

NEWS

Germany calling provides new start for young Julianstown man

WORK Martin is now country manager for new online travel blog

NOELLE FINEGAN

AFTER graduating with a masters in film and television, 24-year-old Martin McKenna from Julianstown found it impossible to find any paid work in this area in Ireland.

He decided to look further afield and, just over a year ago, he moved to Germany to take up a job with a new online travel blog, holidayguru.ie

A year on, Martin is now managing the project and is settling into life in the German city of Dortmund. A football-mad city, he says in ways it reminds him of the GAA culture at home and he admits that the biggest sacrifice in moving was having to give up football with his club, St Pat's, Stamullen.

A son of Martin Snr and Ro-

saleen McKenna, Martin is the youngest in a family of seven. His father is very well-known in the local area where he drives the school bus and was involved with the local community games for many years.

Martin went to the Whitecross NS and his secondary education was in St Mary's Diocesan School in Drogheda. He graduated from NUI Maynooth with a degree in history and geography and went on to study a masters in film and television studies in Dublin City University.

After completing his masters, he recalled that it was very difficult to get any paid work in the field.

"I worked in a few call centre and insurance jobs and did an unpaid internship but it was very hard to get a paid job. All



Martin McKenna from Julianstown who is managing travel blog holidayguru.ie

that seemed to be available was JobBridge or unpaid work. It was very frustrating.

"Then I started to look fur-

ther afield and I saw a job advertised with jobs.ie for an international online editor. It was an entry level position in editorial and writing for a website, and there was a wage at the end of the month."

Despite having no German. Martin took the plunge and moved to take up the job in Dortmund.

Urlaubsguru.de is the parent company which was set up in late 2013 by two friends. It became incredibly successful and expanded to develop sites

for other countries, including Ireland.

Martin explained how it works: "We are bargain holiday bloggers and search websites for cheap holiday offers and relay them to consumers, We also offer promo codes for many of the sites like eBookers and Click and Go. The holidays could be anywhere. If we see something good value we write about it."

There are holidayguru websites in several European countries now and with all

the company's 100 employees based in the Dortmund offices, Martin said there is a very international mix.

The company focuses very much on integrating their staff and Martin explained that they organised a flat for him to live when he moved and also offered German language lessons.

"They do a lot to help you integrate and to build a family environment among the employees," he said. "There is even a feelgood manager, whose entire role is to look after the wellbeing of the company employees."

Martin began working with holidayguru.ie in March of last year and, in October, he became country manager for the Irish site.

Holidayguru has an average of 180,000 visitors to its website each month and 4.5 million fans on Facebook and the company is continuing to grow.

While there a lot about Ireland that he misses, Martin says it has been an amazing experience and he has learned so much about other cultures.

The biggest sacrifice was giving up football and he said it was one of the reasons he hadn't moved away before this - but he plans on coming back home and playing again in the future.

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From left: Anthony Clinton, Charlie Farrelly, Charlie Smith, Ann O'Reilly (manager, Meath Specialist Palliative Care), Davy Gargan, Mary and Gerry Hennessy.

Quiz funds for palliative care

THE annual Charlie Smith table quiz in aid of Meath Palliative Care was held recently in McCormack's Bar, Moynalty, and raised €1,840.

Speaking at the presentation, Ann O'Reilly, manager of Meath Specialist Palliative

Care, expressed her thanks to everyone involved in raising the funds and assured all that the donation will be used entirely to provide extra supports and comforts to patients receiving specialist palliative care in Meath.

Charlie Reilly, chairperson of the organising committee, thanked everyone who helped in organising the event, everyone who generously provided spot prizes and donations and those who attended on the night.