



Newtownards schoolgirl singing 'Hallelujah' on US TV gets 11m views

A performance of Leonard Cohen's *Hallelujah* on US television by a 11-year-old Co Down girl has been viewed millions of times online.

Kaylee Rogers who shot to fame in 2016 after a video of her performing the song at a school concert attracted more than 100,000 views, with her appearance on NBC's Little Big Shots alongside Grammy winners Pentatonix on Sunday.

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In just three days her performance has been viewed 11 million times on Facebook.

Posting on her own Facebook page, the Donaghadee native said she was “truly blessed” and thanked everyone for their support, including Grammy Award winners Pentatonix who joined her on the show midway through the song.



Kaylee who has autism and ADHD, started to sing at age three. She is a student at Killard House Special School and the 2016 video was recorded as part of the school’s Christmas show and apparently only made it online because Kaylee was too ill to perform at a church carol service.

Colin Millar, the school’s principal, told BBC News that Kaylee is often shy — but not when she sings.

“All my kids have talents, as well as barriers, and this is hers.”

“She’d be a very quiet little girl, but when she sings, she just opens up,” he said.

Kaylee started attending Killard House a few years ago, in order to help her address learning delays. She’s overcome some incredible

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challenges to share that voice with the world and singing has helped her build up her confidence

“For a child who came in P4 (7 to 8 years old) and wouldn’t really talk, wouldn’t really read out in class, to stand and perform in front of an audience is amazing. It takes a lot of effort on Kaylee’s part,” Millar said.

“Hallelujah”, written by Leonard Cohen over the course of five years, was recorded by dozens of famous artists. But, Cohen passed away in November, just weeks before Kaylee Rogers’ rendition of his most famous song was released. Somehow, we’re sure that Cohen would approve of this stunning remake.

Hear Kaylee Rogers sing “Hallelujah” with the Killard House School Choir.

Irish policy aimed at Catholic schools raises fears of discrimination

A proposed policy in Ireland that would ban Catholic schools from prioritizing Catholic students on wait lists is being criticized as discriminatory, since it would not apply to other religious schools.

Faith in Our Schools, a newly-formed Irish group, says the proposal “openly discriminates against the conscience and educational rights of Catholic parents” and the “religious, autonomy, and associational rights of Catholic faith schools,” according to the Irish Times.

In Ireland, the Catholic Church runs more than 90 percent of schools, which also receive government funds.

When a religious school is full, the admission process to determine which students will move off the waiting list currently can take religion into account.

However, Richard Bruton, Ireland’s education minister, is expected to soon announce plans to make legal changes to remove what is called the “baptism-barrier.”

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Bruton has said that it is “unfair that preference is given by publicly-funded religious schools to children of their own religion who might live some distance away, ahead of children of a different religion or of no religion who live close to the school,” according to the Irish Times.

The proposed policy would only apply to Catholic schools, however. Bruton has said that minority faiths, such as the Church of Ireland, will be able to continue to use religion in the admission process for their schools.



The American

Chamber of

Commerce Ireland -

which represents Facebook, Google, and some 700 other U.S. companies - has advocated in support of the removing the “baptism barrier.”

However, Catholic organizations within Ireland worry that Catholic children and their parents could end up discriminated against under the new proposal, which they also fear could threaten the ethos of schools’ Catholic education.

The Association of Trustees of Catholic Schools, Catholic Primary Schools Management Association, and Association of Missionaries and Religious of Ireland have all spoken out against the proposal.

Ireland’s Constitution protects the right to religious education and also has protections against religious discrimination. It acknowledges the right of parents to “provide, according to their means, for the religious and moral, intellectual, physical and social education of their children.”

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Ireland is a largely Catholic country; however, Church leaders have voiced opposition to several prominent legislative proposals in recent years.

In 2015, 62 percent of Irish voters supported referendum to change to constitution to support same-sex marriage.

This May, Ireland's 8th constitutional amendment, which outlaws abortion except in medical emergencies, could be repealed in a national vote.



Blarney C of I Church hosts a 'Community Table'

On Monday 26th March The Church of The Resurrection in Blarney, Co Cork opened its doors to the community with an invitation to come around for the very first 'Community Table' event in the church. The event was suggested at a recent Missional Community

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meeting made up of congregation members and friends who helped in the preparations for the evening.

The aim of the event was simply to ‘meet the neighbours’. All were invited to along, bring friends and family. The concept was simple, anyone who was coming signed up online for catering purposes, people who came were invited to bring a dessert to share and the church provided the main course.



Food was served from 6pm and the event was cleared up by 7.30 – there was a definite feeling from locals that this needs to happen again.

The Reverend Robert Ferris said, “Community Table is a very simple concept of bringing people together in the Church building – some of whom have never set foot over our door way before – with the simple actions of eating, chatting and both giving and receiving of hospitality.”

Mothers’ Union steps in to help snow-trapped medics’ unplanned hospital stay

When the “Beast from the East” blanketed much of the UK with large amounts of snow at the beginning of March, many roads were impassable, leaving many essential services short of staff. In hospitals around the country, nurses and doctors opted remain at their hospitals in their non-working hours, to ensure they were there for the start of their next shifts. In Newcastle, in the north-east of



Catherine Swanston, patient services coordinator and matron Julie Waite distribute Mothers' Union care packages to hospital staff who remained on site during a recent episode of unusually heavy snowfall.

England, the chaplaincy department at the Newcastle Upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Trust teamed up with the diocesan branch of the Mothers' Union to provide essential toiletry kits to staff.

The "Beast from the East" was the name given by the media to an unusual weather pattern which saw warmer than average temperatures over the arctic sending colder air further south than normal, resulting in much of western Europe being hit with sustained low temperatures and heavy snow, blown in from Siberia. In the UK, many bus and train services were cancelled, several motorways and major roads were closed, and local roads had treacherous conditions. So when their shifts ended, many hospital staff chose to remain on site to cover for staff who couldn't make it in to work, and to ensure that there were sufficient staff members on duty when their next shifts started.

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While solving one problem, the unexpected overnight stays created another: the staff didn't have basic toiletries with them. This is where the Mothers' Union and the hospital's chaplaincy team stepped in. For a number of years, they had worked together to provide bags of toiletries to all the local hospitals in the Diocese of Newcastle's area, containing items like toothpaste, shampoo and shower gel. These were used as gifts to patients who had been taken to hospital in an emergency and hadn't had time to collect their own belongings.

"We supply over a hundred sets each month, with members buying the necessary items in bulk, and meeting regularly to assemble them and take them in to their local hospital, delivering them to each ward as required to top up their supplies," Newcastle Diocesan Mothers Union President Barbara Packer said. "I believe it makes a huge difference to a lot of people at a moment of crisis.

"When the nurses and doctors were in need of toiletries to make their stay at the hospital more comfortable, fortunately, the hospital staff knew that the kits were already in the hospital. They phoned the Mothers' Union member responsible, and asked for permission to give some of them to the staff. Of course we were delighted to be able to help."

International award for Limerick's Sr. Bernadette Nealon for community health education in western Kenya

Irish Franciscan Missionary of St. Joseph, Sr. Bernadette Nealon from Limerick city, has been presented by WiRED International with its Health Education Champion Award for Outstanding Leadership in the Community Health Education Programme in the Kisumu region of western Kenya.

WiRED – short for World Information Resources for Education and Development – a US-based non-profit organisation has been delivering medical and health education to conflict-affected and



under-developed regions since 1997. It provides health education by delivering programmes, equipment, and co-ordinated instruction in remote regions across 15 countries. All of its educational programmes are technology-based and peer reviewed. Complete health training programmes can be operated in remote communities entirely on solar equipment, thereby, opening health education to people who have been left behind by other programmes. WiRED resources – online and on portable media – are cost free to users.

The WiRED International e-library of more than 300 medical and health education modules enables physicians and nurses, patients, health workers and communities to address the prevention and treatment of both infectious and non-communicable disease in developing areas of the world. The more than 300 topics are as diverse as maternal health and hand washing, rheumatic heart disease and Ebola, clean water strategies, and home caregiver training.

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With these interactive training programs, communities and medical professionals alike can educate themselves through the material released on its website and also distributed on portable media for communities off the grid. These training modules are developed by WiRED

International's team of physicians, medical editors, imagers and technicians along with a host of other medical experts. The team continually

updates the existing material and creates new modules to provide a rich source of health information. It has supported the KUAP Pandipieri Health Programme in Kisumu for the past 15 years.

KUAP (Kisumu Urban Apostolate Programme) is a non-governmental organisation created by its main stakeholders - the Archdiocese of Kisumu and the Mill Hill Missionaries. It is a leading humanitarian

organisation dedicated to fighting poverty and social

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Matt Moran planting a tree at the KUAP site in Kisumu, Kenya in 2014

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justice placing special emphasis on investing in children, youth, women, and other vulnerable members of the community in Pandipieri. In the neighbourhoods where KUAP works, most people live in shacks, often without any future prospects. Its programmes improve the living conditions of residents in the slums and annually provides assistance to thousands of residents. It does this by using the power of their own community. Its vision is “the gospel fully at work creating a united Kisumu community bonded together through solidarity, spirituality and neighbourhood ministry.”

Sr. Bernadette arrived in Kenya in 1998 to work with disadvantaged communities. “I came to work in the Archdiocese of Kisumu” she says, and “was given the mandate to work in the informal settlements of Kisumu city. I was shocked at the living conditions of the people, but I was overjoyed at their joyfulness, spontaneity and the care they gave to those in need from the little they had.”

In 2002, the Community Health Information Centre was established starting with a focus on HIV/AIDS, and has expanded to a broad health education programme on a wide range of critical topics. Sr. Bernadette uses WiRED’s health education programmes to train community health workers, who, in turn, train community members in home-based care for bed-ridden clients and also trains people who are caring for children at home.

The centre provides facilities for students from medical schools to use the modules to conduct their research and prepare for their exams. Students can study on their own at home, then visit the centre to be tested on the material. Many live a long way off, so access through the download programme stands to expand the reach of these health education courses considerably.

Professor Gary Selnow, Executive Director of WiRED said: “I have been working with Sr. Bernadette and the staff at Pandipieri since 2002, and I have seen the remarkable outcomes of her dedication first hand. She is a blessing to the Kenyan people and a testament to the extraordinary impact one person can have on the lives of so many disadvantaged folks. In addition to the larger impact she has had by way of the Pandi organization, she has demonstrated the power of helping people one-to-one. On several occasions, I have

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seen her reach into her purse and generously give her own money to a mother who needed medications for her child and to a young man who needed tuk tuk fare for a ride to the hospital. She has a paltry income and yet she shares it so freely with the neediest in the community. Sr. Bernadette has inspired my own work to provide health training in low-resource regions around the world. From my viewpoint, her generosity of heart and her dedication to helping others serve as remarkable examples of the very best of the human spirit.”

Gary points out that “our programme in Kisumu would never have materialised or expanded without Sr. Bernadette and her team. Together, they organised our current health outreach programmes that have trained so many people through the facilities at Pandipieri and Obunga. They have made WiRED’s community health training programme a success beyond our imagination – last year graduating more than 130 people with certificates for completing thousands of modules available at both locations and in our online Health Learning Centre.”

Another member of the KUAP – Pandipieri team, Lillian Dajoh, who is a graduate of the Community Health Information Centre and is now its co-ordinator was also presented with a similar award recognising her contribution to the work of the centre.

Matt Moran – author of *The Legacy of Irish Missionaries Lives On* - visited KUAP in October 2014 as the then Chairman of Mísean Cara. “During my visit I planted a tree” he said “as a symbol of growth and renewal. As that tree grows bigger and stronger, it is wonderful to see the evolution and growth that continues at the centre that provides a diverse programme of health and social services for the poor and marginalised. Warm congratulations to Sr. Bernadette and Lillian on the awards recognising their inspiring work” he said.

For more information, you can visit:

<http://www.wiredhealthresources.net>

<http://pandipieri.org/mission-objective-vision/>