

RECOGNISING OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS

The ASTI Awards celebrate those who have provided invaluable service to the teaching profession and the union, those who excel in their own right and provide a valuable example to their students.



Outstanding Teacher Achievement Award winner Scott Gaynor was recognised for his role in the resurgence of soccer in his school. Photo by Piaras Ó Midheach.



Outstanding Individual Achievement Award winner Mary Corless. Photo by Gerge Reid.

We continue our profiles of the 2023 winners in this edition of *ASTIR*, highlighting the Outstanding Teacher and Outstanding Individual Award recipients, and the winner of one of the two 2023 ASTI centenary scholarship bursaries.

Outstanding Teacher Achievement Award

A teacher in Wexford is a 2023 ASTI Outstanding Teacher Achievement Award winner for his role in the resurgence of soccer in a girls' school, with multiple age groups and teams now competing and achieving success.

Scott Gaynor is an English and history teacher in Presentation Secondary School in Wexford Town. Working alongside his colleagues, Scott restarted the school's soccer teams and there are now four active teams within the school: first year, under-15s, under-17s, and senior.

It is through his passion and commitment to the sport and to his students that there are now over 100 students in the school training, playing, and representing their school in soccer. The teams have been very successful, with the first year, under-15 and senior teams all winning their respective Leinster Girls Leagues in 2022.

Scott recognises the importance of acknowledging student participation. He initiated awarding graduating students who played for the school a pennant, which students take great pride in. He has also worked to provide opportunities to play outside of the school. Presentation has now officially partnered with Wexford FC's women's team and Scott is involved with school soccer at all levels in Wexford, Leinster and nationwide.

Scott has organised trips to see both the Irish men's and women's teams play. Students have even travelled to see teams like Manchester United and

Manchester City play, and to attend a week-long training camp in Barcelona. Seren Ward, a former student who recently signed with Sligo Rovers, said: "I think Mr Gaynor's dedication to promoting the women's game and sport in general is outstanding. Personally, Mr Gaynor helped me to improve as a player while I played with the school, and his enthusiasm and support was always evident."

Outstanding Individual Achievement Award

Mary Corless is a 2023 ASTI Outstanding Individual Achievement Award winner for her athletic exploits. She is a past pupil of Scoil Bhríde, Mercy Secondary School in Tuam, Co. Galway, where she now teaches science. She has been a competitive swimmer from a young age, and won five national swimming titles as a teenager. Her more recent achievements include finishing second in her age group in a 2019 Cork Ironman event and qualifying for the 2019 Ironman World Championship in Kona, Hawaii, where she was the fastest Irish woman home.

At the 2022 Connacht Cycling Awards she was named the Female Rider of the Year (all disciplines) after winning the Connacht Road Race Championship and the first ever National eRacing Championships. Mary is also a volunteer coach and was a guide for a para triathlete in the TriLakes Triathlon Club in 2022.

Mary is not one to shy away from new challenges. Having worked in clinical diagnostics, she only recently changed careers to become a teacher, and achieved the highest mark in her class for her research project in her PME. Her colleagues say that she is an excellent role model for her students, demonstrating what can be achieved through consistent effort and hard work.



From left: Geraldine O'Brien (ASTI President), Teresa Gallagher (ASTI Bursary recipient), and Kieran Christie (ASTI General Secretary).

Bursary Award

To mark our centenary in 2009, the ASTI inaugurated an annual scholarship scheme for ASTI members. The aim of the scheme is to assist members in

undertaking further studies relating to teaching, education or trade unionism. There is no shortage of research on teaching and education, but the difference with teacher-led research is that it is embedded in the day-to-day realities of the classroom. This offers a richer evidence base for the purposes of developing sound education policy.

Teresa Gallagher is a teacher at Pobalscoil Ghaoth Dobhair, Co. Donegal, and is a recipient of an ASTI Bursary. Teresa is undertaking a PhD in Education at Dublin City University. Her research aims to explore inclusivity challenges relating to students with additional educational needs in second-level schools in Gaeltacht DEIS regions.

This study will add an under-examined perspective – that of the Gaeltacht DEIS post-primary teacher – to professional conversations on second-level education. It will also provide evidence that will inform policy-making pertaining to minority languages. Her research aims to explore challenges in achieving inclusion as they exist at the intersection of Irish medium education and disadvantaged status.

ASTI scholarships are determined by a Selection Committee whose criteria include relevance of the proposed course of study to the professional lives of teachers and second-level education, potential for the study to inform the ongoing policy agenda and work of the ASTI, and potential for the research to enhance the quality of teaching and learning.

<https://www.asti.ie/member-benefits/awardsgrants/>

ECO-UNESCO

ENVIRONMENTAL WORKSHOPS FOR YOUNG MINDS!

Are your students passionate and eager to find ways to protect our planet? Want to make a real difference? Dive into our series of engaging environmental workshops tailored for young people aged 10-18!

Our workshops offer hands-on activities, discussions, and expert-led sessions.

Topics include: Fashion Focus, Exploring Ecology and Biodiversity, Climate Action, Waste Warriors and more!

To find out more scan the QR code, contact us on bookings@ecounesco.ie or call us on (01) 6 62 5491







Want to take environmental action in your school or local community and have a positive impact? Sign up for our Young Environmentalist Awards now www.yea.ie

Let's make a difference together!