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## **Press Release**

### **Special Schools Sportshall Athletics Challenge**

Special Schools in Donegal recently participated in a sportshall athletics coaching programme which gave children with learning disabilities the opportunities to participate in fun athletic events with their peers of similar ability. The two Donegal schools “Little Angels” and “St Bernadettes” participated in a six week coaching programme focusing on the development of the fundamental movement skills. Coaches from Letterkenny Athletics Club (Sharon Bradley & Anthony Ward) facilitated the programme which saw children with mild to severe disabilities take part.

A fun jamboree hosted by Donegal and Sligo Sports Partnerships was the culmination of the coaching programme and saw two Special Schools from Sligo – “St Cecílias and St Josephs” travel to Donegal to participate with the Donegal schools. Under the guidance of the local coaches children were put through their paces competing in the events they had practised in the lead up to the sportshall competition. Over 60 children from both Counties attended on the day and a great time was had by all. Each child was awarded with a medal for their participation in the event; there were no winners or losers.

School feedback on the sportshall initiative was very positive with schools already expressing an interest in participating next year. It is hoped that by facilitating initiatives such as these Donegal Sports Partnership can strengthen club – school links and create a pathway for children to participate in mainstream sports clubs.

Sports Inclusion Disability Officer with Donegal Sports Partnership Thérèse Laverty said she was delighted with such a great turnout on the day. “It is great to see the children having fun competing with their peers. The whole focus of the event is fun and participation it’s not about having winning and losing teams. It is now hoped that this will turn into an annual event that will grow from year to year.”

Donegal Sports Partnership would like to extend a big “Thank You” to the schools for taking part in the programme and committing time to attend the event and also to the coaches Sharon Bradley, Anthony Ward and Michael Black; to the PLC students also from Errigal College who were a great help on the day. Further information on this initiative or any other disability sport related queries can be obtained by contacting Thérèse Laverty on 074 91 16078.