



Young Entrepreneur 2013 in Association

Charleville Young Entrepreneur of the Year Final

One of the most innovative ventures in promoting business acumen among students takes place next Friday, 8th March in the Charleville Park Hotel, with the hosting of the Charleville Young Entrepreneur of the Year Final. The Young Entrepreneur of the Year Programme started last September in the three secondary schools in Charleville, CBS, St. Mary's and Mannix College and since then 19 teams from these three schools have been working hard at bringing business ideas to fruition. The programme was initiated by Referral Partners, a group of like-minded business people from the Charleville area with the aim of fostering entrepreneurship among young people and giving them a taste of what it is like to run a real life business.

Referral Partners set the ball rolling last April when they approached the three local schools and they got great support from Anne Doherty of St. Mary's, Maurice Keohane of CBS and Kevin White of Mannix College. With the support of the schools, the programme was launched last September, when mentors were introduced to the teams in the schools. Each mentor is a business person and they soon set to work with the teams to develop business ideas, do market research, and carry out research, budgeting, marketing and all the different aspects of bringing a business idea to fruition. The teams have worked very hard since last September, completing modules, at the end of which they met with the three judges, who are Martin

Condon from Cavanaghs, Patsy O'Brien, formerly of Golden Vale/Kerry Group, and Belinda Murphy, Business Development Manager at Croom Enterprise Centre.

The judges spoke to all the teams, who made presentations on their products and on Friday next, 8th March in the Charleville Park Hotel, all teams will be presented with their certificates on stage, after which the winning team will be announced and crowned the 2013 Charleville Young Entrepreneur of the Year. All 19 teams will have stands at the event displaying their products.

Michael Collins, Chairman of Referral Partners said this week that running the programme has been challenging, but also rewarding on many levels. "In a way we have all been learning and I would like to thank everyone, the judges and mentors for giving their time and energy and also the schools which have been so supportive."

Speaking recently, Donal Mulcahy, Education Officer at Referral Partners, said the programme gives students an idea of what it's like to be out selling every day, dealing with the ups and downs of trying to make a success of a business idea. "If we can inspire them, then they may go out someday and become successful," he said, adding that the various teams had come up with some fantastic ideas.



Members of Referral Partners at a recent meeting.



Yvonne Barry, **Quintas**, Anthony Dinan, BCR Radio, Michael Collins, Collins Energy and Chair of Referral Partners, Aine Collins TD and Ken Wheeler, BCR Radio