

2009 Leading Lights Awards

1. Category – “Organisation” and winner of the Supreme Award

Winner – Matthews Coach Hire Ltd

Matthews Coaches were nominated for the award by Monaghan County Council and Louth County Council. They were chosen as the category winner for the initiatives which they have introduced in their business in the interest of road safety.

Matthews Coach Hire Ltd (based in Inniskeen, Co. Monaghan) is a family run business set up by Dundalk man Paddy Matthews and his wife Mary in 1995. The firm provides an important commuter- service to people working in Dublin – but is also very popular with day-trippers and concert-goers. The initiatives that they have included in their business to promote road safety include:

- The oldest coach in the fleet is 3 years old;
- All coaches have been fitted with Alcolock 500 breathalysers;
- The coaches have been fitted with tamper-proof Digital Tachographs – so that drivers cannot exceed the maximum hours of driving;
- CCTV cameras and tracking devices have been installed – these monitor the driver's behaviour and that of other road users.
- Passengers view a DVD during the course of their journey which illustrates safe methods for boarding or disembarkation.
- The firm has developed a comprehensive Health & Safety Statement – which is supplied to all new drivers when recruited.

2. Category – “Education”

Winner – ‘Just One Life’ initiative from Wexford County Council and Wexford Rotary Club

The ‘Just One Life’ road safety initiative was nominated by Wexford County Council. Wexford County Council and Wexford Rotary Club joined forces to provide this road safety initiative aimed at young people. The objective of the “Just One Life” programme is to save young drivers lives by demonstrating the common causes of accidents to 15 – 17 year old students in a practical manner which they can understand. The students are also provided with an opportunity to experience driving difficulties at first hand, as they participate as passengers in a vehicle emergency stop procedure performed by the highly trained specialist drivers of the An Garda Síochána Traffic Corps.

The delivered programme consists of a number of different sessions including “Hazard and Perception” delivered by An Garda Síochana, Road Demonstration delivered by An Garda Síochana, “Finance and Insurance” delivered by Sheridan Insurances, “Psychology, Peer Pressure” delivered by Wexford Mental Health Services, “Accidents do Happen” delivered by a Consultant from the A&E department of Wexford General Hospital and it is followed by review and discussion. Since its inception in 2007, more than 2000 students from 20 second level schools in County Wexford have completed the one day series of seminars. It is an excellent initiative and reaches a large number of students in many schools throughout the county.

3. Category – “Media”

Winner – Midlands Radio 103FM

Midlands Radio 103 FM, nominated by Superintendent Ken Brennan, Westmeath was chosen to receive the media award. Midlands Radio 103 FM have adopted the road safety message and utilise every opportunity to promote road safety which includes inviting members of An Garda Síochana to their studio to promote all aspects of road safety to the general public. Topics aired include annual drink driving campaign, speed cameras, traffic diversions, road safety over bank holiday weekends, young drivers, motorcyclists, and the movement of agricultural vehicles on roads, HGVs, vulnerable road users, general enforcement issues and traffic management. They consistently promote road safety messages through their programmes by advising motorists to drive with dipped headlights for example.

4. Category – “Community”

Winner – ‘For Sale, For Race’, C.B.S. Tralee, Co. Kerry

The “For Sale for Race” road safety initiative was nominated by Superintendent Gerard Dillane, Cork City. As part of the Young Social Innovator competition 2008/2009, the Transition Year students at Christian Brothers School, Tralee, Co. Kerry identified a social issue that concerned the local community which concerned the racing culture among some young drivers of modified cars. They noticed that the racing culture depends in part on the printing of ‘For Sale’ signs and accompanying numbers on the side or rear windows of modified cars. From their research, they discovered that 67% of students were aware that ‘For Sale’ sign was advertising a race while 60% of parents were not aware of this. 65% of parents admitted to being affected adversely by boy-racers in some way. The students

presented the survey and findings to the Transport Committee in Dáil Éireann. This project received a significant amount of media coverage both locally and nationally, including coverage on the Marian Finucane radio programme and 'Ear to the Ground.'

Other activities that were organised by the group included a demonstration and prayer service to remember the 259 lives lost from January to November '08. A Road Safety Awareness Day was organised in the Square Tralee to raise awareness among the general public regarding the importance of road safety. This was organised in conjunction with key stakeholders such as the Gardaí, Kerry County council and the Emergency Services. The schools drama group from the awareness day along with the rest of the class prepared a short drama and launched it on Youtube. Students were asked to hold a prominent stand in the RDS, Dublin by Young Social Innovators at which they were awarded third place in the overall category.

2008 Leading Lights Awards

The late Mr Vivian Foley, an award winning author who lectured at Cork Institute of Technology was awarded a Posthumous Award for his work in promoting road safety right up to the time of his death in 2003. The author of the book "*Is Your Car Safe?*" Vivian was well known for his writing on the issue of road safety and had received a special commendation at the 2000 Prince Michael International Road Safety Awards.

Among the other recipients of the *Leading Lights Road Safety Awards* were:

- The Kildare Road Users Association (KRUA), a group of volunteers including driving instructors, bus drivers and principals who devise road safety initiatives and work with the Road Safety Officer to implement them;
- Micilín Feeney, a survivor of a road collision whose story is featured in the RSA's 'Crashed Lives' TV campaign and who has worked to raise awareness of road safety among teenagers and young adults. Micilín, who crashed after drink driving, now talks to young people nationwide about how the crash changed his life forever;
- Derrywash National School for their re-recording of the 'Safe Cross Code', reminding people of the importance of being familiar with the basics of road safety, such as finding a safe place to cross the road;

- Tommy Marron of Mid West Radio for keeping road safety issues consistently on the agenda for his popular mid-morning talkshow;
- Ann Moran, whose daughter was killed in a collision, for bravely sharing her personal experiences at local and national Road Safety events;
- Aileen Ferguson, Secretary of Kells Road Races in County Meath for her work in primary and secondary schools, advising youngsters of the importance of staying safe on the roads;
- Susan Gray, Founder of Public Against Road Carnage (PARC), whose husband Stephen was killed in a road collision four years ago and who has since dedicated herself to raising awareness of road safety.