

August 2009

Chief Commissioner's Award

As the Leaving Cert results arrived last week and future options began to unfold, 2 students were receiving their points in slightly more unusual circumstances than many of their friends. In various misty muddy fields or laneways around the Dingle Way walking trail, Orla Keady from Galway and Tracy Chambers from Cork and 12 other members of the Irish Girl Guides from Donegal, Dublin, Galway & Cork taking part in the Chief Commissioners Award 2009 expedition around the Dingle Peninsula. Tracy chose to build the suspense a little more by not receiving her results till the end of the expedition, a wait well worth the trouble when she finally heard her points. Meanwhile Orla and team joined her mother's team over breakfast in the porch of their tents on Wednesday morning to hear the news. Her mum had also taken on the challenge of the expedition, along with 2 friends, all 3 of whom were persuaded over the last 8 years to come along and help as leaders with the local Ladybird, Brownie, Guide and Senior Branch units and they are loving every minute since, together with their daughters and friends, old and new.

The Award (or the "Chief's" as it is affectionately known) has now run 12 times since 1987 in various corners of the country and many past participants and staff will be familiar with the format:

- Teams of 2 or 3 are dropped off with a map at a location unknown to them, having been deprived of most luxuries during a rigorous gear check, leaving them with only a compass, tent, stove, other minimal weatherproof lightweight supplies, one mobile phone per team for emergencies only, and a budget to challenge any recession of less than €5 per person per day.
- They must then hike more than 60kms and camp over 5 days to reach a prescribed pick up point.
- They are given a list of projects and challenges, of which 8 must be completed and recorded every day, along with other stories, their route plans, menus and budgets.
- On day 5, after a quick shower back at base camp, before any Awards might be presented, teams must undergo 2 assessment interviews with panels of previous participants & experienced Leaders, and demonstrate again how phenomenal they really think they were over those 5 long days.

This is not for the faint hearted, and we warmly congratulate all who took on and enjoyed the challenge.

Here's to all those who may consider taking the challenge in 2011 for our Centenary.