

A.M.D.G



# THE ALBERTO HURTADO PROGRAMME

AN OVERVIEW



CLONGOWES  
FOUNDATION

Established in 2007, the Alberto Hurtado Programme (AHP), is a bursary scheme inspired by the desire to remove barriers to the unique educational experience that a seven-day boarding school can offer. In its relatively short existence, the AHP has matured into an integral part of the fabric of Clongowes life. The programme aims to provide up to seven bursary places each academic year to children coming from circumstances that otherwise would preclude them from attending Clongowes.

**It is worth stating at the outset that AHP students are not selected on the basis of their academic, sporting or musical abilities. They are chosen instead on the basis of their general suitability, family ambition and their potential to thrive in a seven-day, boarding environment.**

**The seven-day, boarding environment and the scale of the AHP, accounting for some 10% of the student population, are two characteristics of the programme that have contributed to its success.**

The participation in co-curricular activities suggests that the boys are receiving the broad education that Clongowes strives to provide for all its students. The participation rate in music is above the level for the school as a whole with two boys successfully having auditioned for the Dublin Youth Orchestra. Some 26% of the current AHP students are performing in the College Orchestra (and ensemble), which is above the 18% rate for the whole pupil body, while the respective figures for the Choirs and Schola are 21% and 15%. The rate of membership of *The Academy* is marginally below the rate for the whole school while some 20% of the AHP students have actively participated in the *Debating Society*. More notable is that half of these boys have represented the school in external competitions, participated in *Medal* debates and, or in the annual *Past versus Present* debate. Last year's *Present* debating team was led by an AHP student.

In the area of sport, 41% of the boys have played representatively for the School. A current pupil played representative rugby for Leinster this year while a graduate won his rugby *Blue* for Cambridge in December 2018.

Over the past seven years, since the programme reached a critical mass, some 23% of AHP students have achieved the role of being a House Leader in Clongowes against a figure of some 22% for the wider body of boys.

As of the close of the 2019 academic year there have been 46 graduates from the programme. The average Leaving Certificate points for AHP graduates is some 8% below the average for the College as a whole, putting them at just over the top 33 % of the national distribution of results<sup>1</sup>.

Of the 46 graduates, the first being in 2013, 45 have gone onto third level education. **For the very most part these graduates have attended primary schools in areas with designated disadvantaged status (DEIS), where rates of progression to third-level education approximate 2%.**

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<sup>1</sup> Based on the 2019 distribution of Leaving Certificate results. Source: Central Statistics Office.

There are currently 39 bursary students: some 10% of the total school population. Of the students who joined in last August 2019, just over half came from outside of the Greater Dublin area. Of the current cohort of students 51% come from the Dublin area, 26% from Munster, just under 18% from the other counties of Leinster and some 5% from Connaught.

**Education is the most powerful  
weapon you can use to change the world.**

Nelson Mandela

## THE BURSARY SELECTION PROCESS

Candidates are sourced mainly through the School's links with DEIS primary schools; however, applicants can apply independent of the primary school link. With the help of various Primary School networks, such as the Irish Primary Principals Network, the AHP Coordinator continues to extend the network of partner schools throughout the country. At this early stage of the AHP's existence the onus still rests with Clongowes to reach out to Primary schools and raise the awareness of the bursary programme. It is hoped that as the Programme matures the heads of Primary schools increasingly will promote the cause of their pupils in 5th and 6th Class. For the coming academic year, the Coordinator also works with representatives from **Tusla** (the State agency dedicated to improving the wellbeing and outcomes for children), who has access to some 150 primary principals and home school liaison coordinators throughout South Leinster. Going forward it is the intention to engage with the HEAR (Higher Education Access Route), programme of various third level institutions in order to promote the AHP. In the context of the above, it is encouraging that 17 of the applicants from 2019 came from schools that had not previously put candidates forward for the AHP.

The families of candidates are first invited to visit Clongowes. Later the coordinator along with staff from the College and/ or members of the Board undertake a series of visits to shortlisted families of applicants. The shortlisted candidates have to meet eligibility and **suitability** criteria. A candidate is deemed eligible if they meet the criteria as outlined in the AHP Application Form. A candidate is deemed suitable if they have the support of their family and they exhibit those personal qualities that will enable them to cope with the vagaries of a boarding school environment, qualities such as a sense of self-worth, good social skills and an aptitude for co-operative activities. Eligibility and suitability can be judged by contact with the candidate and his family within the environment of their own home and the College.

Members of the AHP subcommittee will make the final selection of candidates and submit these to the School's Board of Management for approval.

**Without excluding any social class from our educational offering, we need to continue to make progress in educating for justice.**

Fr. General, Arturo Sosa S.J.

## **WHY THE ALBERTO HURTADO PROGRAMME?**

The objective of the AHP is to offer opportunity to boys who might otherwise not fulfil their potential because of socio-economic disadvantage. From the very outset, when the bursary programme was conceived, there was a clear intention to avoid any association with the notions of charity or access. These words imply that the College is simply engaged in helping the disadvantaged and allowing them access to 'our world'. It is an inclusive programme not one based on distinction.

Since its inception, it is clear that the programme benefits the College by making it a more socially diverse community, one that better reflects the world that we live in. To this end, the AHP has created a greater appreciation that disadvantage does not equate to a lack of intelligence or lack of a work ethic. The programme is a confirmation that the Jesuit ethos is alive in Clongowes and is not an empty or static concept. Clongowes Wood College is a better living and learning environment for all as a result of the AHP.

## **ALBERTO HURTADO**

Alberto Hurtado is a modern Chilean, Jesuit saint. A priest, a lawyer and a social worker, Alberto Hurtado established a foundation to care for children in need of food, shelter and education. He was canonised on October 23, 2005, by Pope Benedict XVI.

As a child, impoverished by the untimely death of his father, Alberto was offered the opportunity to attend St. Ignatius College, a prestigious Jesuit school in Santiago, as a 'scholarship boy'. He went on to study Law while working in the afternoons to help his mother and brother. With his mother's blessing, Alberto was able to enter the Society of Jesus in 1923, at the age of 22, when his family no longer needed his help. During his formation he trained in Europe – including Ireland – and became an accomplished academic and teacher. After his studies and his ordination Fr. Hurtado SJ dedicated the rest of his life to helping the disadvantaged and especially in helping young people to access education as a way of escaping from poverty.

**All the well-being of  
Christianity and of the whole world depends  
on the proper education of youth.**

St Ignatius's letter to King Philip II of Spain



"THROUGHOUT ITS MORE THAN TWO HUNDRED YEAR HISTORY  
CLONGOWES CONSCIOUSLY HAS SOUGHT TO EDUCATE YOUNG MEN OF  
COMPETENCE, CONSCIENCE AND COMPASSION, YOUNG MEN WHO SEEK  
TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THEIR LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND AT THE  
NATIONAL AND EUROPEAN LEVEL."



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