

Belmont Primary School 'loving' The Life Channel Schools network



30 April 2009:

The Life Channel Schools network held a launch at Belmont Primary School - the first primary school in Northern Ireland to install the state-of-the-art TV channel - 28th April.

TV presenter Lynda Bryans said, "The Life Channel is a highly informative, great idea."

The Life Channel Schools network, in partnership with Belfast Education & Library Board (BELB), delivers high quality programming, supporting key government initiatives such as the DENI's Every School a Good School policy. The network operates as a communications platform for each school to communicate with their students, whilst other partners including the IFA, PSNI and CSPs can also add content designed to highlight community initiatives. The Life Channel also helps schools to tackle key issues children may come across such as child obesity, staying healthy and being safe.

Olwen McIlroy, Principal at Belmont Primary School, said, "The children are loving [The Life Channel Schools network]. They're loving making the programmes, they're loving watching the programmes; and they are just so delighted to see themselves on television, in among proper programmes.

"It's such a brilliant idea, and I have to say that the level of support that we've got - from technical support, to advice and guidance and all sorts of ideas - has been fabulous. And even for people that aren't terribly technically minded, it's very, very easy to do," McIlroy added.

Since its launch by former Prime Minister Tony Blair in February 2007, over 1000 schools in England have signed up with The Life Channel Schools network. An informal research study carried out by The Life Channel found that 88 per cent of schools installed the system to communicate key health and well-being messages to students; 81.5 per cent of schools with the network agreed it helps educate young people about nutrition.

Glentoran FC players Daryl Forgyce and Mattie Burrows, together with Glens Commercial Manager Peter Halpin and Director Stafford Reynolds joined the children, school staff and parents at the launch of this most important and exciting initiative.



(Left to right) Principal Olwen McIlroy; David Cargo, Chief Executive of the Belfast Education Board; and TV presenter Lynda Bryans stand in front of The Life Channel's screens at Tuesday's launch.



The Life Channel's staff members at the launch: (Left to right) Alan Mains, Charlene Fitzsimmons, Barbara Smith, Wendy Phillips, Jane White, and Martin Beattie with Belmont Primary School students.

"The Life Channel Schools network has the very exciting potential to make a difference to children in schools all over Northern Ireland," said Reynolds. "I expect to see the network rapidly grow over the next two years."

Other schools in Southern ELB and South Eastern ELB regions are also launching The Life Channel Schools network. Schools involved in The Life Channel pilot include Ashfield Boys' High School, Good Shepherd Nursery School, Good Shepherd Primary School, Corpus Christi College, Hardy Memorial Primary School, Ashfield Boys' High School, Loughshore ERC, Academy Primary School, Abbey Primary School, Belfast Boys' Model School and Belfast Model School for Girls, with many more schools pending.

At the launch the news was announced that The Life Channel has been nominated to present to education's most influential leaders at the International Confederation of Principals biannual conference, to be held this July in Singapore.

The Life Channel plans to roll out the network across all schools in Northern Ireland over the next two years.

End

Note to Editors:

For more information regarding The Life Channel and any matters related to this press release please contact:
PR Executive Diana Bradley, The Life Channel
Tel: 01772 722 510 ext 226
Email: diana.bradley@thelifechannel.com

Information Officer John Martin
Belfast Education and Library Board
T: 02890 564333
Email: john.martin@belb.co.uk



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT THROUGH OUT-OF-HOME TELEVISION

The Life Channel Schools network, launched by Tony Blair in 2007, is an in-school television network owned and managed by the Life Channel. It is currently contracted in over 1000 schools, with a network growing rapidly across the UK. Content in Northern Ireland supports education initiatives including Every School a Good School and NICCY's priorities, encouraging students to live the best life they can. The channel also provides interactive capabilities for 'school/college-specific' programming, where teaching staff, pupils, students and local authorities can broadcast their own content. The Life Channel system is a sophisticated, campus-wide digital notice-board which key stake holders can use to convey information to all students in schools.

The Life Channel was launched in 2004 and first implemented into GP surgeries throughout the UK. Today, The Life Channel network can be found in over 4000 fully contracted sites, including GPs, schools, colleges, pharmacies, opticians and children's activity centres, and growing. Heralded as one of the best 'local community' and health-related communication platforms, The Life Channel is the largest practice-based healthcare TV network in the UK and Europe. With a unique audience of over 5 million patients per month, The Life Channel is a screen-based communications network that, unlike broadcast television, goes out-of-home to find its audience.