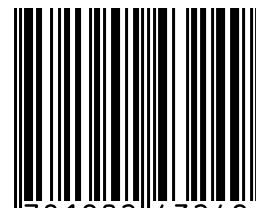


Up the hill, down the hill

What do children think about living on a Respond estate? Do they like their home? Do they like the community centre or after-school they attend? What do they think of the communities where they live and the indoor and outdoor spaces that they inhabit?

Commissioned by Respond, this Kids' Own publication uniquely captures the voices and experiences of children living in Respond housing. It celebrates the idea of community and presents children's own writing and artwork, developed in the summer of 2024, through a creative and collaborative process guided by professional artists and writers.



9 781902 432496

ISBN: 978-1-902432-49-6

© Kids' Own Publishing Partnership 2025

kidsown.ie



Up the hill down the hill

A book about homes and communities
by the children of Respond Waterford



Up the hill down the hill

A book about homes and communities by
the children of Respond Waterford

**kids
own**
PUBLISHING PARTNERSHIP



respond

Up the hill down the hill

A book about homes and communities by the Children of Respond Waterford.

© Kids' Own Publishing Partnership CLG, 2025

All rights reserved

No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form within prior written authorisation.

ISBN: 978-1-902432-49-6

Published by

Kids' Own Publishing Partnership CLG.
40 Wolfe Tone Street, Sligo, F91 R231, Ireland
(+)353-719170759

www.kidsown.ie

Charity number: 20082109

Project Artist

Maree Hensey

Project Writers

Mary Branley and Jo Holmwood

Shadow Artist

Cúan Cusack

Design

Martin Corr

Print

W&G Baird

Kids' Own Board of Directors

Liz Coman, Naomi Feely (Chair), Tommy Flavin, Michael Kirby



Introduction

At Respond, we believe that home is more than just a place to live—it's a foundation for belonging, friendships, and opportunities. This book is a celebration of that idea, told through the words and illustrations of the children in our communities.

Through our partnership with Kids' Own Publishing, children from our Early Learning and School Aged Care (ELSAC) and Family Support services took part in artist and illustrator led summer camps in 2024. Together, they explored what home and community mean to them. Their stories, jokes, and artwork have been beautifully brought together in this book, offering us a glimpse into their world.

One child writes, *"I'm part of this community at Ard an Ghleanna for ten years. I love it here and have loads of good memories and friends new and old."* These reflections highlight not just the importance of home, but also the sense of connection and support that Respond aims to create and support every day.

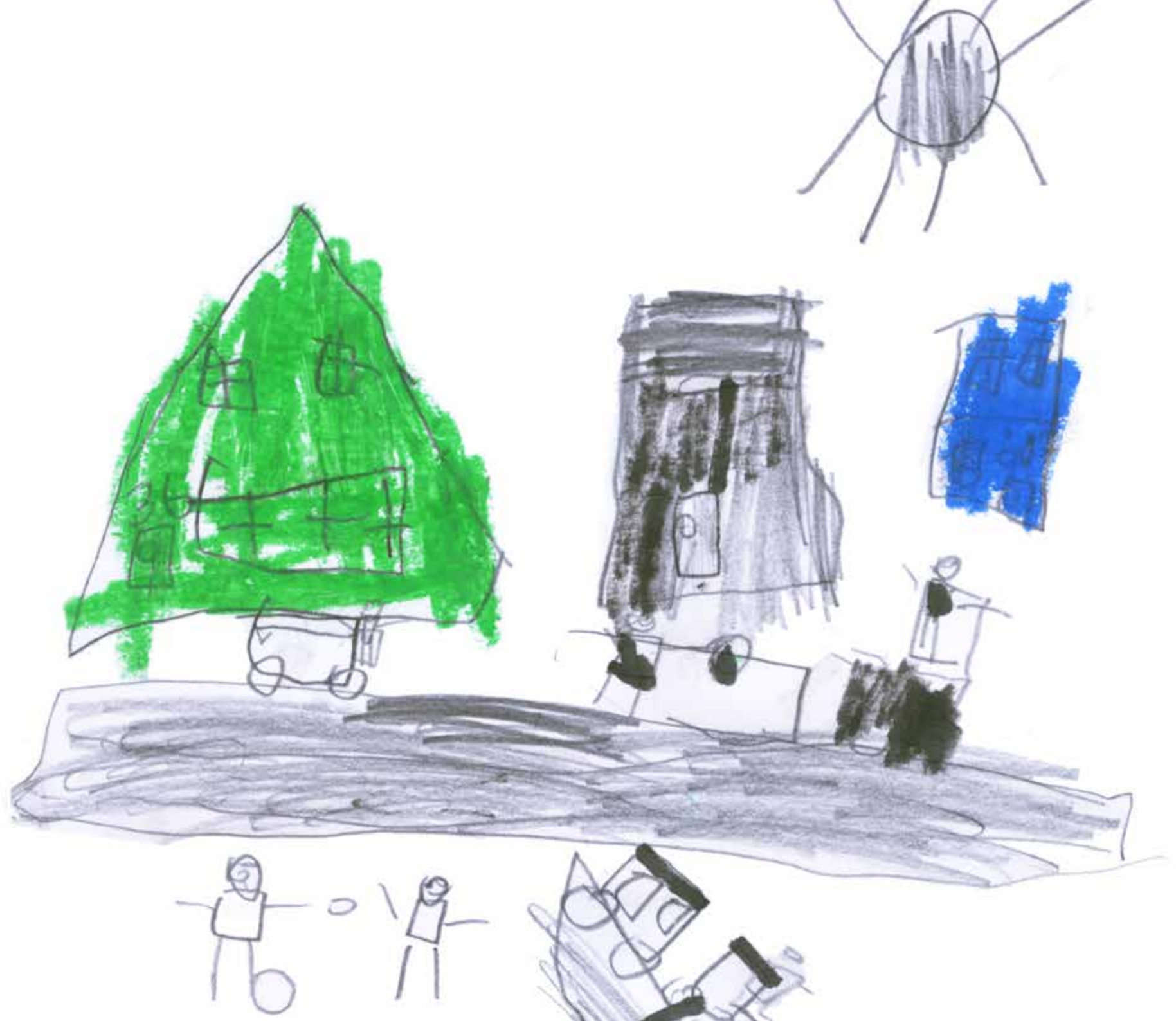
In our services our vision is to work to try to ensure that the children in our care 'know their value and discover their magic.' This project enabled them to do just this.

The children's words are a testament to the richness and diversity of our communities. They speak of blended and multigenerational families, of loved ones near and far, and of cultural roots spanning from the Czech Republic to Nigeria to Egypt. But at the heart of it all is something universal—the unique contentment of feeling safe, included, and valued.

A special thank you to the children who shared their voices—you remind us why our work matters. We are also deeply grateful to Family Support Worker Niamh Flavin, who brought this project to life, to Early Years Manager Sandra Morrissey and the team at Ard an Ghleanna, and to The Arts Council Young People, Children, and Education Project Award for funding this initiative.

We hope you enjoy this book as much as we do. Happy reading!

Declan Dunne
Chief Executive Officer
Respond



Foreword

The term ‘voice of the child’ refers to the real involvement of children in expressing their opinions and experiences. When thinking about this and how we in Respond capture the children’s voices I wanted to explore this further. I wondered as a worker what does a child think about living on a Respond estate? Do they like their home? Do they like the community centre or after-school they attend? Creating a book by children to hear their voices started to slowly become a reality through funding with YPCE Arts Council and the collaboration with Kids’ Own Publishing Partnership.

The process began in Summer of 2024. I invited children living on our estates from across Waterford City to attend a one week summer programme in Killure Grove Community Centre, John’s Park Waterford. The children also come from Carrigea Crescent estate which is a new estate on the outskirts of Waterford with 69 houses and apartments. The children were all tenants of Respond. The programme focused on where the children lived, their estate, their home. The week involved the Kids’ Own writer and artist bringing the children through a process, discovering new art materials and forms that the children may not have experienced before. The children built constructions from straws and really delved into what their estate looked like and how they envisaged it.

The second week of the programme was brought to Ard an Ghleanna Community Centre, Tramore, Co. Waterford. This estate has a wonderful early learning and school aged childcare service. There are 27 houses on the estate surrounding the community building. This is an integrated estate consisting of affordable, council and approved housing body housing. Many of the after-school children come from this area. The centre is situated in the sea-side town of Tramore. We invited the after-school children aged to partake in the programme in the centre. The focus of this week was around community, making memories, playing games and having fun with friends and acknowledging pets as an important part of their family too. There was a real sense of belonging with this group and this is testament to all the staff in the centre.

What makes this book so special to me is that the book is written and illustrated by the children themselves. This book was about the process and the end result of creating this beautiful book was an added bonus. The children were so excited to think they themselves were writing their very own book. I hope you enjoy reading it as much as the children enjoyed making it.

Niamh Flavin
Family Support Worker
Respond

A vibrant child's drawing of a village. The houses are drawn with thick black outlines and filled with various colors like blue, red, and green. There are several trees with green foliage. In the foreground, there's a large green hill. The background is a light, sandy color.

Killure Grove Waterford

Who we are

Killure Grove Estate Waterford

Killure Grove estate consists of 35 houses located on the outskirts of the city. There is a community centre situated on the estate. Children from Respond estates across Waterford came to this centre for this project.

We are a team

We are all children who live in Waterford [in Respond housing]. Some of us have different traditions and different religions.

What is Respond?

Respond is an organisation that has community-based supports for families in the area. They have homeless shelters too.

A simple line drawing of two children. One child is on the left, and the other is on the right. They appear to be playing together, possibly with a ball or a stick.

Some of us have different traditions and different religions.

What our book is about

Mostly our book is about [Respond] estates. A place with lots of houses and sometimes a green. It's about where we live. It's about children's creativity.

Where we live

When you come into the estate [Carrigea Crescent], there's houses here, there's a green, there's houses there, you go up a hill. They live down the street and we live up the street. Not even two minutes away.

If you look that way, there's kind of a road, and if you look that way, there's another house.

Carrigea Crescent: It's a circle. A street. Everybody says... "you live up the hill, you live down the hill."

A long hill and a short hill. We're kind of in the middle, next to the lower hill.

There's like a really straight road, there's like a turn in. You turn in that way [left]. And then you keep going straight and our house is the first on the right.

I live in Killure Grove, John's Park and it's up there.

There's a lot of fields.

...And thorns and nettles.

There's a park by Ballybeg stores.

We live in Kilbarry. There's a buttercup field. There's a sign saying they might put a playground there.



**I have flowers
outside my house.
And a tap sticking
out of the wall.**

I live in a house which is kind of a rectangle,
it's called a bungalow.

**Our old house was a bungalow
and now we live in a two storey.**

We walk the dog. Sometimes we go up to Londis.

**It's normal for a house
to have people in it.**

It was an empty house.
We put all the furniture up in it
[to make it a home].

**A home is where
people live.**



James

My neighbour actually lives in my house. I live on one side and my neighbour lives on the other side. A long time ago, there was a neighbour, my two neighbours, it was a wife and a husband. They were married for a long time... Then he passed away. I knew him for a long time, so did my dad, so did my granddad. My whole family were great friends with him.

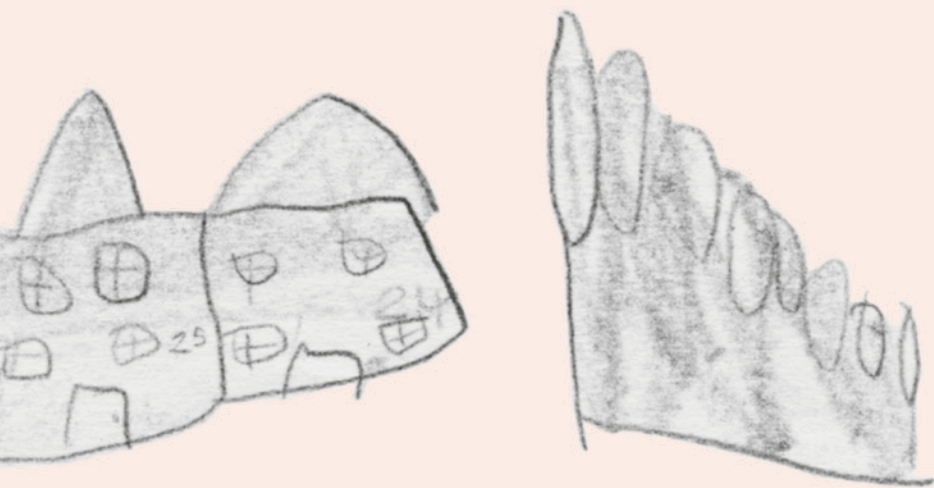
I've lived in that house since I was born. My cat, my mum, me, my granddad used to live there, but he's no longer with us. My granny lives there. My uncle Roger lives there. Those are all the people. We sleep in the Respond apartment in Kilbarry. My cat is called Cookie. I came up with that name because he looked like an Oreo cookie.

My house is there and Mister Ford's house is there. One time, I threw my paper plane and it went over and into Mister Ford's. I was with my dad and he knocked the door and he said, "**Can I come in? My son's plane went into your garden**" and he said, "**Yes you can come in.**" He wasn't annoyed.

Fatima

This is my two-storey house. It has stairs. We're going to fix the garden because it's kind of messy. We're going to paint the gates. My neighbour has a house that's stuck to my house. I used to live in an apartment. Outside at home, we kind of do things like hide and seek, tag and we make up games. A long time ago, my neighbour used to bring out water balloons in summer.

My nanny and my grandpa are in a different country, **Egypt**. Sometimes my mum calls my granny and then I talk to her. I know what my mum's going to do when she gets there, she's going to hug her brother.



Mahmoud

We used to live in an apartment. It's better now, because I can finally ride my scooter in such a wide space. There's a grass field and there's this little path that goes down the grass... it's really long so the scooter picks up a lot of speed. My sister usually comes with me, so we just have races.

I used to live with my grandparents in **Egypt** when I was really small. We were meant to go there last year, but there's a war on.



Oscar and Sofia

Sofia. We live very close, there's only a house between us. It's very noisy. It can be friendly and it can be crazy.

Oscar. Sofia was living there first and then I moved there. I used to not be Sofia's friend.

Sofia. We're third cousins. We live in a two bed and his is a three bed.

Sofia. Oscar likes the Popeye van coming.

Oscar. But we miss Kristy. He was an ice-cream person too.



Sofia. There's work going on and It's really noisy.

Oscar. We play hurling at the top of the road on the green. There's a basketball net, but I think it's broken.

Sofia. It's important that we have clubs that clean the environment, like the litter picking clubs. I got into climate change through school. We play a lot of things, football, gaelic, hurling/camogie.

Oscar. I did a hurling match on Thursday, it was Tramore versus Mount sion. We won.



Demi-Leigh

My stepmum lives with my real dad and my stepdad lives with my real mum. I live with my stepdad and my mum [in Carrigea Crescent]. My baby sister's name is Kaia. It's the estates close to here, but not this estate, you go up and turn and go up and turn, and then you see her house.

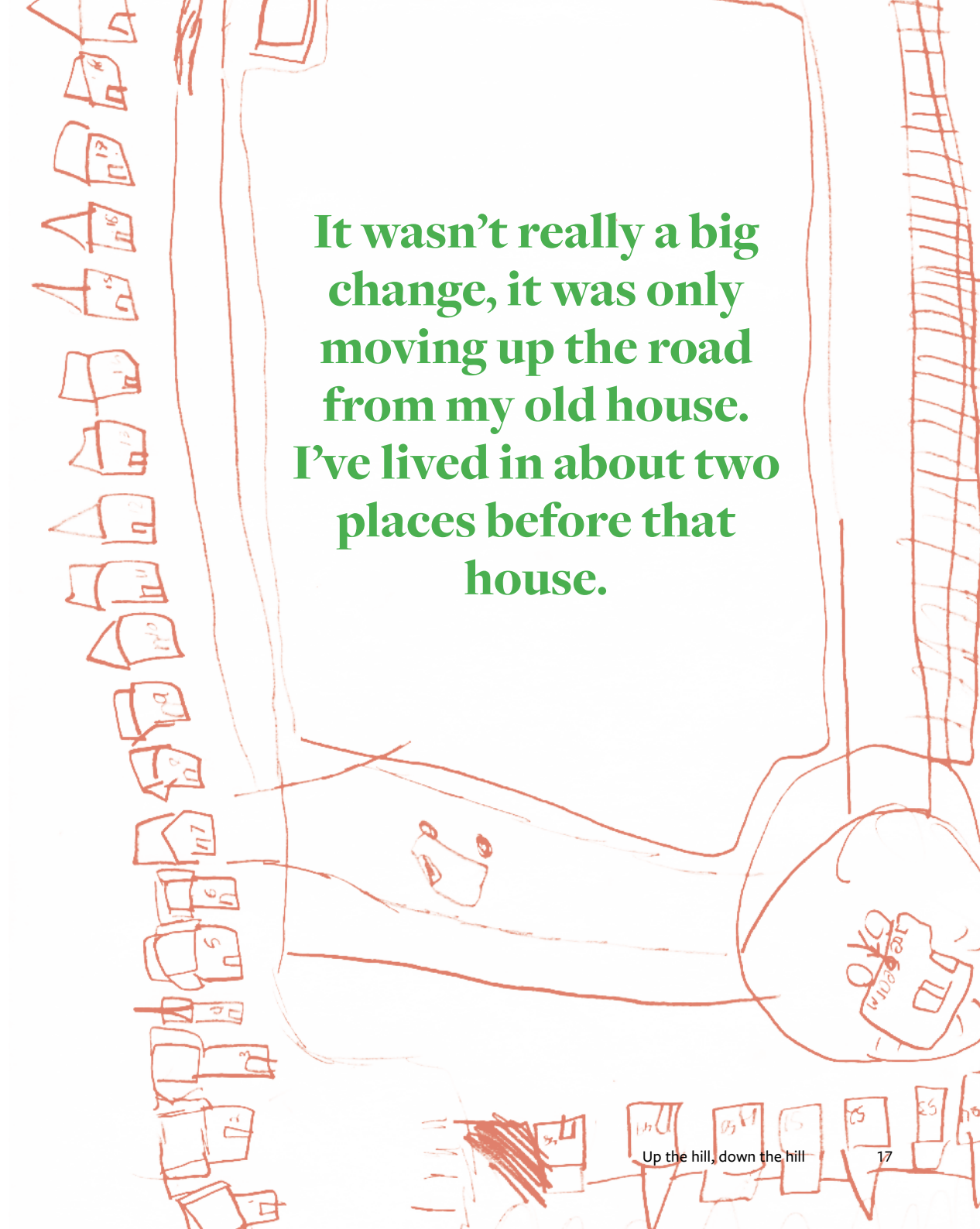
When we hear the ice-cream truck and it goes to another estate, I go in and get money and put it in my pocket. And when the ice-cream truck comes, I can be the first one there. And sometimes I get something for Kaia.

When we moved house, I was in pre-school and my granddad collected me and Sophia's granny collected her and they dropped us straight away and then I seen everyone moving everything out of the house and we moved up the road into the new house.

Sophia

On the weekend I go staying with my dad. Traffic-wise it's about fifteen minutes. I'm an only child of my dad's. Demi Leigh has a different dad... He lives in Hawaii. Her nanny and granddad are on the estate literally right beside Spar. And my nanny lives in John's Park down the road.

My dad's been with my stepmum Shirley for nearly ten years now. We do a lot of stuff together. We usually go out and walk the dogs up in the fields. He has two Springer Spaniels, Jessie and Bella.



It wasn't really a big change, it was only moving up the road from my old house. I've lived in about two places before that house.



Mikey (Mario)

My name is Mikey and I play football. I live in Killure Grove, John's Park and it's up there.

I never went to my mum's country or my dad's country. We're going to go on vacation with mum, dad and our little brother, but not with our dog.

My sister loves dad and dominik and dogs. **I love my family.**



Emelia

When you go up the road, I live at the top. I've lived here a long time, like, since I was six or five. Before that we lived somewhere else in Waterford. My dad speaks Slovakian because he's from Slovakia and my mum speaks Czech because she's from Czech Republic. I mostly speak Slovakian.

Now we have two dogs, because we have to mind one. It's hard to mind two dogs. The first time, they were growling at each other but now they're friends.

I used to hang out with friends but now I don't because they stopped being friends with me. I don't mind. I go play with my cousins sometimes.



Sometimes there's cranes working and me and Clare watch them.

Anne

We live in Waterford. There's a hill downwards and there's a big space at the side where we park our car. You just come into the lane and you keep going straight and there's a hill and there's our house and another house and you keep going straight and there's a house on the corner and that's Pat's house. Sometimes there's cranes working and me and Clare watch them.

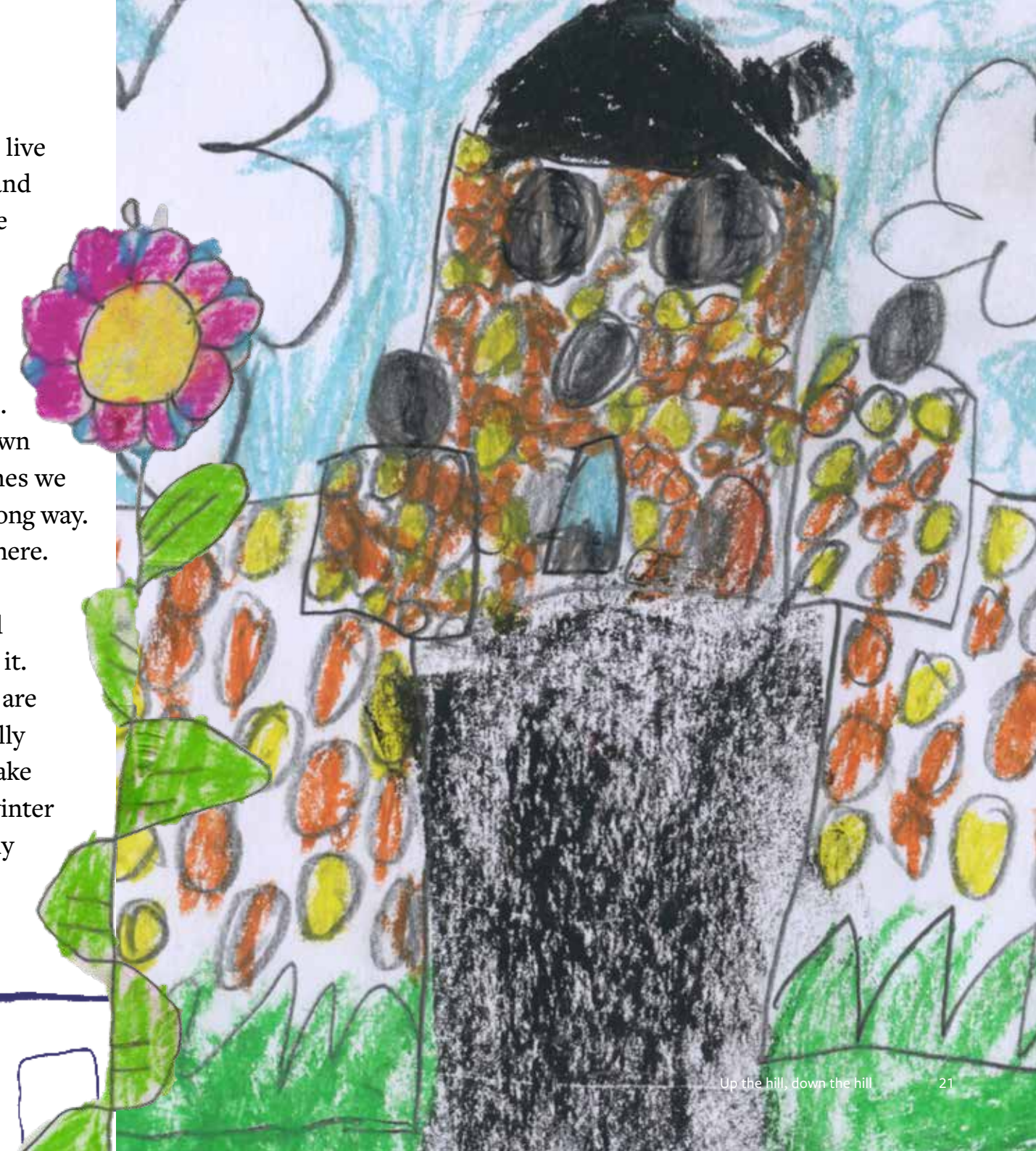
When we're just going home, we go down and see granny and granddad.



Clare

I live in a stony house and I live with my mum and my dad and Anne and me. I used to have a rabbit. He ran away. His name was Rabbity. We have a swing set in our garden. Our granny and granddad, they live just down the lane. Sometimes we just walk down to their house, but sometimes we drive because it's kind of a long way. Sometimes we rollerblade there.

My dad works on a farm and granddad helps him work in it. There's only cows and cows are his favourite animal. It's really hard because you have to make thousands of bales for the winter time. I don't know how many bales he has, like, billions!



Tramore



Who we are

Ard an Ghleanna Early Learning and School Aged Childcare Service, Tramore, Co. Waterford

Ard an Ghleanna estate consists of 27 houses. Ard an Ghleanna Community Centre is situated in the middle of this estate and is located in the seaside town of Tramore. Respond run an Early Learning and School Aged Childcare service from this community building. The after-school children engaged in this project.

What is a community?

A community is a group of people who do things together, like here in Ard an Ghleanna or Tidy Towns.

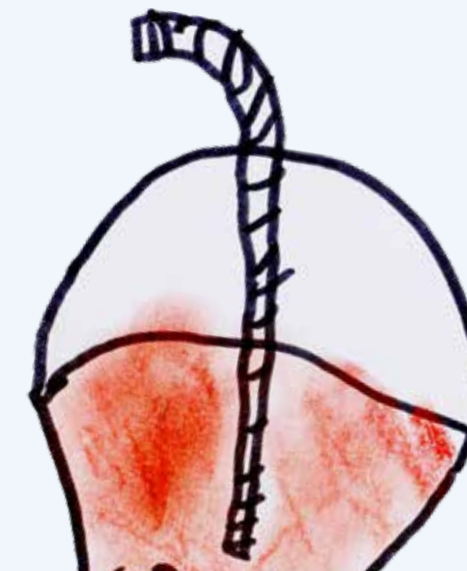


We are all friends

Elijah and Alex and Mason are the newest members of Ard an Ghleanna. Many of us are coming here for years. We started when we were in toddlers. There are loads of people who work here and look after us. Everyone here is nice and careful and they listen and share.

A community is a group of people.

– Alex



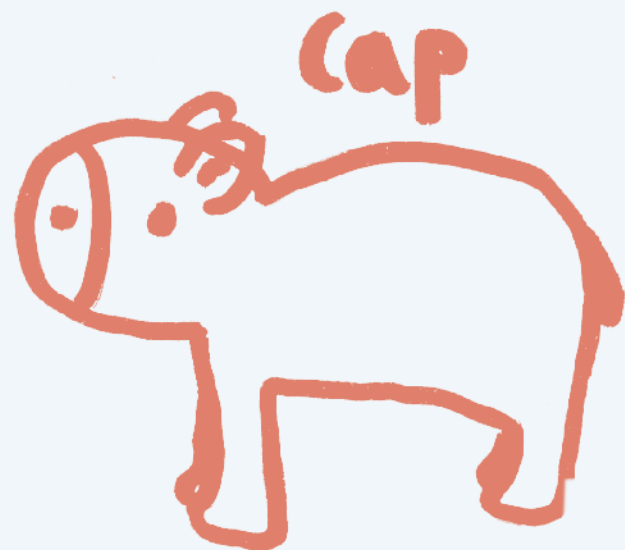
Mary Jane

Capybara is my second favourite animal next to dogs. We saw the capybaras at Secret Valley Wildlife in Wexford. I like their little ears, big noses and how big and chunky they are. I also like how calm they are. My mom brought me a German Shepherd in Nigeria. Her name is Sandy, my Auntie is minding her now. My rabbit's name is **Raven**, he lived in my Dad's farm in Nigeria, then I brought him to my grandmother's house. One day I let him inside the house and he sadly died, because he was accidently left in the sun in his cage. I really miss him.

We were supposed to go to a garden today but we couldn't go as it was raining. Now I'm in Ard an Ghleanna community centre writing a book. My dreams for the future? I'd love to have pets and I'd love to be a vet.



**I'd love to have pets
and I'd love to be a vet.**



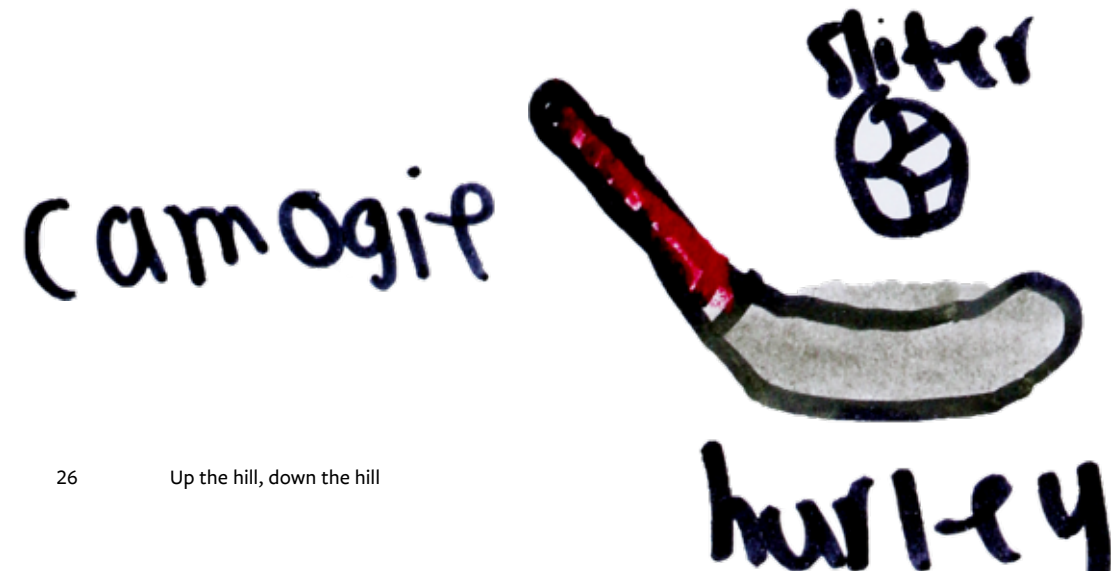
Elijah

I'm eight years old. I like sleeping, I like playing games. I liked making my new game and playing it. I love going outside. I come to Ard an Ghleanna a lot, I have friends here and everyone joins in the games.

Kaci

My favourite animals are **dogs** and **monkeys**. I used to have a pet dog, Gizmo, a Jack Russell. I love rollercoasters at the amusements. I'm the only one who screams my head off, and everyone laughs at me or says be quiet. I play on the **camogie** Tramore team, we are going to Portlaw for a tournament and we'll get medals and cups. I love swimming in the sea, we find crabs buried under the sand. I hate spiders, they look scary and those webs hanging down from the ceiling give me the heebie geebies.

I'm part of this community at Ard an Ghleanna for ten years. I love it here and have loads of good memories and friends new and old. There are great people here, so kind and caring. I love going for walks on the prom at sunset, where the sun goes around Tramore.



I Like to go to the Amusement

Caroline

I love playing outside when I'm at my Nanny's. There's a tennis court there at pebble beach. I come here a lot to Ard na Ghleanna and play with my friends, and I play outside here too. I go to my friends' house for sleepovers, but we don't go asleep until six in the morning. That's just at the weekends or holidays not during school time.

I'm a goalie in **Gaelic football**, you don't have to run around that much and I'm very good at catching the ball. I wear green gum shields (my lucky colour). Every save is good as you save your team from losing. We win most of the time.

Gaelic Football



Mason

I'm seven years old and I used to come to the toddlers room when I was a little boy. I used to play and go outside, but this room is much better, there's more stuff to do. When I was a baby, we actually moved and now we have our own house. I have a little sister, she's three. Sometimes she's in a good mood, and other times she's whinging and crying. She got a pen and drew on the door. My parents were not happy. My older brother made a snake den, but he lives with my nanny.

My life is going good. I do chores, I clean my room and wash the windows with a cloth and spray. My room was so messy, clothes everywhere, but then it got clean, it wasn't elves, I think it was a ghost. In two weeks, I have a sleepover in Dublin with my aunt. She has two sons, Max and Scooty. I love playing Hide and Seek with my cousins in Aunty Fifi's.



Shayne-Leigh

Kaci is braiding my hair at the moment. It hurts because Kaci is brushing it too hard. I love sports, gymnastics specially.

I got first place in gymnastics under 9, I think. My parents got me flowers and chocolates. They weren't expecting me to get first place. I'm good at doing hair as well, I'm braiding Kaci's hair as well.

**I love sports,
gymnastics specially.**



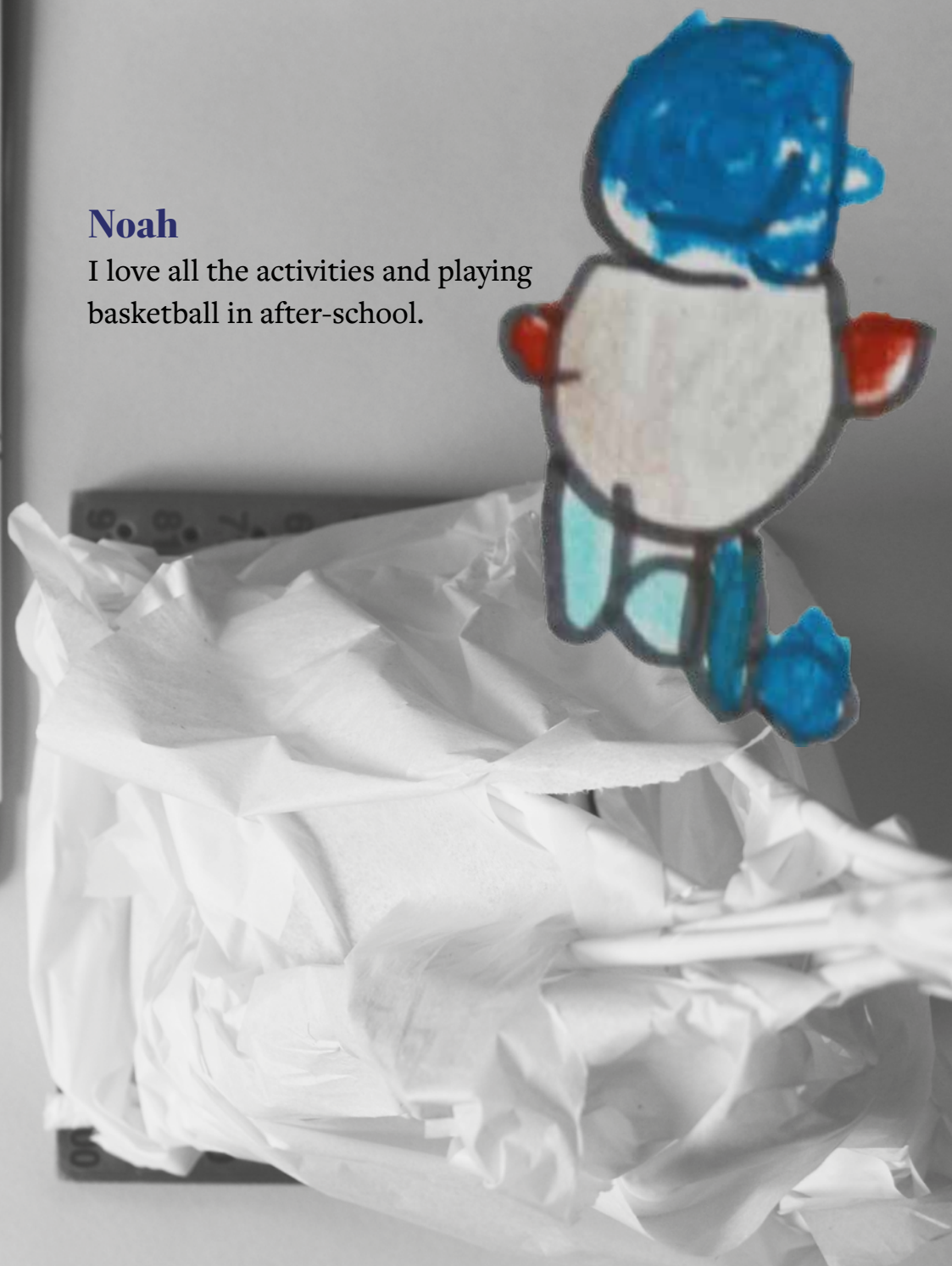


Abbie

I like playing with all my friends in after-school and doing the activities like arts and crafts and baking.

Noah

I love all the activities and playing basketball in after-school.



CJ's Lullaby

Ten pigs are asleep
Once upon a time there was a farm, with a cow and
two sheep
Ee I ee I oh
Kiss the sleepy moon.

One spotted cow and two sheep are asleep

SHHHH

Don't wake them
Sleepy heads,
Its bedtime
Snuggle deep
Three sheep are snoozin and four pups,
Six chicks hop
The moon is now out
Kiss its sleepy head.

Can you find sleepy dad
Leap frog
Five little chicks hop to the bed,
Its bedtime.
Can you find sleepy DAD?
The moon is now out
Kiss its sleepy head.

Its bedtime
Can you find sleepy dad,
Spot the x
Press
The moon is now out
Kiss its sleepy head.

Alex

A community is a group of people who do things together, like here in Ard an Ghleanna, or Tidy Towns. Respond is an organisation that has community-based supports for families in the area. They have homeless shelters too.

Elijah and Alex and Mason are the newest members of Ard an Ghleanna. Many of us are coming here for years. We started when we were in toddlers. There are loads of people who work here and look after us. Everyone here is nice and careful and they listen and share.

**I like
Rap music**



Games

Mason's Game: 10 stars, Mystery feathers game

You need: A bag, feathers, sleeping mask.

You close your eyes and put on the sleeping mask.

Then you put your hand in a bag of feathers and try to pick the colourful ones.

Elijah and MJ's Game: Basketball level up

You need: Two players or more.

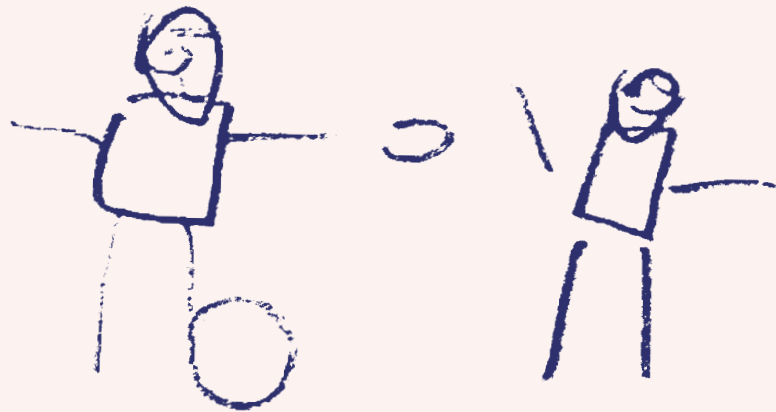
Make your hoop. Get your balls. Stand back.

Throw the ball into the hoop and win points until you get to 100 or 15.

Level 1: Easy: You can throw it from near.

Level 2: Medium: Stand back further.

Level 3: Kind of harder: Stand way back.



Caroline's game: 2b2 dice roll

You need: Dice, paper, seven numbers split in half.

You roll the dice and if you get 3 you jump three spaces on the paper. When you get to the end you have to get the right number to win.

Shayne-Leigh and Abbie: The hoop game

Level 1: You have the glove on and try and shoot.

If you get it, then you move to level 2.

Level 2: Your opponent kneels down and tries to block you. You have 3 goes and if you get a score move to level 3.

Level 3: Abbie stands up and tries to block you.

If you get it in, you win. If you don't get it in, you lose and someone else gets a turn.

Jokes

What did sushi **A** say to sushi **B**? **Wasabi.**

What kind of underwear do lawyers wear? **Briefs.**

What did the beach say to the tide? **Long time no sea.**

Why did the whale **blush**? **He saw the sea's bottom.**

What do you call a huge pile of cats? **Meowantian!**

What do you call a **pig** who can do kung fu? **A pork chop.**

Why do **bees** have sticky hair? **Because they use honey combs.**

How we made this book

We drew pictures.
We had ideas.
We made the book with words, with expression.



We made buildings with the straws and the tape.
If I want to build a house, what do I do first?
Bricks, The idea, The base.



“It’s taller than us!”
“We should do a slide.”
“Let’s combine a load. We need more.”



Inks and Watercolours

There are so many ways to use inks and water and quality watercolour to make art.

First you practice squirting water from a pipette, a squeezey thing. We had lovely hard paper.

Then you dampen the special watercolour paper. Ordinary paper gets soggy.

You put drops of ink on the wet paper and the bowl of water turns a lot of colours.

Then you take a pipette of green ink and drop a few on the watercolour paper.

Then blue drops as well.

Then you dunk it in a bowl of water and what happens is the colours fade.

The drawing goes for a swim!



How to use this book

During the workshops, the artist and writer led a process that was open-ended and child led. At the start and end of each session, we were careful to allow time for reflection, which gave us as facilitators an opportunity to hear the children's thoughts and their connections with the themes. We sat in a simple circle and took turns to offer our thoughts.

We started with free play, allowing the children to be comfortable in the space and with each other and observed where this took them. We began conversations to explore the children's sense of place and community—where they live, how they socialise and relax, who they play with and who the important people in their lives are. We then made an artistic offering, using high-quality art materials. The materials were laid out for the children to interact with, with no direction.

They invented their own journeys of interaction.

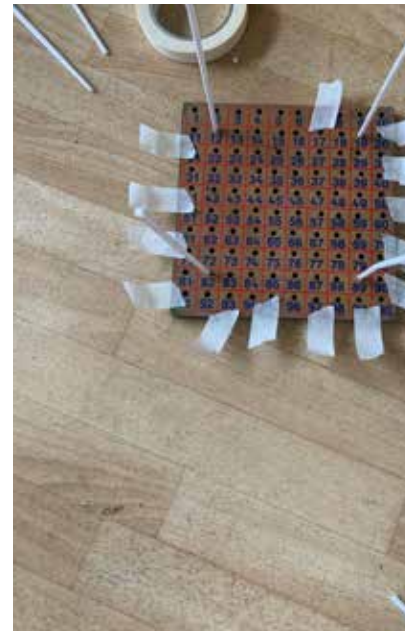
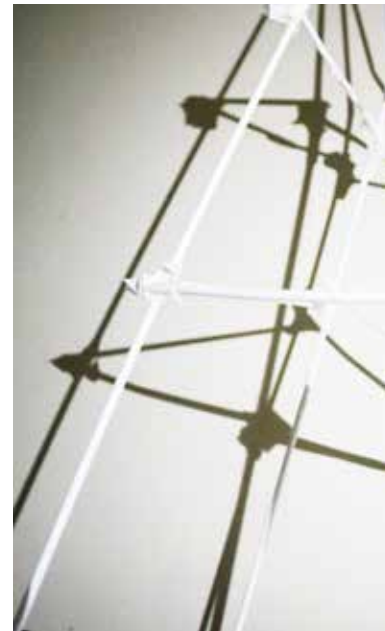
We began with pastels on large sheets of paper to simply make a mark or trace a line. Then, with clipboards, they were invited to make drawings of where they live. As a group we created a mental map of their communities and discussed where they lived in relation to each other.

We also built structures with straws and tape and used inks in water to create colour-rich patterns. This allowed the children to express feelings and emotions in an abstract way.

A key aspect of this work was the collaborative element—

Supporting the children to work collectively.

This book represents the outcomes of this group expression.



There are myriad ways that this book can be used to support rich conversations, learning and self-expression among children and their adults across a range of settings. Here are simple ideas for how this can be built on in other settings.

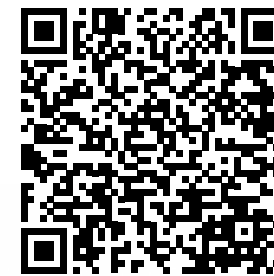
Curriculum links

There are many cross-cutting themes and ideas that link to the primary curriculum, especially in areas such as Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE). The key thematic strands of the SPHE curriculum are Myself, Myself and Others, and Myself and the Wider World. Within this, there is a focus on social responsibility and respect for diversity and difference.

In the classroom, a teaching response could be as simple as:

Read, discuss, compare your own childhood community with the two mentioned here.

The full curriculum can be viewed at this link.



Conversations

Any aspect of the book can be drawn out to elicit new conversations with children and young people and as a stimulus for dialogue about their own lives and experiences. A critical and central feature of all Kids' Own's publications is the child's voice—authentic and uncensored. Children recognise the value of seeing the voices of their peers truthfully represented on the page.

Reading together with a parent, teacher or community worker provides a great opportunity for open-ended questions and honest responses.

The child's voice is supported again and again through the repeated and meaningful use of Kids' Own books.

Self-expression

Although the artwork in this book was developed by a professional artist in collaboration with children, there are lots of ideas that can be developed further in any setting. Using similar materials, children can be encouraged to express themselves freely and openly. A non-directive approach is best. Once the invitation to participate is honest, children will respond positively.

Participants

Mary Jane (MJ) Ayo Vaughan
Kaci Connolly
Abigail (Abbie) Power
Caroline Baker
Shayne-Leigh Baker
Alex Power
Elijah Ibekwe
Christopher James (CJ) Power
Mason Dempsey Kenny
Noah Walsh
Emelia Pugzikovs
Mario (Mikey) Pugzik
Sophia Gaffney
Demi-Leigh Croke
Sofia Foley
Anne Burn
Clare Burn
James Keane Kennedy
Mahmoud Eltayib
Fatima Eltayib
Oscar Broderick

