Our first ever Grandparents Day in St Marys Secondary School Ballina

Grandparents' day was a big hit in St Marys secondary school.

It was packed with various entertainment and the grandparents loved it. The idea came from the October Suicide Awareness Month.

I became aware of it online and saw some lovely quotes about not giving up, associated with suicide awareness month. I pitched this to my Positive Mental Health teacher and Transition Year Coordinator, and asked her if we could we make suicide awareness month posters and put them up around the school. My teacher thought this was a brilliant idea and asked me to prepare a presentation for the class to show them what exactly we would be doing. The class loved it and they all made posters to stick up around the school. All the posters included positive mental health quotes about not giving up and asking for help is okay. These posters really added to the awareness of suicide prevention awareness month in our school. The presentation I showed the class really opened amazing ideas.

The whole class then came together and decided we should fundraise for a charity that supported people in their mental health struggles and wellbeing. The class suggested of an afternoon of “Tea, Treats, Live Music and Fun” for our Grandparents. We all agreed that our grandparents are people we all look up to as wise role models. That made us think of our Wellbeing Wall. The idea of this Wall was to invite the Grandparents to write a piece of advice to their 16-year-old self. We also decided to include Grandfriends to support students whose grandparents may not be with us today.

Our afternoon was open to all First Years and Transition Years. All the First Years and Transition Years helped to put the day together by baking decorating hospitality singing dancing etc. We supplied tea and all the baked goods for the grandparents. We had many people singing and Irish dancing and even some traditional Irish music which supplied amazing entertainment for the grandparents and grand friends. We also asked the teachers in our school to write down some advice they would give their 16-year-old self. The wall turned out to be a positive feature of the afternoon, and everyone enjoyed the day. The best part is we raised 510 Euro on the day.

After careful consideration we decided to give the money to our local Mental Health Association in Mayo. This association works closely with the young people of Mayo, supporting them during challenging times.

I am so glad that Grandparent's Day was successful, and we raised awareness about suicide prevention month too.

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