

# 2018 Duhallow Business Awards

## BEST WOMEN-LED BUSINESS AWARD FINALIST

### Marie leads an educational pack of party animals

#### The Animal Roadshow Marie Fleming

Established in 2004, The Animal Roadshow is an interactive education programme.

What makes it unique is that they introduce a selection of varied creatures from around the world. They also do many other creative projects under the same wild theme.

It all started 14 years ago when Marie Fleming's daughter was still a tiny baby. "I was unqualified on paper, with just a Junior Cert equivalent behind me and a background in retail," recalls Marie Fleming, who runs the business with her husband, Brendan. "It was extremely important for me to have a job that worked around my family, so with my background experience working with the public and animals, I set up The Animal Roadshow.

"I got so busy that, after a while, my husband took a leap of faith and gave up his stonemason career to join me. It was a wonderful move as Brendan is extremely creative, too, and, combined, they became a force to be reckoned with.

"It was not unusual to be brainstorming at 3am on ways to improve, creating new and fresh party packages, painting props and signs etc," says Marie.

Through their mobile education programme they introduce a variety of exotic creatures in a safe and entertaining way, with close encounters and loads of handling opportunities! Their selection generally includes lizards, snakes, owls, tortoises and much more.

Their customers range from toddler groups and pre-schools to private parties, special needs groups, schools and nursing homes. They also do a lot of corporate and festival entertainment. Their company operates mainly in the Munster region but have worked nationwide, as far as the Arran Islands down to West Cork.

#### WORKING ON CONTINUOUS GROWTH

Brendan qualified in level 5 Early Childcare / SNA last year and is hoping to carry on to do level 6 and 7, and also has horticulture qualifications. They are looking into specialized autism studies in order to create a more tailored therapy experience to offer their clients.

Their onsite polytunnel and classroom are scheduled as the next project to work on, so that they can bring small groups onsite for specialized camps/wild art workshops/ planting and animal experience/wild art/nature clubs.

#### CARING FOR CREATURES AND CUSTOMERS

Marie and have a genuine passion and professional outlook in the work they do. Not only are their creatures loved and well cared for, their customers are valued and cared for, too. They would love to win an IRD Duhallow award and would be delighted to share their success with all of their customers.

Marie Fleming of The Animal Roadshow with Horton the Tawnee Owl. Below: Husband and business partner Brendan, Marie, Elfie and Hollie holding Webster the Tarantula, Bruce the Bearded Dragon Lizard, Mr. Blue the Blue Tongued Lizard, and Johnny 5, the Tortoise.

