



Brothers Ronan and Conor McGarvey with Alan Grant of Expert Hardware and the Expert Hardware Man at the Donegal Pens Open Day in Loughanure on Saturday.

'Pens' boys are good to go

On Saturday afternoon two young entrepreneurs from West Donegal held an open day and invited the public to view their business's new workshop in Loughanure.

Brothers Ronan (15) and Conor (12) McGarvey welcomed members of the public to the premises of Donegal Pens to celebrate the completion and opening their new workshop.

People got to view newly installed equipment thanks to the kind sponsorship of Expert Hardware which has nearly 50 outlets nationwide.

The generous support came after company director Alan Grant heard that Ronan and Conor had been turned down for grants as they are both under 18.

After hearing RTE journalist and Dungloe native Lisa McKelvey's report on Radio One's Morning Ireland in December, Alan offered to fund the new 7x4m workshop and a new Record Power Nova Lathe to the tune of €4,500.

Alan was on site in Loughanure on Saturday to see first hand how the boys are putting the new equipment to good use in the workshop.

He said: "Ronan and Conor are an inspiration to any young person with a business idea who has the passion and commitment to follow through



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on their vision. It is great to see such talent coming through and we as a nation must support, nurture and invest in such talent and not discriminate due to age."

Alan said the company was delighted to support Ronan and Conor in their enterprise and wished them well in the future.

"Ireland's future is dependent on the youth of today and we at Expert Hardware believe in the McGarvey brothers and will give any support we can," he said.

The two enterprising school boys, who both attend Rosses Community School in Dungloe, set up Donegal Pens over two years ago and have been going from strength to strength

with orders shipping worldwide and many companies now also using the pens as corporate gifts.

Ronan said the two brother were delighted that after two years their business had such a "brilliant" workshop following the completion of the building projects kindly supported by Alan and Expert Hardware.

"Everything is in place now and thanks to Alan (Grant) and all at Expert Hardware we have a brilliant new workshop and equipment.

"When Lisa McKelvey's package aired on Morning Ireland little did we think we'd have gotten this response. We expected maybe a few companies would have offered to buy pens as corporate gifts but never a new workshop.

"We are also delighted to hear that Expert Hardware has signed up its first outlet in Donegal - McClafferty's Mace & Hardware store just out the road from us in Gortahork.

"The open day gave people the chance to see us at work and get a first hand view on how we make the pens," he said.

Conor said they were so pleased to welcome nearly 70 people to their open day on Saturday.

"We were doing demonstrations for our guests and people actually bought some of the pens that we made on the day."

He said they can't wait to get stuck into work at the new workshop and trying their hand at different items with the new equipment.

"We've made a few bowls with the new equipment, but we aren't selling these yet. We'll try out different products over the coming weeks and

hopefully expand our range soon."

For Conor the best thing about the open day was cutting the ribbon.

"That was a very special moment for us and we really appreciated Alan Grant and Rita Ranehan being there on the day," he said.

The boys' father Eoin said it was a proud day for him and his wife Marie. "Ronan and Conor have received so much support from Expert Hardware, Raitt's of Stranorlar, friends and relatives in getting this project up-and-running.

"They still can't believe that so many people would happily help them without wanting something in

return, people have been so generous," said Eoin.

With so many possible distractions, from computer games to television, Eoin said they were delighted to see that their boys are still so keen on their hobby turned business.

"The first thing they ask when they come home from school is if there are any orders in, but there is still a 'homework first' policy in place that the boys have to abide by," he laughed.

Check out the newly updated website www.donegalpens.com



Some of the handmade pens and bowls by Donegal Pens.

“Ronan and Conor are an inspiration to any young person with a business idea who has the passion and commitment to follow through on their vision - Alan Grant”