Coming Home

Not sure where I start with a blog entry, I’ve never done one before but I suppose where I am at the moment is as good a place as any. In May I finished teaching Economics on the TAP Foundation course. It was the most enjoyable aspect of my career so far. I accessed college through the Higher Access Education Route (HEAR) in 2009 and was the first person in my extended family to go to University. I feel so privileged to have come full circle and now to be helping people from similar situations advance their education and lives. I finished my undergrad in Economics and Geography in 2012 and went on to study a Masters in Economics in 2013. I then worked for a year to build up my finances to do the Hdip in Education, which had changed from a one year Higher Diploma to a two year Masters, so a further commitment of time and especially money was needed to complete the course and qualify as teacher. I completed year one in May 2015 and began working in the Civil Service as an Economist in the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. I intended on seeing how this went before going back to complete year two, as jobs with my subjects aren’t exactly plentiful at the moment. I also began the tutor position with TAP that September and during the course of the year it became fairly obvious to me where my passions lay and what I wanted to do so I’m leaving the civil service to do what I love – teach.

When I read about this blog I thought to myself what would I like to say if I write something? Is a timeline of my academic background or my career aspirations my topic of choice or is it something else? So I thought why not explain a bit about my rationale for wanting to get involved in teaching and education and why I’m so passionate about it.

Growing up without a father in a council estate with lots of social problems was extremely tough. My father died a week before my 4th birthday from a drug overdose. My mother had to raise three young kids pretty much on her own, albeit with support from a partner for a few years. My extended family helped when they could but things were not easy for her or us. When I was 7 I moved to the countryside to live with my granny because things were so hard at home. During this period of my life my grandparents and uncle helped me grow and develop. After around four years I just wanted to move home and be near my mother and sisters. I knew life would be tougher there but I was so close to them. I started secondary school in Athlone and really enjoyed it, I was good at the academic side of things and really thrived at sports. At the same time things had gotten much better at home. Then came my junior cert year! While things continued going great in school and on the pitch, my home life took a nosedive. Two days into my exams my eldest sister suffered the same fate as my Dad, both never came home. My life crumbled around me, school and football were the last things on my mind. I drifted from both over the next year or so and just became apathetic about
life. Then 6th year came, I wasn’t long listening to my friends talking about where they wanted to go to college and what they wanted to do with their lives before realising I needed to take responsibility for my own life or else it would pass me by. Two teachers in my school took me under their wing and helped me with everything, from college applications to catching up on all the work I missed out on. I looked up to them so much, we still keep in contact to this day. They were and still are two of the biggest influences on my life. I made the decision that if I got to college, I wanted to be just like them. Well here I am!

The most joyful part of my life now is coming home to share with my mother, sister and her children stories of my latest endeavours and of a life none of us thought we’d ever see. This is all due to the power of education and inspiring teachers willing me to become the best version of myself. I’m really looking forward to finishing my Masters in Education and seeing where life takes me next.

As Nelson Mandela said, “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”