limited edition range of designer upcycled bags. Mamukko are selling their unique bag styles worldwide.

- David O'Brien, The Workshop Cork. David took part in 2012/13 and is now running the successful tea room and antique

store The Workshop at Lios Cross, Ballygarvan. It was recently rated as the number one café in Cork on TripAdvisor.

- Kathy O'Connor, Sherkin North Shore. Kathy took part in 2013/14 and now runs a destination nature and learning venue on Sherkin Island in West Cork, soon to feature on RTE's 'At Your Service'.

Atilla Magyar, director of Mamukko and award winning bag maker explained: "The group discussions were a big help. Participants share their fears and their successes. You learn a lot from the other participants."

"Prior to coming on **Greenshoots** I managed a business but that is not the same as running your own business," Atilla said.

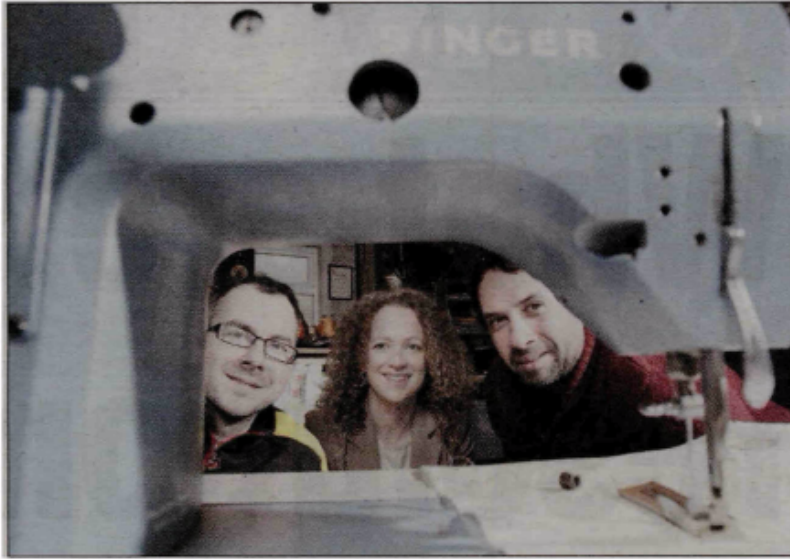
"Thanks to participation on the programme, I learned the skills needed to run a business," said David O'Brien, of the Workshop coffee and tearooms.

A simple application form is available from [www.greenshootscork.ie](http://www.greenshootscork.ie).

The deadline for applications is Wednesday 21 January, after which applicants will be shortlisted for an interview presentation and selected based on the viability of their business idea.

The programme is due to start in early February.

The project website can be found at [www.greenshootscork.ie](http://www.greenshootscork.ie).



Leve Magyar and Attila Magyar from Mamukko, based in Kinsale, who passed through the **Greenshoots** Programme, with Catherine Costello, Enterprise Programme Manager. *Photo: Darragh Kane*





## Greenshoots programme will help emerging entrepreneurs make their mark

BUDDING Cork entrepreneurs and start-ups hoping to make their mark in 2015 have been invited to apply to participate in the next **Greenshoots** Emerging Entrepreneur Programme, commencing in February at Macroon E Enterprise Centre.

In the four years since its inception, the **Greenshoots** Emerging Entrepreneur Programme has worked with dozens of individuals in Cork, helping them develop their new business ideas from conceptual stages through to launching new companies, with most establishing themselves as successful Cork-based companies in a renewed economy.

The **Greenshoots** Emerging Entrepreneur Programme is a support, training and guidance programme for early stage start-ups, delivered at Macroon E Enterprise Centre and funded by the Economic Development Section of Cork County Council and the Local Enterprise Office South Cork.

During each programme, **Greenshoots** participants avail of free shared office space, weekly training workshops on key areas of business development, individual mentorship, business coaching, links with local and national support agencies, guidance from excellent established entrepreneurs and lots of peer to peer support.

"The **Greenshoots** programme is an exciting breeding ground for creative ideas, business progression and practical hands-on advice towards running your own business. We're delighted to be welcoming yet another group of Cork's top entrepreneurs and are looking forward to seeing all the ideas they bring," said Catherine Costello, Enterprise Programme manager.

Over the course of four years since it began, many success stories have emerged from the alumni group, such as:

Ed Donovan, Advanced Medical Screening (formerly HeartAid). Ed took part in the first **Greenshoots** programme in 2010 and is now the leading provider of cardiac screening in Ireland, working with the GPA, Laya Healthcare and Irish Rugby.

Derek Binchy, Winner Kayak. Derek took part in 2011/12 and is now also running two spin-off businesses in Cork — Spike Island Adventure and Neptune Kayak — and employing 15 people.

Attila Magyar, Mamukko. Attila took part in 2012/13 and has recently made headlines after his company acquired the sails of the *Astrid* Tall Ship to create a limited edition range of designer upcycled bags. Mamukko is selling its unique bag styles worldwide.

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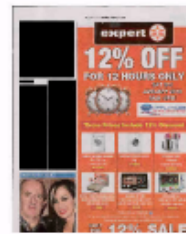
Kathy O'Connor, Sherkin North Shore. Kathy took part in 2013/14 and now runs a destination nature and learning venue on Sherkin Island in West Cork, soon to feature on RTE's *At Your Service*.

Attila Magyar, director of Mamukko and award-winning bag maker, explained: "The group discussions were a big help. Participants share their fears and their successes. You learn a lot from the other participants."

"Prior to coming on **Greenshoots** I managed a business but that is not the same as running your own business. Thanks to participation on the programme I learned the skills needed to run a business," stated David O'Brien, the Workshop coffee and tearooms and restaurant and antique shop.

Application details: A simple application form is available from [www.greenshootscork.ie](http://www.greenshootscork.ie). The deadline for applications is Wednesday, January 21, after which applicants will be shortlisted for an interview presentation and selected based on the viability of their business idea. The programme is due to start in early February.

The project website is [www.greenshootscork.ie](http://www.greenshootscork.ie).



# From green shoots to profitable business

## BILL BROWNE

DO you have a unique business idea but are having trouble getting the finances and expertise to see its potential realised?

If so a scheme set to commence in February at the Macroom E Enterprise Centre might just hold the solution to your problem.

Budding Cork entrepreneurs and start-ups hoping to make their mark in 2015 have been invited to take part in the next 'Greenshoots' Emerging Entrepreneur programme.

Established four years ago, the programme has worked with dozens of individuals from across Cork by helping them grow and develop new ideas from conceptual stages through to business launch.

They include Advanced Medical Screening founded by Ed Donovan who took part in the inaugural 2010 **Greenshoots** programme. His company is now the leading provider of cardiac screening in Ireland with clients including Laya Healthcare, the Gaelic Players Association

and Irish Rugby.

Derek Binchy of Winner Kayak Ltd who took part in the 2012 programme is now running two spin-offs businesses employing 15 people.

Other former participants include David O'Brien whose 'Workshop' tea room and antique store in Ballygarvan was recently rated the number one café in Cork by Trip Advisor.

They and dozens of others are testament to the success of the **Greenshoots** support, training and guidance programme, which is funded by Cork County Council and the South Cork Local Enterprise Office.

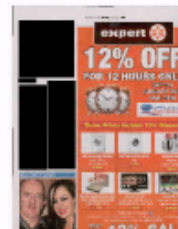
It gives participants the opportunity to avail of free shared office space at the E Centre, weekly training workshops on key areas of business development, individual mentorship and coaching, links to support agencies and peer to peer support.

**Greenshoots** programme manager Catherine Costello was enthusiastic about what the scheme can offer budding business leaders.

"It is an exciting breeding ground for creative ideas, business progression and practical hands on advice towards running your own business," said Ms Costello.

Applications forms, which must be returned by Wednesday, January 21, 2015 are available at [www.greenshootscork.ie](http://www.greenshootscork.ie).





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# Seeking entrepreneurs

**BUDDING** Cork entrepreneurs and start-ups hoping to make their mark in 2015 are invited to take part in a 'greenshoots' training and support programme.

The next **Greenshoots** Emerging Entrepreneur Programme will start in February at Macroom E Enterprise Centre.

In the four years since it started, the programme has worked with dozens of individuals in Cork, helping them develop their new business ideas from conceptual stages through to launching new companies, with most establishing themselves as successful Cork-based companies in a renewed economy.

The programme is a support, training and guidance programme for early stage start-ups, delivered at Macroom E Enterprise Centre and funded by the Economic Development Section of Cork County Council and the Local Enterprise Office South Cork.

During each programme, **Greenshoots** participants avail of free shared office space, weekly training workshops on key areas of business development, an individual mentorship programme, business coaching, links with local and national support agencies, guidance from excellent established entrepreneurs and lots of peer to peer support.

Catherine Costello, Enterprise Programme Manager, said: "The **greenshoots** programme is an exciting breeding ground for creative ideas, business progression and practical hands on advice towards running your own business.

We're delighted to be welcoming yet another group of Cork's top entrepreneurs and are looking forward to seeing all the ideas they bring."

An application form is available from [www.greenshootscork.ie](http://www.greenshootscork.ie).

The deadline for applications is Wednesday, January 21, next after which applicants will be shortlisted for an interview presentation and selected based on the viability of their business idea.

The programme is due to start in early February.



David O'Brien of Workshop Tearooms and Antiques store, Ballygarvan, a success story of the **Greenshoots** programme. Darragh Kane





## CORK AIRPORT CHRISTMAS TRADE FAIR

Schools in the South Cork region had the opportunity this week to showcase their mini companies at the annual Cork Airport Christmas Trade Fair as part of the Schools Enterprise Awards.

Three hundred Cork students participated in the event, comprising 100 mini company groups showcasing their products and services. Students were interviewed by a panel of judges during the Trade Fair and rated on their business acumen, before prize winners were selected according to category during an awards ceremony at the end of the event.

Initiated by the Local Enterprise Offices, the Schools Enterprise Awards are open to second level students across the country and has had over 17,000 participants each year. The Christmas Trade Fair enables students involved in the programme to showcase their mini companies and facilitate inter-school learning and selling.

Due to the huge increase of students in the South Cork region taking part in the programme this year, the event was held at Cork Airport for the very first time.

"Cork Airport are absolutely delighted to host this year's event. It is a unique showcase for fresh thinking and bright ideas and it's great to see these take off at Cork Airport" said Kevin Cullinane, Head of Communications, Cork Airport.

Now in its 10th year, the SEAs is the biggest enterprise competition for students in Ireland. It helps students to grasp real life skills associated with running a real enterprise including working as part of a team, managing production and finances, organising a sales and marketing campaign and liaising directly with customers, judges and the media.

"Youth Entrepreneurship is so vitally important to our future economy and we

are delighted to see such vibrant young entrepreneurs, who have brought the airport to life this morning showcasing their innovative ideas," said Ciara McGee, Business Adviser, Local Enterprise Office South Cork.

"The **South Cork Schools Enterprise Programme** are delighted to be here at the airport today and are extremely grateful to Cork Airport for hosting the Christmas Trade Fair. There has been a magnificent turn out with over 380 pupils in attendance" added Katherine Corkery, Programme Coordinator, Schools Enterprise South Cork.



Kristan Warngok, St Peters Community College Passage West with his start up Spice of Life at the Annual Christmas Trade Fair for the **South Cork Schools Enterprise Programme** in Cork International Airport.  
Pic Darragh Kane



Linda Gleeson and Laura Mehigan with their start up company Cupomise from St Peters School, Passage West at the Annual Christmas Trade Fair for the **South Cork Schools Enterprise Programme** in Cork International Airport. Pic Darragh Kane



David O'Brien, owner of The Workshop tea rooms and antiques store at Ballygarvan, Co Cork. The Workshop is one of the many success stories from the **Greenshoots** programme, a free start-up support service for new and small businesses. [greenshootscork.ie](http://greenshootscork.ie)

Picture: Darragh Kane





# Flying colours for students at Cork Airport Christmas Trade Fair

**Schools in the South Cork region had the opportunity last week to showcase their mini companies at the annual Cork Airport Christmas Trade Fair as part of the Schools Enterprise Awards.**

Over three hundred Cork students participated in the event, comprising of 100 mini company groups showcasing their products and services. Students were interviewed by a panel of judges during the Trade Fair and rated on their business acumen, before prize winners were selected according to category during an awards ceremony at the end of the event.

Best Exhibition Stand: 'Comhghairdeas.net' - Middleton CBS

Best Interview: 'The Gadget Gang' - Scoil Mhuire Fan Smaí Blarney

Best Innovation: 'CC

Games' - St Coleman's Community College

Best Marketing: 'East Eats Best' - Middleton CBS

Best Team Spirit: 'Christmas Logs' - Glanmire Community College

Junior Prize: 'Colourful Candles' - Colaiste Choilm, Ballincollig

Intermediate Prize: 'Drihle Nollaig' - Colaiste An Chroí Naofa, Carrig-annar

Overall Winner: 'Adventurousz' - St. Coleman's College, Middleton

Initiated by the Local Enterprise Offices, the Schools Enterprise Awards are open to second level

students across the country and has had over 17,000 participants each year. The Christmas Trade Fair enables students involved in the programme to showcase their mini companies and facilitate inter-school learning and selling.

Due to the huge increase of students in the South Cork region taking part in the programme this year, the event was held at Cork Airport for the very first time.

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"The **South Cork Schools Enterprise Programme** are delighted to be here at the airport today and are extremely grateful to Cork

Airport for hosting the Christmas Trade Fair. There has been a magnificent turn out with over 380 pupils in attendance" added Katherine Corkery, Programme Coordinator, Schools Enterprise South Cork.



• Ciara McGee, Business Advisor Local Enterprise Office with winners of Best Exhibition Stand for their start up Comhghairdeas.net' from Midleton CBS Eoin Fitzgibbon, Darrah Hannigan, Ronan Cotter, Jacques Kinane at the Annual Christmas Trade Fair for the **South Cork Schools Enterprise Programme** in Cork International Airport. (Photo by Darragh Kane).



•Ciara McGee Business Advisor Local Enterprise Office with winners of Best Marketing for their start up East Eats' Best from Midleton CBS Ross O Connor, Ross Walsh, Sean Gilsennan, Ciarr O Connor and Charlie Terry at the Annual Christmas Trade Fair for the **South Cork Schools Enterprise Programme** in Cork International Airport. (Photo by Darragh Kane).





•Ciara McGee, Business Advisor Local Enterprise Office with winners of Best Team Spirit for their start up 'Christmas Logs' Glanmire Community College, Kate Brennan, Katie O'Brien, Jemma Stacey, Victoria Brennan at the Annual Christmas Trade Fair for the **South Cork Schools Enterprise Programme** in Cork International Airport. (Photo by Darragh Kane).



•Jean McCarthy, Rebecca Mulkeane and Liane McCarthy from Glanmire Community College displaying their start up 'That 70s Shop' at the Annual Christmas Trade Fair for the **South Cork Schools Enterprise Programme** in Cork International Airport. (Photo by Darragh Kane).



•Ciara McGee, Business Advisor Local Enterprise Office and Kevin Cullinane, Head of Communications Cork International Airport with Over All Winners who scored highest in the five awards for their start up 'Adventorious' from St. Coleman's College, Midleton, Sean Downey, Cillian Cartyblake at the Annual Christmas Trade Fair for the **South Cork Schools Enterprise Programme** in Cork International Airport. (Photo by Darragh Kane).



•Oisín Parsons and Leon O'Sullivan from Midleton College displaying their Start Up Bee Hotel at the Annual Christmas Trade Fair for the **South Cork Schools Enterprise Programme** in Cork International Airport. (Photo by Darragh Kane).



•Jordan Buckely and Ryan O'Keeffe from CBS Midleton with their start up Candy Creation at the Annual Christmas Trade Fair for the **South Cork Schools Enterprise Programme** in Cork International Airport (Photo by Darragh Kane).





• **Overall Winners for their start up Adventoriousz, Cillian Carty Blake and Sean Downey from St Colmans College Midelton at the Annual Christmas Trade Fair for the South Cork Schools Enterprise Programme in Cork International Airport.**  
*(Photo by Darragh Kane).*



• **Ciara McGee, Business Advisor for Local Enterprise Office with winners of Best Innovation for their start up 'CC Games, from St Coleman's Community College Michael Cosgrave and Diarmuid Coleman, at the Annual Christmas Trade Fair for the South Cork Schools Enterprise Programme in Cork International Airport.**  
*(Photo by Darragh Kane).*



# Success for Midleton students



- **LEFT - Ciara McGee, Business Advisor for Local Enterprise Office, with winners of Best Innovation for their start up 'CC Games' from St Coleman's Community College Michael Cosgrave and Diarmuid Coleman at the Annual Christmas Trade Fair for the South Cork Schools Enterprise Programme in Cork International Airport.**  
*(Photo by Darragh Kane).*



## ***Flying Colours for Students at Cork Airport Christmas Trade Fair as part of the Schools Enterprise Awards***

**S**chools in the South Cork region had the opportunity this week to showcase their mini companies at the annual Christmas trade fair, which took place at Cork Airport on Tuesday December 9 as part of the Schools Enterprise Awards.

During the trade fair, the groups were interviewed by a panel of judges and rated on their business acumen. Winners were awarded prizes by category in a ceremony which took place at the end of the event.

The prizes were received by 'Comhghairdeas. net' from Midleton CBS for Best Exhibition Stand, 'The Gadget Gang' from Scoil Mhuire Fan Smal Blarney for Best Interview, 'CC Games' from St Coleman's Community College for Best Innovation, 'East Eats' from Midleton CBS for Best Marketing and 'Christmas Logs' Glanmire Community College for Best Team Spirit. The intermediate prize was awarded to 'Drithle Nollaig from Colaiste An Chroi Naofa, Carrignavar, Junior prize to 'Colourful Candles' from Colaiste Choilm, Ballincollig and The overall winner who scored highest in the five awards listed was 'Adventoriousz' from St. Coleman's College, Midleton.

Set up by the Local Enterprise Offices, the Schools Enterprise Awards (SEA) are open to second level students across the country and has had over 17,000 participants each year. The Christmas trade fair enables students involved in the programme to showcase their mini companies and facilitate inter-school learning and selling.

Due to the huge increase of students in the South Cork region taking part in the programme this year, the event was held at Cork Airport for the very first time. There were over 300 students attending the event, with 100 mini company groups displaying their products and services.

"Cork Airport are absolutely delighted to host this year's event. It is a unique showcase for fresh thinking and bright ideas and it's great to see these take off at Cork Airport" said Kevin Cullinane, Head of Communications, Cork Airport.

Now in its 10th year, the SEAs is the biggest enterprise competition for students in Ireland. It helps students to grasp real life skills associated with running a real enterprise including working as part of a team, managing production and finances, organising a sales and marketing campaign and liaising directly with customers, judges and the media.

"Youth Entrepreneurship is so vitally important to our future economy and we are delighted to see such vibrant young entrepreneurs, who have brought the airport to life this morning showcasing their innovative ideas." said Ciara McGee, Business Adviser, Local Enterprise Office South Cork

"The **South Cork Schools Enterprise Programme** are delighted to be here at the airport today and are extremely grateful to Cork Airport for hosting the Christmas Trade Fair. There has been a magnificent turn out with over 380 pupils in attendance" added Katherine Corkery, Programme Coordinator, Schools Enterprise South Cork.

The Christmas fair was open to the general public where they were able to see for themselves just how talented these young people were, as well as the opportunity to purchase some extra special Christmas presents.







## Picture Diary

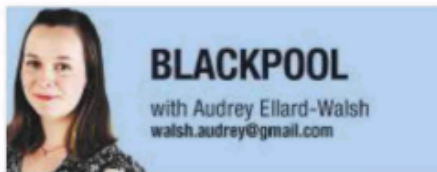


Becky Kelly, Katie Cotter and Kasey Kenny from St Coleman's school in Midelton displaying their start up The Pop Shop at the Annual Christmas Trade Fair for the **South Cork Schools Enterprise Programme** in Cork International Airport.

Picture: Darragh Kane

Picture: Darragh Kane





# Students show innovations at shopping centre trade fair

**STUDENT entrepreneurs will showcase their innovations at a Christmas Trade Fair in Blackpool Shopping Centre this Wednesday, from 10am to 2pm.**

The fair takes place as part of the Cork City Local Enterprise Office (LEO) Schools Enterprise Programme which some 400 students from Cork City are partaking in.

The initiative, which was established in 2004, gives second level students the opportunity to set up and run their own businesses. Students are exposed to all the realities and challenges faced by entrepreneurs today. Working in teams, they are involved in every stage of the business development from market research and production to sales and marketing. It is hoped that through the **Cork Schools Enterprise Programme** many of the participating students will eventually opt for self-employment as a career choice. For the first time this year, Junior Cycle students from first and second year have been invited to participate, and will be selling bespoke Christmas products at the Trade Fair.

Students will also receive a master class on 'How to Bring Your Product to Market' from Tracey Ryan, local entrepreneur and founder of Bia Beauty an award-winning range of natural skin care which combining food and skin products.

The diverse choice of products at this year's Christmas Trade Fair range from the ethically-motivated to the health-conscious as well as educational and social but only one company will be chosen as the winner of the Christmas Trade Fair by judges Chris Dorgan, Cork City Council and business owner and florist Fiona Donnelly of Sakura Floral Design and Flowers in Bloom.

See [www.localenterprise.ie](http://www.localenterprise.ie) for more.



# Cork pair vie for Young Entrepreneur award

Two Cork entrepreneurs are competing in the first national final of Ireland's Best Young Entrepreneur.

Darren Hayes of DA Renewable Energy, supported by Local Enterprise Office Cork City, is in the Best New Idea category, while Myles Murray of PMD Solutions, supported by LEO South Cork, is shortlisted for Best Established Business.

The final will take place at Google this Sunday, December 7th, hosted by maths lecturer and broadcaster Aoibhinn Ní Shúilleabháin.

The 24 finalists, aged between 18 and 30, will deliver live pitches to the judging panel and up to €70,000 in investment funds will be presented to the three winners.

"These aren't just the entrepreneurs of the future; many of this year's finalists are already running successful companies and employing big teams," said Ms Ní Shúilleabháin. "Hopefully, initiatives such as the IBYE competition will help to encourage even more young people to set up a business in the years to come."



## New Innovators RespiraSense

# Breathing monitor gives Cork-based start-up oxygen to accelerate

When a person is very ill a change in their breathing pattern can be a vital indication of a deterioration in their condition. Currently the main method for assessing change is human observation. RespiSense, a new medical device from Cork-based start-up PMD Solutions, aims to support this skill this with smart-monitoring technology.

RespiSense is a discrete sensor pad patients wear on the chest. It monitors breathing continuously and alerts medical practitioners if irregularities are detected. The product has just received its CE mark certification and is about to go on sale in the European Union. Distribution agreements for Asia and the Middle East are being set up.

RespiSense was developed by mechanical engineer Myles Murray, who began working on the idea as a final-year project while studying at Cork Institute of Technology (CIT). The solution won him CIT's entrepreneur of the year award in 2011 and a place on the New Frontiers high-potential start-ups programme run by the Rubicon Centre, CIT's business innovation hub.

Murray has also participated in the Venture Lab technology accelerator programme run by the National Digital Research Centre.

"Our vision is to create a new industry standard in patient breathing monitoring while delivering a measurable economic benefit to the healthcare community," he says.

"The idea behind the product was to support a shift from interventional therapy to preventative monitoring. This shift is happening in healthcare systems all over the world and is being driven by an on going need to reduce adverse events and associated costs."

The inspiration for RespiSense came when he was introduced to Stephen Cusack, pro-

fessor of emergency medicine at University College Cork.

"Stephen, who has since become our clinical director, explained how difficult it is to accurately measure patient breathing," says Murray.

"He was seeing people in the A&E with chest tightness and breathing difficulties and it was a continual challenge to monitor their breathing. I discovered this was a worldwide problem for clinicians and, given that respiratory rate has been shown to be the earliest and foremost indicator of a problem, I felt a solution needed to be found."

RespiSense provides continuous breathing monitoring based on objective measurements. It is suitable for a broad spectrum of patients in all clinical environments and is very user friendly. The product is aimed at the global market with hospital acute medical units as the initial target.

"We partnered with Irish medical devices company Gentian Services in Co Clare to develop the product and this was invaluable," says Murray.

"It enabled lower development costs and the establishment of a world class supply chain that can deliver small-scale products at a competitive price while also being capable of high volume manufacturing. RespiSense is the first of a pipeline of products to be launched over the next year."

PMD, which employs 10 people, is not without competition from multinationals and smaller companies. Murray believes RespiSense ticks more boxes, however: "It is competitively priced, easier to use than existing systems, has broad rather than niche applications and is robust enough not to be influenced by any patient movement."

Investment in PMD to date has been about €650,000, which has come from personal funds, angel investors and the

South Cork local enterprise office. The company has also received support from the Rubicon Centre, Enterprise Ireland and the National Digital Research Centre.

"RespiSense has been three years in development and we believe our timing is very good. Our market is really only emerging and is estimated to be worth about €2 billion by 2020," says Murray.

- OLIVE KEOGH



**“It is easier to use than existing systems and is robust enough not to be influenced by patient movement**  
- RespiSense founder Myles Murray





# New LEO microfinance loans are the business

**Brian Hayes Curtin**

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**It can still be hard for small businesses to secure credit but a new scheme for organisations with fewer than 10 employees and an annual turnover of less than €2m should prove to be really useful.**

Kevin Curran, assistant head of enterprise at the Local Enterprise Office (LEO) Cork North and West explains why the new microfinance loans for small businesses they offer have already proved popular since they were launched in October.

The LEO Microfinance loan was officially launched last month, offering small business loans of between €2,000 and €25,000, at a reduced rate of interest.

Benefiting from advice and support during the application stage, start-ups and small businesses can now apply directly to the LEO Cork North and West for the new LEO Microfinance loan package.

"It's part of a suite of options for people that find it difficult to access credit. There has been a good response to it," says Kevin Curran.

"They are small loans to small businesses but €25,000 can make a big difference. We've gotten good feedback from businesses and the fact that it's administered locally is beneficial.

"Businesses can deal with someone locally. I definitely think that is of value to businesses. Having us on their doorstep is of value,"

he adds.

Under a new protocol between the LEOs around the country and Microfinance Ireland (MFI), it is expected that up to 250 new applications for the loan support will take place this year alone. Based on an average loan size of €15,500, the €3.8 million in lending is expected to support 500 jobs nationwide.

Importantly, loans are generally unsecured and can be used for working capital, as well as items like equipment, hiring new employees and marketing campaigns. Start-ups and small businesses across all industries and sectors, which employ fewer than 10 people, are being encouraged to apply if they are finding it difficult to access credit.

"We base criteria (for getting a loan), not just on facts and figures but also based on a face-to-face meeting and a chat. It's a chance to evaluate and talk them through a project. It's a chance to improve things for businesses," he said.

There is an added benefit to pursuing a loan with the LEOs according to Kevin: "By working through us there is a one per cent reduction in rates." The reduced interest rate for the new LEO Microfinance loan product is 7.5 per cent (7.8 per cent APR), which is one per cent lower than the standard loan rate of 8.5 per cent (8.8 per cent APR).

Michael Hanley of the LEO Cork North and West said: "Getting access to credit can still be difficult,

especially for people looking to get new ventures up and running. We are very well-placed to understand the needs of small businesses in our community, as the 'first stop shop' for anyone starting or growing a small business in the area."

MFI, a not-for-profit lender, was established in October 2012 and received its first loan application the following month. It was set up to deliver the Government's Microenterprise Loan Fund, announced in the Action Plan for Jobs.

Around half of MFI's loan applications already come through the LEOs and the newly-appointed CEO of MFI, Michael Johnson, encourages more start-ups and small business owners to apply through the LEO network.

He said: "Since Microfinance Ireland opened its doors less than two years ago, we've approved loans to 308 small businesses, providing €4.8m in lending, supporting 711 jobs to date. We are in a demanded business, so for every loan application we receive, there could be ten or more potential loan applicants out there, still finding it difficult to get finance for their business."

Three microenterprises, which have successfully applied for MFI loans through the LEOs, showcased their products at the launch. They included Cork businesses PAP Healthcare Ltd (suppliers of sleep apnoea machines to the medical industry), Fastnet Catch Ltd (producers of breaded

fish and shell fish, with gluten-free ingredients) and Veronica's Snacks (distributors of healthier snacks and crisps under the 'Veronica's' brand).

"In the last fortnight, we've had double figures of people applying, around 10 or 12 inquiries. A couple of applicants have been dealt with and sent off to MFI. It is meeting a niche for people and there has been good interest in it," Kevin Curran adds.

Further information is available through [www.localenterpriseoffice.ie](http://www.localenterpriseoffice.ie) and [www.microfinanceireland.ie](http://www.microfinanceireland.ie).



L-r: Michael Hanley, head of local enterprise at the LEO Cork North and West; Sara Healy, asst programme co-ordinator for the **Cork Schools Enterprise Programme**; Cllr Timmy Collins, Deputy Mayor of Cork County; Joan Kelleher business information advisor and Kevin Curran, assistant head of enterprise from the LEO at the launch of The **Cork Schools Enterprise Programme** 2014/2015 back in September.  
*Photo: Sean Jefferies*





# A new take on things

**Róisín Thornhill meets the Cork businessmen flushed with success after Dublin's Web Summit**

**F**resh from his company's inaugural appearance at this year's Web Summit, the biggest technology event of its kind in Europe, Denis O'Mahoney, Chief Marketing Officer of Cork start-up Votake, is feeling positive: "It went even better than expected."

If anything, Denis is in fact playing down the company's success at the event. This year, the Web Summit – the fourth such annual event – had six-hundred-and-three speakers from some of the most successful and influen-

tial companies on the planet today. Those attending were addressed by speakers who included Peter Theil, the co-founder of PayPal, and John Sculley, the former Chief Executive Officer of Apple. The event was the brain child of Paddy Cosgrave, an Irish entrepreneur, and saw one thousand journalists and twenty-two-thousand attendees from Ireland and from around the world descend on the RDS for three days last week.

Votake was one of four start-up finalists that were selected by members of the

Allied Irish Banks Youth Hatch Incubator Programme for young entrepreneurs to compete for a prize of €10,000 (footage of the pitches submitted by each of the four entrants will shortly be available on Allied Irish Banks' YouTube channel). Although Votake did not ultimately win the overall prize, O'Mahoney declares that its being chosen to compete with a pitch was in fact a 'huge validation' of the company. Its interactive platform TapStak struck a chord with the younger attendees at the event. This is quite a validation indeed when you bear in mind the estimated five hundred plus start-ups vying for attention at the Web Summit.

TapStak provides synergy in smartphone applications by enabling a stack (or stak!) of interactions currently dependant on the verbal, digital or written word to be made available via push-button, or 'tap', technology. Data capture and processing are at the very heart of customer relationships and the developers of TapStak claim that it will open up new avenues and solve problems for both end-users and content providers. And, importantly as TapStak is a shared platform, it will reduce development costs for the technological industry and pain for end-users. What it will provide will be one shared platform along with shared costs and also shared interactive experiences. Although they have initially targeted the entertainment and media industries, the developers feel that their product will also have a future use as a tool with information gathering functions which would be suitable for use in scenarios such as opinion polls and elections.

O'Mahoney admits that the



description of the platform's capability is limited and so he prefers to demonstrate the capabilities of the product at first hand. The Vostake website will be upgraded to include an interactive demonstration of TapStak in January, when the product will be officially launched. He laughs off the suggestion that the contentious WiFi outage at the Web Summit hindered the demonstration of TapStak for potential investors and says, "It wasn't as bad as the media were making out: we made do. It was down on Tuesday and sporadic on Wednesday but luckily we had some back-up data on hand to show people." O'Mahoney was also enthused by the atmosphere at the event and says, "There's a genuine hunger out there in marketing for new and innovate ways to retain engagement with consumers and *TapStak* provides that."

The company consists of Tony O'Donovan, its Chief Executive Officer, Denis O'Mahoney, Chief Marketing Officer and Assumpta Donovan, its Chief Financial Officer. None of the executives are coders or programmers of any kind. O'Donovan had a spark of an idea and turned to O'Mahoney to help fulfil its potential. "Myself and Tony hadn't seen each other in years. In fact he knew me back when I was involved in a music publishing company.... we bumped into each other leaving a Weblink conference and we reconnected."

O'Donovan is a graduate of the New Frontiers Entrepreneurial Development Programme, which is funded by Enterprise Ireland and helps entrepreneurs to validate the market potential of their business ideas. After joining forces, both men realised they needed assistance from a technical source to develop their product.

*Vostake* turned to the Nimbus Centre at Cork Institute of Technology to begin initial development on the prototype of TapStak. The Nimbus Centre, a huge state-of-the-art facility, is Ireland's only research centre which is devoted to the field of networked embedded electronic systems. It supports the three individual and vital pillars: Research, Learning and Industry. The 'Industry' pillar is known as the TEC Gateway. Nimbus is funded under the Higher Education Authority's Programme for Research in Third Level Institutions by Enterprise Ireland, Science Foundation Ireland and by direct industry funding.

Vostake received additional support from the South Cork Local Enterprise Office which serves as a 'first stop shop to provide support and services to start grow and develop micro business in the South Cork area'. The 'software mentor' provided by the Local Enterprise Office helped Vostake to develop the technical specification from which DMS (the company's tech pro partners) could then develop the platform that has now become TapStak. DMS is a global entity which is largely based Sri Lanka but which also has a presence in Ireland. The company has over five hundred employees and thirty years of experience in different areas of information technology. The company's head of mobile Dhananjaya Premaratna joined Vostake at the Web Summit so as to provide additional technical support for TapStak.

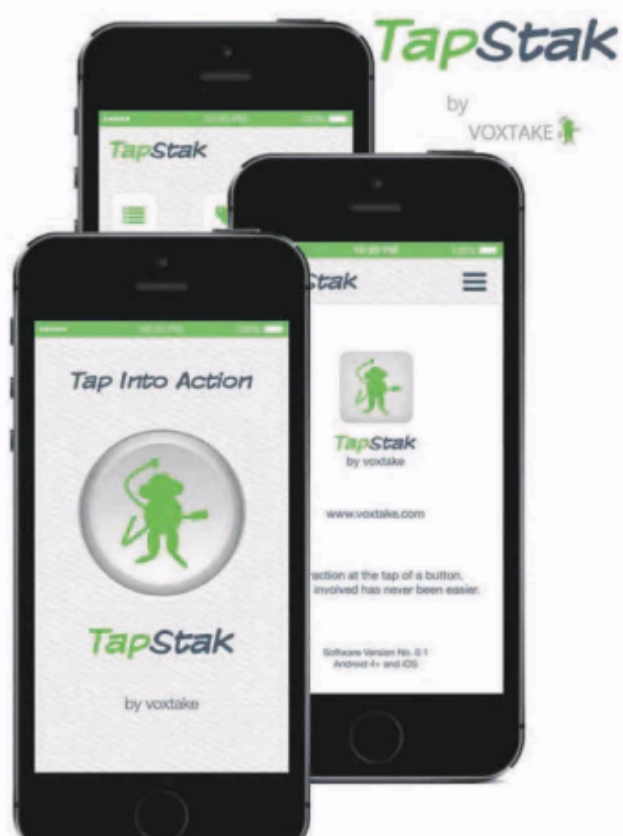
TapStak is currently in final testing for iOS (Apple) and for Android applications. The testing will be completed shortly and the platform will be launched in January. It is promised that TapStak will unlock the full commercial potential of the smartphone

as a powerful 'person-to-real-world' interactive device with one simple interface. With over 1.6 million people in Ireland alone currently owning a smartphone and considering that eighty nine per-cent of consumer media time is spent using mobile applications, one can only conclude that if TapStak fulfils its potential the possibilities for it and for Vostake are endless.

**"There's  
a genuine  
hunger out  
there in  
marketing  
for new and  
innovative  
ways to retain  
engagement."**



Picture by Rob Lamb.







# Deadline looms for online trading vouchers

**Brian Hayes Curtin**

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**The deadline for applications for the online trading voucher (OTV) scheme, which offer matched funding to small businesses and retailers, is approaching fast.**

The scheme offers funds to the value of €2,500 to businesses to develop and improve their online trading presence, but businesses must apply by the Friday 28 November deadline.

The OTV scheme which was rolled out by the local enterprise offices (LEOs) in Cork this summer.

Although digital trade in Ireland is growing at a rate of 16 per cent per annum and the digital economy in Ireland set to grow to €21 billion by 2017, only 23 per cent of Irish SMEs are currently trading online. The scheme offers small businesses a huge opportunity to develop and engage in the hugely powerful market of online sales.

The LEOs in Cork city and county have €150,000 worth of OTVs available to distribute to eligible SMEs in the region, which can be used for the development or upgrade of ecommerce websites by implementing online payments or booking systems, purchasing internet related software, online advertising, development of an app, implementation of a digital marketing strategy or training/skills development to establish and manage an online trading activity. Over €100,000 worth of OTVs have been awarded to Cork businesses in recent weeks.

The scheme is open to businesses that are trading for over 12 months and have a limited online trading presence, less than 10

employees and a turnover less than €2m.

Sean O'Sullivan, head of enterprise at the Local Enterprise Office South Cork, said: "International research shows that SMEs who adopt online trading grow twice as fast and export twice as much as their offline competitors.

"Trading online offers a major opportunity to Cork retailers and SMEs, at a time when growth in these sectors is so imperative."

For more information or to apply for the Online Trading Voucher Programme before Friday 28 November, call Ciara on 021-4975281, email ciara.fitzgerald@leo.corkcoco.ie or visit [www.localenterprise.ie/southcork](http://www.localenterprise.ie/southcork).



Aimie Musgrave, Crunch Food Company; Audrey Lehane, Azure Jewellery and Mark Roche, Medco, recipients of Online Trading Vouchers (OTVs) from the Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) in Cork. Small businesses and retailers must apply before Friday, 28 November for match funding to the value of €2,500.

**Photo: Darragh Kane**



## Innovative sports device to capture athletes' attention

THE lactate threshold is something all competitive athletes are constantly aware of.

Exercise drives up your lactic acid levels, forcing your muscles to shut down. Stay under the threshold, and you can keep going. Until now real-time measurement of lactic acid requires an invasive procedure, drawing blood from the fingertip or earlobe, or a crude estimation system that can give an inaccurate result.

Enduro Pro, founded by Ian Kerins, James Foody and Josef Tugwell, with help from the Tyndall Institute, is developing a watch-like device to measure lactic acid in real time. The device was named Best New Idea by the South Cork LEO, and received €10,000 in investment. He said this system will allow athletes to constantly monitor themselves and train to the highest level.

Myles Murray and PMD Solutions have put together another monitoring device to track the "lost vital." Mr Murray, a CIT mechanical engineering graduate, has developed RespiraSense, to measure breathing in hospital settings.

"Respiratory rate is the first sign to change if a patient is getting worse," he said. "But the standard for measurement is still a nurse watching a patient and counting their breaths," he said.

His device measures the rate automatically with no need to take up the time of a health care professional.

PMD Solutions was named Best Established Business with New Add-on by the South Cork LEO, and received €20,000 in funding. Pundit Arena is rapidly becoming one of Ireland's top sports sites, under the stewardship of Richard Barrett from Grange. The site offers coverage from fans and experts, with anyone able to apply to write. Mr Barrett's site was named Best Start-up while he picked up the Young Entrepreneur of the Year award, receiving €20,000 from the South Cork LEO. South Cork Nominees





**Enduro Pro's South Cork entrepreneurs (from left) Ian Kerins, Peter O'Mahony, James Foody.**