

conjunction of a sponsorship for an insurance company and the portrayal of what's supposedly a social phenomenon; there was not even embarrassment in RTE over that, of its obvious

newspaper articles studied, just 4% were found to be positive news. Twenty-two out of 24 TV news reports were about crime in the area.

When discussing the Regeneration project in

Save in Our Community. We would also like the clarify that the Ballinacurra Weston Residents Alliance were invited to the seminar and were asked to provide five names of local residents who wished to attend.



At the symposium in the West End You O'Sullivan, left, and Eileen Humphreys

# Leigh's book gets cheerful launch

**Norma Prendiville**

It has been a hectic week for Pallaskenry's Leigh Gath, who launched her memoir *Don't Tell Me I Can't* on Saturday, following an impressive interview on the Late Late Show the night before.

But, now her story is out there, Newry-born Leigh - who grew up without arms or legs as a result of Thalidomide - can expect even more public engagements - with more media attention and requests coming in for book-signings.

"It has all gone brilliantly, the Late Late was great and the audience response was great," she said this week. "I have had people come up to me since saying 'I saw you on TV' every time I have gone to the Crescent since And the book launch on Saturday was brilliant".

Fine Gael TD Dan Neville, who launched the book at Dooradocyle library, described Leigh as a "very feisty, independent, determined woman whose disability was never going to impinge on her life opportunities". Taking examples from the book, he spoke of her positive experience when British soldiers visited her school - only to find later that they destroyed her toys at home. And he told the audience Leigh had always been political in defence of those with disabilities.

After writing to her MP Enoch Powell to demand accessible footpaths, Mr Powell turned up on the family doorstep, much to her mother's surprise. And later, living in Texas, Leigh was among a group arrested during a protest against broken promises for those with disabilities.

Mr Neville also spoke of Leigh's personal struggles in dealing with the break-up with her first husband who was an alcoholic and how she survived as a single mother of two. He spoke too of how



Leigh Gath, centre, with Maggie Woods, chairperson of the Irish Thalidomide Association with Finola Cassidy, spokesperson for the Thalidomide Association at the launch in Dooradoyle. PICTURES: BRENDAN GLEESON

Below: Hannah, Christopher and Mary Lynch, at the launch of *Don't Tell Me I Can't*.



love returned to her life when she made contact with Eugene Gath, maths lecturer in UL.

It was a relationship which blossomed through long - and expensive - phone-calls and visits, he said to much laughter - and which ultimately saw both of them along making a new home in Pallaskenry together with Leigh's children Karl and Aisling.

The most extraordinary thing about Leigh's life, Mr Neville said, is that it has been an ordinary, difficult life - with all the ups and

downs of an ordinary life. And he quoted English clergyman, Bernard Edmonds who said: "To dream anything that you want to dream, that is the beauty of the human mind. To do anything that you want to do, that is the strength of the human will. And to trust yourself to test your limits, that is the courage to succeed."

It was a quotation which aptly sums up Leigh Gath.

*Don't Tell Me I Can't* is available in bookshops from this Wednesday.



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