

Shine a Light Sleepout in aid of Focus Ireland

by Amy Hanton and Finna Donoghue

On the 17th of October, 91 Transition Year students took part in the Shine a Light Sleepout in the school to fundraise for the charity Focus Ireland. Each student was given a sponsorship card to fill as much as they could for the event. Focus Ireland is a charity for homelessness which organizes housing projects, campaigns for the rights of homeless people and provides education about homelessness to people across the country.

The TYs arrived at the school at 7pm on Friday evening and organized their sleeping gear before heading outside into the cold. We were able to order some delicious hot food from a variety of places, including Dominos and Apache, which reminded us how lucky we were to have the ability to do that. We got all wrapped up in our warmest clothes to huddle outside for the next few hours. A few girls brought along speakers so we could play a variety of great music to keep our energy and spirits up. The entire group had great fun singing and dancing in the school courtyard together.



At around 1am we were all sent into the PE hall as the forecast showed it was about to rain, but that did not stop us from having fun! We all played our favorite songs and danced around the hall until we dropped!

As it got later in the night a thunder and lightning storm began with rain pelting off the windows, loud clashes of thunder and flashes of lightning every few minutes. We all appreciated how lucky we really were to have warmth and shelter on a stormy night. It made us really empathize with people whose reality is living on the street and appreciate the work of Focus Ireland.

At 5am, after we had all stuffed ourselves with chocolate and sang our hearts out it was time to get some sleep.

Most of us started to wake up at 7am after a short and broken sleep to pack our things and clean up the hall to get ready to go home.

The 'Shine a light' sleepout was a very important thing to do as it gave us a small insight into the plight of a homeless person. Even though the rain interrupted our sleepout and moved us into the hall, we hope that the money we have raised will help Focus Ireland and all their incredible work they do. We are very proud that we have raised just over 5000 euro for Focus Ireland.

We all enjoyed the sleepout very much, it is a night to remember. We are very thankful to the Shine a Light committee for organizing the sleepout and the teachers who volunteered to sleepout with us.

