



## CONNECT WEEKLY

### HEART TO HEART with the EDITOR



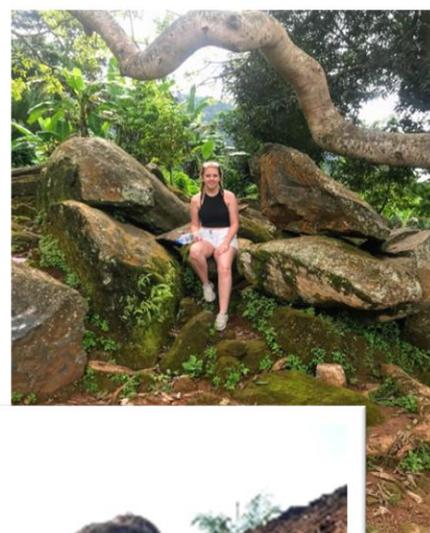
**Name:** Katie Phelan,  
**Position:** General Operative,

*You started as a part-time employee in Momentum Support, how did this come about?*

Well my mam was manager; Portiuncula Hospital and my brother Andrew was a part-time cleaning operative during college holidays and Weekends, so naturally when a vacancy was advertised for weekend cover, I applied. I attended an interview with John Browne, Momentum Support and the company has supported me financially through college for five years now.

*Like so many young people today, at seventeen how did you decide what career path was for you?*

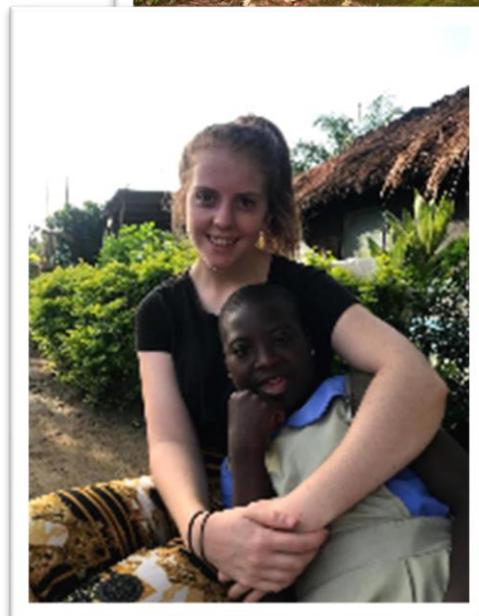
When I was seventeen, I really did not know what career I wanted, so as I went into the leaving cert year there was added pressure to decide what career to choose. I liked business subjects and the fact that my older brother Andrew was studying business and that my mother was all about Momentum Support business!! No pressure from the family!! In the end I decided what I thought was best for me, midwifery. After six weeks I received an email from UL advising internal transfers were open. This really made me question my future. I was happy but was midwifery for me? When I made the CAO application, criminal justice was a preference further down on the list of choices. Now I felt more research was needed as it could be more suitable for me. I graduated in August 2020 with a criminal justice degree. Already doors of possibility have opened for me.



*Tell us about your eye-opening experience when you travelled to Ghana in 2018?*

As part of my university degree I had to do a placement in Ireland or overseas. I met with the university advisors in March 2018 to consider options open to me such as the NGO in Ghana. The Padre Pio Rehabilitation Centre included a school for children with disabilities, a leprosy camp and a childcare outreach facility. The children live there full time as the parents are unable to care for them.

My family supported the cost of participating in the project for which I am so grateful. I wanted to fundraise to support this worthwhile cause, but the challenge was, it was March with only three months before I travelled and I was based in Limerick. I needed to call in the troops." The Phelan family". We raised €1500 through many activities such as church gate collection, local bingo raffles, a non-uniform day at St Ronan's school where I attended and donations received from the ICA and local community.





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### *How has your visit to Ghana impacted you personally and your future?*

One subject included within the criminal justice degree is human rights' law which was scheduled on my return to college. In the module we learnt about the breaches of human rights' law. After returning from Ghana in 2018 having experienced life for six months, I could understand the people's living conditions and the social issues such as sex trafficking of children and FMG in the North of Ghana. In December 2019, I went back and had an opportunity to revisit old friends and see more of the country. It showed me the social differences across areas. In Abee village, near where the centre was located it is very remote where people have basic living conditions including water restrictions. In comparison to Accra, the capital, where it is more developed and includes a landscape of high-rise buildings and flash cars where wealth is an option. Personally, my learning is that Ghana has motivated me to work harder on my studies and achieve a LLM in international human rights' law, so one day I can work with an NGO to contribute and help vulnerable people.

### *From your experience at the Centre, what touched you emotionally?*

The children are so grateful for a small square of chocolate or a simple pencil. It highlighted how much we actually have and take for granted. The joy was infectious from the children!



*Click on the link below to see Katie's Video created as a thank you and to share her experience at the The Padre Pio Rehabilitation Centre in Ghana.*

<https://vimeo.com/454168538>

