

GENERAL NEWS

Dromin/Athlacca can Make it Happen



The Make it Happen awards are a community-focused initiative by the Limerick Leader in association with Combined Insurance. The €20,000 prize fund will be awarded to individuals, community groups and charities in Limerick involved in community projects to help them make a dream a reality. Each week, NORMA PRENDIVILLE profiles a project from around the county.

SINCE early October, Friday night has become fun night for a big bunch of eight-to-twelve year-olds living in the parishes of Dromin/Athlacca. They are burning up energy, learning new skills but more importantly, they are making new friends.

"We want them to go home exhausted but wanting to come back the next week," laughs Mary Blewitt, one of six adult leaders in the newly-formed Dromin/Athlacca Youth Club.

It all started last April. Mary explains when a group of like-minded parents in the parish realised there was a need to bring



Dromin/Athlacca having fun

the children together in a social setting. "There are long distances in our combined parishes and a lot of the kids don't go to the same schools so they don't know their neighbours. And it isn't always possible to have a play-date with their best pal who

lives maybe six miles down the road."

The six, Mary Blewitt, Mary O'Dea and Mary O'Donoghue along with Cyril Power, Dan Durrane and Martin Begley, then approached the Limerick Youth Service and undertook a course on how to

set up and run a club. They also did a child protection course, Children First.

"Then we set the date," says Mary. "Between us, we had ten or eleven children of the age-group and we hoped to have maybe 20 or so."

Instead, when the doors of the Dromin Community Centre opened on Friday, October 8, 32 members turned up to register. And they have been coming back every week since. In addition, some other parents have lent a hand in the one and a half-hour sessions, something which the leaders hope to build on.

The first half-hour is spent as "community time", followed by sessions playing volleyball, indoor soccer and board games. They are also planning to stage a play.

"The Community Council gave us a donation to get started," says Mary, who is treasurer. "We want it to be activity-based because we are very conscious of children sitting at home in front of a TV with a playstation. We need to buy mats and other sports equipment."