

Blackrock College Newsletter



Special points of interest:

- Boarding School
- Pastoral Care Programme
- Guidance and Counselling
- Debating
- Science Department

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Autumn 2014

Dear Parents

"The greatest good you can do for another is not just share your riches, but reveal to him his own"
Benjamin Disraeli

To develop self-esteem in our youngsters - an understanding of self, an appreciation of self, an acceptance of self - is a priority for parents, for educators. Today, youngsters are increasingly fragile and it is important that, in building community, we urge the boys to look out for what might be easily overlooked.

Our first **Mental Health Awareness Day** on Monday 13th of October was a welcome initiative. Fionnbar Walsh, father of the late Donal (livelife.org), told his son's story to the 5th and 6th Year boys. He shared Donal's battle with cancer and the positive influence he had upon so many fellow teenagers. Fionnbar told us that Donal was asked shortly before his death - "Was he afraid of dying?". His reply was - "I am just a little bit nervous". Nervousness - you could have heard a pin drop in the Lecture Hall.

There is a saying that life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away. This was one such moment, when the pulse of Blackrock beat as one in memory of this wonderful young man and in appreciation of the value of life, of the sanctity of life.

Each one of our boys, your sons, has much to offer. Their developmental years are part of a journey of self-discovery. Central to this is a search for authenticity, a belief that there is value in who you are. We believe that faith in God - Donal's deep faith was evident in Fionnbar's talk - is the secure source of personal well-being and from this springs an acceptance of self and the desire to bring out the best in others.

Our programme of Liturgies, Retreats, Pilgrimages and Masses is key to this. It directs our boys to what is of real value, to what endures. We were encouraged by the overflowing attendance at the recent 2nd Year Family Mass. It is on such occasions that the boys are imbued with Fides et Robur.

Another such occasion was our Whole School Assembly to celebrate the start of the new academic year.

Guest of Honour, Jordi Murphy (Class of 2009) told the boys that he wanted to speak to them about values. He shared with the 1,000-strong audience Joe Schmidt's maxim for his players - 'Be Humble, Be Disciplined, Be Relentless'. Jordi urged the boys to lead their lives by this. This was another moment that opened our eyes to what we are all called to be.

For many today, the www is the source of all knowledge. Our boys can readily compute content but how many can read context? The French Renaissance essayist Michel de Montaigne wrote, "We may be knowledgeable with another man's knowledge but we can only be wise with our own wisdom".

We live in a knowledge-based economy but whose knowledge is it? Do we just borrow it from Google or Bing? Wisdom, on the other hand, means understanding and insight. Wisdom provides for a good heart as well as a good head. It demands humility, discipline and faithfulness.

We challenge our boys to deepen their own awareness and to believe that they can make a difference and experience the joy of service to others.

Our programme incorporating the vital daily interaction of the classroom, the Rugby 10s to the Swimming Gala, 5th and 6th Year Retreats, 2nd and 6th Year Family Masses, Lourdes Pilgrimage and Pastoral Placements, M.U.N. and Debates, Lectures and Talks all encourage this awareness.

I particularly wish to acknowledge **Mr McDonald and the Libermann Choir** whose performance in the **Leinster Finals of the All Island Choral Competition** televised on RTE1 on 19 October, proudly represented a dimension of Blackrock which surprises those unfamiliar with our holistic programme.

Finally, as our **Strategising To 2015** document nears its natural end, we look forward to a 2020 vision for Blackrock and invite all of you to share in the charting of our course. There are many issues to be addressed. We can always do better. With your help we will.

It has been a marvellous half-term. For this, I thank my colleagues, our Spiritan Community, our Union, the boys and, of course, you the parents, for leadership, advice, guidance, service and prayers.

Enjoy the mid-term break.

Yours sincerely

ALAN MacGINTY





Second Year



The class of 2019 began their career in the senior school with aplomb, achieving the highest number on Principal's Lists on the weekly **Application Cards** that has been seen in quite a few years. The card is brought home each Monday by each boy and is a great opportunity for parents to compliment their son on the good effort he is making in school. Boys also should use the card to see what area of their work, if any, needs particular focus and improvement during the subsequent week. Each boy also records his involvement in the **Extra-curricular activities** provided by the College staff and coaches, whether it's a sport or a club: rugby, table tennis, cross-country, squash, badminton, swimming, cycling, basketball, water polo, rowing, art club, debating, chess, science club or public speaking. A boy is missing out, not least on his social development, by not being involved. We congratulate Edward McKenna who was part of the 3rd placed Inter-Team in cross country's first outing of the season in Santry; Ross O'Reilly whose team won the Leinster U16 Final at Milltown, and Drummond McGinn who received a Distinguished Delegate Award at the Model United Nations in Turenure.

The **House Captains** were chosen at the end of First Year and were commissioned by our Spiritual Director Fr Cormac Ó Brolcháin CSSp in the College Chapel on 30th September: they are James Gibney and Jack Loscher for DeValera House; Ben Murphy and Tom Dwan for Duff House; Tadhg Egan and Mattie McShane for Ebenrecht House; Seán Lardner and Cormac McCabe for Leman House; Harry Clarke and Diarmuid Foley for McQuaid House; and Harry Hughes and Charlie Reilly for Shanahan House. The House Captains serve as an important link in the communication chain in the school and we wish them well in their new responsibilities.



The new Captains began the year by organising the first of many **House Competitions** and hence we had a full list of boys signed up for the Table Tennis Competition. This competition is progressing faster than previous years and so we will be playing the

final during the month of November. The Rugby 10's Competition took place at the end of September. Jack Losher's De Valera team won the A-Blitz beating Ebenrecht in the Final, with Mattie McShane Player of the Tournament. David Campbell's De Valera team beat McQuaid in the Final of the B-Blitz, with Aaron O'Sullivan the Player of the Tournament. The College Sailing Regatta was held at the end of September with at least one Second Year boy involved in each team: Mackenzie Kinsella, Darach Clonan, Drummond McGinn, Cian Dunne, Carl Somers, David Fitzsimons, Conall Walsh, Sean Hannon, David Kealy, Victor Ferreira, David Fitzsimons, Cameron Kelly and Frank Madden. The Swimming Gala was held in front of a noisy crowd just before mid-term with enthusiastic involvement from Second Year. The House Cross-country will be held in early November, and the House Chess competition will begin then as well.

The Second Year **Family Mass** took place on 12th October and was agreed by all to be a special occasion. Many Second Year boys were involved in the Liturgy and performed their ministries in a creditable manner. The theme was Mission, and the College **Spiritual Director** Fr Cormac Ó Brolcháin CSSp reminded the



Andrew Daly with his father Jim and sister Carla at 2nd Year Mass

congregation that we are all children of God, that he chose us to be so, and we must love one another to become so. Services in the Chapel had been held early in September to provide the boys with the opportunity to attend the Sacrament of Reconciliation and early in October we had our Whole School Assembly on the Feast of our Congregation's Founder, Claude Poullart des Places with addresses from Fr Ó Brolcháin, Mr Alan MacGinty, and from Jordi Murphy, class of 2009.

Also during the first half term, each of the boys has met with the **Counsellor** for the year, Mr Donal Brennan, and they have also begun to meet with the College Chaplain, Fr Hyacinth Nwakuna CSSp. Bullying Awareness Day took place in mid-September reaffirming unequivocally that bullying is unacceptable in Blackrock, be it physical, verbal, written or on-line. Mental Health Awareness Day was held in mid-October with an excellent address from Mr Donal Scanlan, Mental Health Promotion Nurse of St John of God Hospital, to all the boys in Second Year.

The first of three parents' seminars was held on 24th September with a great turnout. The topic was study skills, and was given by Martin Murphy and Orla Callan from *Learning 4 Learning*. It was very well received and we are grateful to the Second Year **Parents' Committee** for organising this and future events.



Diarmuid Foley, Alberto Rodriguez Serrano and Scott Henderson at 2nd Year Mass

Finally if a Second Year boy achieves something of note outside of school in sports, drama, music, an academic pursuit or some community service, please inform the Dean so we can celebrate the achievement. For example, Cian Murphy took part in the *Malin to Mizen Cross Charity Cycle* raising over €2,250 himself. We congratulate Cian and look forward to hearing of many more accomplishments from many more Second Year boys.

Third Year



We had a very good start to the new academic year, an analysis of the application card trends clearly illustrates that a lot of very good work is being done. Notwithstanding this, it would be great to see the recent increase in the number on the Principal's List extended further in the run up to the Christmas examinations. The challenge is there for every boy to maximize his focus. The deadline for cards that have to be returned is the **Wednesday** following its issue. We would urge parents to insist on seeing the card each **Monday** evening. The good practice of keeping the Homework Diary up to date as the boys go through each day can in fact reduce stress for them. With this in mind we would request parents to inspect the Diary on the weekends to ensure full use is being made of it.

The Bullying Awareness Day, the main focus of which was a DVD featuring the Clare hurling manager Davy FitzGerald and the Mental Health Awareness Day, at which Mr. Donal Scanlon of St. John of God Hospital gave a talk, were very well received. Hopefully both played a part in empowering the boys to seek help if they are experiencing difficulties, and as the handout they got during the latter day says, **"It is ok not to feel ok, and it is more than ok to ask for help"**.

A feature of the College extra-curricular programme in recent years has been the great variety of activities available to the boys. A recent survey of involvement showed that boys take part in 15 different activities. Boys have represented the school in rugby, basketball, rowing, badminton, cross country, debating, sailing and golf. No doubt many more opportunities will come their way in the coming months, in these and other activities. In the Inter-House Competition de Valera were victors over Duff in the Rugby 10's A competition and Duff overcame de Valera in the B competition. At time of writing we are looking forward to the Swimming Gala and Cross Country

competition and plan to hold a Table Tennis completion in the run up to Christmas break.

Over 120 boys attended study skills workshops facilitated by Mr. Frank O'Sullivan to whom we extend thanks for this important opportunity he has provided over the last 8 years. It is his intention to address an Assembly as a follow up prior to the Christmas examinations.

The commissioning of the House Captains took place at the end of September. Their role is a very important one and it is equally important that all House members would feel free to forward items for the agenda to their House Captains to be discussed at their fortnightly meetings.

Noel Canavan has been giving a talk to parents of Third Year boys for the last 8 years. It was pleasing to see a good turnout for this year's talk on Parent-Teenager Relationships. As parents he urged us to look at ourselves and our own experiences during our teenage years, to recognise the uniqueness of each of our children and to always show respect when dealing with any issues that may arise. As with any such talk time can be an issue, so Noel has decided to run a **6 Week Parenting Course** starting on **Tuesday November the 11th** in the College where he will have time to delve deeper into the material previously covered. Please find details enclosed with this newsletter.

**Third Year Family Mass is on Sunday
November 30th @ 11 A.M.
First Sunday of Advent**





Transition Year

Blackrock College Radio

At the time of writing preparations are well under way for BCR 2014. All groups are now up and running and meeting regularly. Over 170 students are involved in what should be a fantastic week of broadcasting. We hope you will tune in on the week Monday 17th – Friday 21st of November to the wide variety of shows, from news and current affairs, sports, language shows and guest schools. We will broadcast on 97.3fm and also stream live on the college website.



Junior Certificate Results

Congratulations to all students in transition year and their parents on what were fantastic results at all levels in the Junior Certificate. It is hoped that results of appeals will be back from the State Examination Commission in the 2nd week in November.

Evening Courses

There has been a great uptake on evening courses, which will continue after midterm. We hope to offer the same course again in the new year. Chinese will continue right up until the Easter holidays. Over 135 students have availed of these courses in the first term.

Tuesday Tours

On Tuesday 16th of September, students went out on their first transition year tours to Croke Park GAA Museum, Glasnevin Museum, Awesome Walls Climbing Centre and the Sandymount Ski centre. The next tour will take place immediately after midterm on Tuesday 4th November.

Lecture Series

To date the students have had three lectures in school: Tim Gaston of Solas Project spoke to the boys about the social outreach programme he is involved in and sought volunteers for the prison rugby project. Dr Conor O' Brien spoke of the risks involved in the taking of protein shakes and other supplements. He also gave a talk to parents on the same day which was very well attended. As part of mission awareness month there was a talk given by Father Brendan Carr, Aidan Coreless and Jack O' Keefe about missionary work and the school Blackrock College is fundraising for in Machakos Kenya. Finally, the students also attended the AXA roadsafe talk in Dun Laoghaire. It was a very hard hitting presentation on road safety, with representatives from the Gardai, Ambulance and Fire service and an A & E doctor addressing the audience.

Goal Aidlink Campaign

The house captains have been busy planning for the Goal Aidlink 2015 badge campaign. On Wednesday the 15th of October we held our initial lecture. Mark Nealon made a fantastic presentation to the Transition Years on the work both Goal and Aidlink do and the aims of the campaign this year. I commend Mark on his work to date and on his very professional approach. Students can sign up to be involved in the different committees of the campaign: direct sales, social media, launch, overseas sales, national schools, secondary schools and administration.

Gaisce

Gaisce is a President's award that challenges students to conquer new personal goals and to serve in their communities. Over 110 Transition year students have signed up to achieve this award. So far we have over 30 TY students giving up their weekends to help in a variety of great volunteer projects, such as: training special Olympic athletes, working with social clubs for those with physical disabilities, playing tag rugby with teenagers with disabilities and volunteering at youth shelters. Long may this great work continue and may the spirit of service continue to thrive in TY.

Pastoral Placement

To date 3 groups have been out on their 2 week Pastoral Placement. It has been great to talk to the students about their experiences. The feedback I have received from Mr Ryan to date has been great. The next group are due to go out on the 24th of November.

Dragons' Den

In September we launched the 7th Annual Dragons' Den competition. I thank Mr Copeland and the dragons for organising this exciting enterprise competition. In November we will have our first idea development workshop for all entrants.

Vocab Express

Our 4th year modern language students competed online against 200 schools internationally. We are placed 5th overall in the French challenge cup, with Dylan McCarthy registering the highest aggregate score. Well done to all involved.

Extra curricular

It has been a busy time with regards to extra curricular activities. Rory Linnane has been captaining the school u16 basketball team. Charlie FitzGerald has been ranked #3 in Leinster U17's for table tennis. Kevin O' Donnell was captain of the Milltown u15 team who were victorious in the Leinster Final. In sailing James O' Connor won the individual "Brouder" trophy in the college sailing regatta whilst he was also involved alongside Conor Byrne in the school team that finished 3rd in the first inter schools regatta.

Our rowers have been training hard and going from strength to strength. On the 11th of October our Junior 8 including Scott Rolland, Robert Brown, Robert Somers, Conor Byrne, Charlie Lawless, Cian de Burca, Jack Stacey and Mark Dignam were victorious over Fermoy Rowing Club in the New Ross Boat Club's Barrow Challenge. In the inter-house rugby 10's blitz DeValera won an epic final against Ebenrecht. Throughout the morning there was some great rugby played, an example of which was Sam Murphy's try in the final. Sam (Ebenrecht) was awarded player of the tournament.

Scott Donohoe and John Heavey received distinguished delegates awards representing South Korea in the Model United Nations held in Terenure College in September.

Charity Work

The transition year students have already been busy with charity work. 28 students were involved in street collections for the Blackrock Hospice raising over €1800 in one day. On the 6th of October another group of transition years assisted the Operation Smile collection, raising €1200. The feedback from the organisers was highly commendable of both groups for their attitude and effort.

Lorcan Dunne raised €1050 in sponsorship as he completed the 700km Tour de Leinster in aid of Downs Syndrome Ireland. Lorcan completed the tour over four days. A fantastic achievement.

Dates for the diary

- 4th November – Transition year tours.
- 17-21st November – Blackrock College Radio
- 28th/29th – 24hr Soccer Marathon
- 4th December – Transition Year Parent/teacher meeting
- 13th December – Hamper delivery for SVP



Fifth Year

5th Year students have embraced their fresh start to their two year programme in the Senior Cycle wholeheartedly and have made great strides. Weekly cards are affirming good application, whilst the two Progress Weeks this half-term have served to highlight the strong academic focus of the year. The cards are an excellent measure of how the students are managing and organising their time and activities. It is strongly recommended that parents view their son's card on a weekly basis to both affirm good practice and offer direction where needed.

It has been a very busy half-term and in addition to focussing on academic progress, the students have been notably and enthusiastically involved in a number of activities and these are summarised here.

Career Guidance

Since the beginning of the year, all students have met with and continue to meet their

Career Guidance Counsellor and many have since sought advice on subject levels and choices as well as advice in relation to study.

The high turnout at the 5th Year Parents' Career Seminars organised by the Career Guidance Department was very welcomed. Over the course of the two evenings Dr. Patrick Prendergast, Provost TCD, Mr Alan MacGinty Principal, Ms Carleen McGee, Head of the Career Guidance and Counselling Department and a number of past pupils addressed many aspects of future educational and career opportunities as well as the supportive role of parents in their sons' career choices.

Day of Reflection

On Tuesday 7th October students were very welcoming of the opportunity to pause and reflect. They travelled to four different retreat centres around Dublin availing of the time away from the daily routine to reflect in a meaningful and spiritual way. The day was deemed



Fifth Year Cont'd



by the students to be very worthwhile and rewarding and we thank Mr Tom Ryan, the Pastoral Care Department and the House Captains for their successful co-ordination of the day.

Commissioning of House Captains

On Tuesday 30 September, all students attended a ceremony in the College Chapel where their twelve House Captains were commissioned by Fr. Ó Brolcháin. Those elected to represent the year group are Jack Gardiner, Richard Mouatt, Ross O'Toole, Jack Ringrose, Brian Grogan, Ferdia Power, Emmet Burns, Tommy O'Brien, Steven Kilgallen, Rory Patterson, Tim Maguire and James Trueick. The Captains are commended for their efficient organisation of the Rugby 10's and Swimming Gala as well as their assistance of 2nd Year Captains so far this year and we wish them well with their future duties.

Mission Awareness

As part of Mission Awareness Month, 5th year students were addressed by Fr. Brendan Carr CSSp and Aidan Corless Chairman of the past Pupils Mission Fund as well as past pupil Jack O'Keefe (2014.) This inspiring address highlighted for students the work of the Spiritans across the globe in the developing world and encouraged students to engage with missionary work in the future.

Bullying Awareness and Mental Health Awareness

On Bullying Awareness day students were reminded of the lasting damage that bullying can cause to the victim and the bully and were encouraged to report any instance of bullying behaviour in order to help us to take care of our overall well-being. Mental Health Awareness Day saw 5th Year students receive information as well as contact names and numbers of mental health organisations and they were also addressed by Mr Finbarr Walsh, father of the late Donal Walsh. Students were encouraged to *start the conversation* in relation to mental health and fundraising for the Live Life Foundation is ongoing.

Extra-Curricular Activities

5th year students have been very engaged and active in all areas of the Games Programme and Extra-Curricular activities. This is to be commended and encouraged as it provides great balance for academic work as well as providing opportunities to further develop vital social and team-work skills. Some of the activities and achievements of the term so far are summarised below.

Choir

Members of both the Leman and Liberman choirs, together with members of the orchestra, led their peers excellently at the term's Whole School Assembly. The members of the Liberman choir have committed much of their free time this term to rehearsing for their performance at the Leinster Regional Final of the All-Island Choir Competition. Despite their haunting renditions of Flanders Fields and Kyrie in the beautiful setting of St. Patrick's Chapel, Maynooth they were not successful in their bid to proceed to the All-Ireland final but we commend them and wish them well for all upcoming events.

Model UN/Debating

Eager to develop their public speaking skills, 5th years are playing an integral part in the senior debating society. Meeting and debating vigorously weekly the debaters are thoroughly enjoying their experiences. Three students took part in a Mace debate in UCD over the course of a weekend in October; this was great exposure to Mace style debating, with one of our student's team progressing in to the semi-final only to be narrowly defeated.

5th Year was well represented in the Blackrock College MUN delegation in Terenure College recently. The day was filled with much debate and discussion and notably Marcus Ó Faoláin received a Distinguished Delegate Award. Congratulations to Stephen Rooney who represented 5th Year and the College in the Estonian delegation at the international MUN conference in London from 18th to 21st October.

House Rugby

The House Rugby teams have had an excellent start to the season. The House 2nds have been victorious in their matches against CUS, Armagh and Bangor. The House 3rds were victorious against CUS, Clongowes, St. Michael's, Armagh and Bangor. All House players have been training hard and are looking forward to the rest of the season.

The Inter-House Rugby 10's tournament on a gloriously sunny Saturday in September was a great occasion and was enjoyed by all. Ebenrecht beat Duff in the final and Jack Ringrose (Duff) received best player of the tournament award.

Sailing Regatta

Four 5th Year students led teams in this year's Regatta. Relishing in this year's Indian summer, James O'Donnell led his team to victory in the annual sailing event. His team, made up of students from 3rd and 2nd year, were winners of the stylish Team Racing L'Afrique Trophy which is proudly on display in the College.

Senior Soccer

The 5th year members of the senior soccer squad were bitterly disappointed to be knocked out of the Senior Cup recently. They continue to train and compete in the League and many participate in the College's Social Soccer on a Friday evening. We wish them the best of luck.

Cross Country

Growing in popularity, the senior cross country team has considerable 5th year membership. At their recent outing in Santry the team's weekly training efforts were rewarded by their achievement of 3rd place. We wish them continued success.

Basketball

Weekly training and matches have highlighted the commitment of 5th year students to basketball whose attendance is such high numbers is very encouraging. Whilst the start to the season has been disappointing with a number of narrow losses, early indicators would be that the senior squad, with 5th students at its core, have very promising times ahead. We wish them well.

Golf

5th year golfers have had a very good start to the year, qualifying for the Ireland Schools' competition and winning all matches in the Leinster four-ball. On a wet and windy day at the Hermitage the golfers did extremely well to come second in qualifying. Other outings in Dun Laoghaire golf club Woodbrook went well and we wish the two 5th years competing in the upcoming Leinster quarter final continued success.

Rowing

Conor McShane is flying the flag for 5th years with the rowing squad this year. Daily training in the gym and on the water is helping preparations for the upcoming season. Conor is thoroughly enjoying the social outlet that rowing provides and we would hope to see many more 5th year rowers, old and new, joining training in the coming weeks.

As we reach the end of our first half-term, our best wishes and hopes are with all 5th Year students as we commend them for their positive and committed attitudes since the beginning of the year. We wish them a restful mid-term break and encourage them to keep their determined academic focus throughout the year ahead.



Mr Alan MacGinty Principal, Dr Patrick Prendergast, Provost TCD, Ms Caroline Dobbyn, Dean 5th Year, Ms Carleen McGee, Head of the Career Guidance and Counselling, Mr Brian O'Neill, PPU and Mr Shane Murphy S.C. at 5th Year Parents' Career Seminar

Sixth Year



The Sixth Years have settled in well and have had very good start to the year. It was a very busy half term with some of the highlights summarised below.

6th Year Retreats

The sixth year family Mass took place on Sunday 28th September where Fr. Larry Behan PP was Chief Celebrant. Fr Behan reminded the congregation that the greatest ability is availability, a readiness to give meaningful service to others. Following the Mass, our sixth years departed to 15 different retreat centres in 11 counties scattered throughout Ireland. The feedback received from the students on their return was extremely positive. We must thank all the retreat directors for their hospitality and the programmes which they put together for the boys. A special thanks to all the staff members who accompanied the students on their retreats and a special mention to Mr Tom Ryan on his organisation of the retreats and the family Mass.

During the boarders Mass and the sixth year Mass eight sixth years were commissioned as

Ministers of the Eucharist. We thank David Bolger, Patrick Brophy, Jay Dolan, Andrew Kilmartin, Andrew Ryan, Joshua Kieran-Glennon, Joshua Climax and Richard Grainger for undertaking such an important ministry of service.

Reconciliation services for sixth years were held from the 8th-12th September.

Lourdes Trip

On the 7th of September, six students Seamus Duff, Cathal Kinirons, Jeff Kirwan, Andrew McLaughlin, Roghan McMahon and David Walsh left to take part in the Dublin Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes. They joined many other Sixth Year groups from schools across Dublin in selflessly taking care of elderly sick pilgrims. The boys gained unforgettable valuable experiences which they will take them through this academic year and into the future.

House Representatives

On October 21st Fr. Ó Brolcháin commissioned the house captains in the College Chapel.



Sixth Year Cont'd



Rostrevor 6th Year Retreat group

Careers

In the first couple of weeks of term Ms McGee gave back the Centigrade tests which the boys sat at the end of fifth year. Hopefully this will give the boys food for thought as they fill in their CAO and UCAS applications over the coming months.

On Wednesday 17th September all sixth years attended the Highers options conference in the RDS, a worthwhile event. The HPAT course is now up and running on Saturday mornings at 9:30am.

There have been two career talks this half term, firstly Paul Ward of UCD Law Society addressed the boys on the 23rd September, with over 40 boys in attendance. Secondly, Adam Baker, UCD School of Business, addressed a large group of sixth years on October 14th.

Parents' Association

The sixth year parents' committee have met a couple of times already this year. It is a very busy year and if you are interested in helping out this year, in any capacity, please get in touch by email 2015classpa.brock@gmail.com

House Competitions

On September 6th the six houses competed in the annual rugby 10's competition. There was an impressive turnout from all and it was nice to see those who haven't played rugby in a long while (or ever!) turn out for their houses. In the final, Duff House beat McQuaid with Ryan C Murphy (McQuaid) named as Player of the Tournament. Well done to all involved and thanks to the house captains for their organisation.

The second of the house competitions, the swimming gala, took place on Tuesday 21st in the College pool. A great success and the sixth years were out in huge numbers to swim and support. A big thanks to Mr Justin Vanstone for his organisation of the Gala and again to the house captains for their help in organising the teams.

Mental Health Awareness Day

The College's first Mental Health Awareness Day took place on Monday 13th October. Fionnbar Walsh from the Donal Walsh Live Life foundation spoke to the sixth years about his son Donal and the foundation. Donal Walsh lost his battle against cancer at the age of 16 but not before he fundraised tirelessly in order to promote his anti-suicide message as well as forward his cause of providing age appropriate teenage facilities in hospital and hospice centres. www.donalwalshlive.life.org

The twelve students elected by the group are Fiachra Bourke and Roghan McMahon (DeValera); Richard Grainger and Richard Heapes (Duff); Louis Hoffman and Joshua Kieran-Glenon (Ebenrecht); Thomas Corless and Ben Reynolds (Leman); Jack Flynn and Greg O'Meara (McQuaid); Ronan Turner and Jake Warde (Shanahan). We wish them well in their leadership roles this year. Additionally, we congratulate Joshua Kieran-Glenon on being elected Chair of the Student Council.

Senior Science Quiz

Congratulations to Joshua Gorman-Climax on winning the College's senior science quiz. Well done to Rory McCluskey and Andrew Ryan who finished 2nd and 3rd respectively.

Sport

The extra-curricular sports programme is well underway. It is great to see sixth years regularly involved in Rugby, Table Tennis, Golf, Soccer, Basketball, Cross Country, Swimming, Water polo, Badminton and Rowing. The SCT have had a good start to the season with good wins over Campbell College and Terenure among others. Our Senior Soccer team were very unfortunate to lose, in extra-time, in the first round of the Leinster cup, we wish them well in the Metropolitan Cup. The Senior Golf team including Conor Harte, Edward Kennedy and Gavin Homan qualified for the Leinster Finals stroke play and also had an impressive win over St. Andrew's in the Leinster Four Ball competition. On another note we'd like to congratulate Mark Bolger on finishing 6th in the Irish Laser National Championships held in Ballyholme Yacht club in Bangor; a fantastic achievement.



Sixth Year students with Dublin Diocesan pilgrimage in Lourdes

All Island Choir Competition

For the Third year in a row the College's senior choir qualified for the Leinster final held in St. Patrick's College Chapel, Maynooth. They gave an excellent account of themselves in the final and were very unlucky not to progress to the All Island finals in Belfast. We congratulate them on their achievement and thank Mr Eunan McDonald and Ms Una O'Kane for all their efforts.

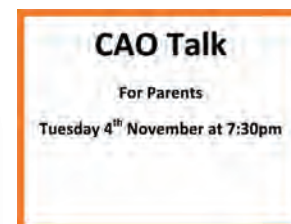
Study Skills

Enda O'Doherty of Study Skills Ireland ran a workshop for the boys on Saturday 18th October from 9:30am until 3:00pm. A very worthwhile event for those who attended. Night study runs Monday through to Friday; Saturday morning study 9:30am to 12:30pm.

Bullying Awareness Day

Bullying Awareness Day was held on Monday 15th September. The classroom presentation featured a Talk by the Clare Hurling Manager, Davy Fitzgerald, in which he shared his personal experience of being bullied as a youngster and the long-term impact this had.

The focus of the day was AWARENESS and not to stand idly by if we are aware of unacceptable behaviour. If you are the victim of bullying or the witness to bullying, whether it is name-calling, isolation or online bullying, have the confidence to TELL ...TELL ... TELL, be it the Dean, a Teacher, the Counsellor, your Parents, an Adult or a Friend. Email address: tacklingbullying@blackrockcollege.com or use the Bullying Tool on www.blackrockcollege.com



Halls of Residence



On the 25th August 2014, 88 young gentlemen and well relaxed housemasters entered the Castle front door for another year of residence in Blackrock College. We would like to welcome to the Castle all the new boys who are sprinkled in amongst 1st to 6th years. The old mixed with the new and by the end of the first evening, everyone was soon settled into his new environment. In addition to the usual day to day activities, such as school, study, extra-curricular activity and eating, a number of other extra activities started with great enthusiasm.

The following activities are taking place throughout each week: TEFL class for foreign students on Saturday mornings, public speaking, Tuesday evening Mass in the Oratory, Boarders' Choir, Boarders' Book Club in the College Library, and Boarders' Cookery Classes for 5th and 6th years start in November. Thanks to all the adults who help organise and oversee the continued success of these activities.

Weekend activities are in full swing, and are enjoyable for all. Over the past number of weeks, the boarders have gone to the National Art Gallery, Bray Head, Dun Laoghaire for the famous Teddys' Ice Cream, two Leinster rugby matches in the RDS and the Aviva stadium, Shelbourne Park for the Greyhound racing, bowling trips and the cinema.



We have had a number of in-house competitions in pool and table tennis there is always great competitive spirit due to the obligatory Pizza at stake. The Des Places Gymnasium is a fantastic resource to the Boarding School and the indoor soccer each evening helps with our training to retain the Paul Stanley Football competition which will take place towards the end of the year. Thanks to all the housemasters who help in the organisation and supervision of these activities.

Weekly Mass has seen a number of guest celebrants including past pupil, Bishop Robert Ellison, Bishop of Gambia, but the highlight in this term was the Boarders' Family Mass.

Boarders' Family Mass

The chief celebrant was Fr. Cormac Ó Brolcháin. This was followed by a relaxing cup of tea in corridor. We also had a visit from the Board of Directors of Duquesne University on the 12th October 2014, thank you to the Spiritan Provincial, Fr. Mark Whelan for celebrating the Mass for us. Thanks to all the community who help make Mass such an integral part of the Boarding School week. Congratulations to Andrew Kilmartin, Patrick Brophy and David Bolger (6th Year) who appointed Eucharistic Ministers. We wish them well in their Ministry. All are welcome to join us at Sunday Mass in the College Chapel at 10am.



Boarders' Family Mass

The Castle continues to be upgraded and all the corridors are now refurbished. The kitchenettes are also great areas for making a snack or just having a chat. Thanks to our accommodation manager Mrs Katherine Cummins and her staff, Mr Fintan O'Connor and his staff, and Mrs Andrea Fitzgerald for their help in this area.

The Boarding School Parents' Committee are having their first social night on the 21st November; were they will attend the College musical "Romeo & Juliet".

Congratulations to the boarders who were selected by their peers to represent them on the Boarding School Student Committee and Boarding School Food Committee. These Committees meet on a bi-weekly basis and any concerns, issues or initiatives are discussed and implemented.

We would like to welcome to the Castle staff Mr. Jeff Neville, Mr. Mark Smyth, Mr. Mark Roche and Mr. Tim Maupin. We wish them well in their year in the Castle.





Pastoral Care Programme



Everything that happens in Blackrock is pastoral in nature because the well-being of each student is the common denominator behind every activity that takes in place whether in a classroom, the sports hall, on a sports field or a court, in or on water, in the music and drama rooms, the yard, the digital learning centre and computer rooms and of course in our chapel.

However, there are some College activities that are more directly Pastoral in nature, where our attention is drawn to the presence of God within ourselves, others and the world around us and where we are challenged to respond to the mission given to us by Jesus; that of building the Kingdom of God in the here and now. A significant number of such activities have occurred this half-term and are covered in more detail elsewhere in the newsletter.

- **Pilgrimage to Lourdes (6th Year)**
- **Pastoral Placements - 3 Groups (Transition Year)**
- **Reconciliation Services to mark the start of the Academic Year (all Years)**
- **Bullying Awareness Day (all Years)**
- **Leaving Cert Retreats & Family Mass (6th Year)**
- **Commissioning of House Representatives (all Years)**
- **Whole School Assembly; Feast of Claude Poullart des Places Oct. 2nd (all Years)**
- **5th Year Retreats - 4 Venues (5th Year)**
- **Mental Health Awareness Day (all Years)**
- **2nd Year Family Mass - Theme of Mission (2nd Year)**

The wide ranging benefits of these pastoral events in the lives of our young men and the whole school community are seen in the following reflections offered both by members of the Class of 2015 about their retreat experiences and by members of TY on their return from Pastoral Placement...

6th Year Retreats

- *'I enjoyed the hour of silence / solitude that we had to do. It allowed us take a step back and be with ourselves.'*
- *'I think the retreat deepened my faith in God and made me look at people in a better light.'*

- *'I found the meditation difficult at the start, as I find it hard to sit still, but by the end they had become easier.'*
- *'We had a bonfire on the last night and it was a wonderful opportunity to get to know each other.'*

TY Pastoral Placements

- *'I felt I was truly living the Christian life by helping those in need in the centre.'*
- *'I got a glimpse of the work that Jesus did and it helped me to understand and appreciate further the Gospel stories.'*
- *'I'm no longer embarrassed or shy around people with disabilities.'*
- *'The placement challenged me to go out of my comfort zone and help those in need, even if it is just offering them a cup of tea and a quick chat.'*

In conclusion, it is important to note that it is the participation by teachers, from many different departments, in the Pastoral Programme that makes all of the above events possible. For example, the 6th Year Retreats could not happen without the 15 teachers who volunteer to travel with the students for three days and two nights and without the support of their colleagues who cover class while they are away. Teachers in the College also lead reconciliation services, prepare students for ministry and attend family masses on a Sunday morning in a generous spirit of goodwill and demonstrating a real enthusiasm for faith development. How fortunate we are in our teachers.



6th Year Retreat Kiltegan 2014

Guidance and Counselling



Early in September the sixth year students received their individual Centigrade Profile to assist them in ascertaining which courses/careers they are interested in and suited too. Results from these profiles, in general, indicate a high correlation between their choice of third level courses and the match chosen by the Centigrade Programme.

On September 17th all sixth year students attended the Higher Options Conference in the RDS. The students found the experience useful and informative with regard to third level colleges and courses in Ireland, Great Britain, other European countries and the US. Students were also able to attend different career talks during the day.

A number of sixth years have already submitted UCAS applications to study medicine and to study history, economics, natural sciences, classics and law at Oxford and Cambridge Universities in Great Britain. Where necessary these students took additional admission tests where necessary. Their applications are now being processed and these students expect to be called for interview in the near future. The deadline for all other UCAS applications is January 15th 2015.

Leaving Certificate students have recently received a hard copy of the 2015 CAO Handbook. This handbook should be carefully consulted throughout the application process. The majority of students will apply online at www.cao.ie. The application process has been clearly explained to the students and CAO are offering a discounted application fee of ?25 to students who apply online by January 20th 2015. In order to assist the sixth year students with their CAO choices a number of Career Talks have been arranged. The Schools of Law and Business from UCD have already delivered talks to the students and further talks in other disciplines will commence after the midterm break.

6th year students interested in studying Medicine next year have commenced a HPAT class in the College on Saturday mornings. These new students will need to register to sit the HPAT test when they acquire their CAO number in early November. Applications to sit the HPAT test can be made online at www.hpat-ireland.acer.edu.au/ with the deadline being January 20th 2015. Students will then sit the HPAT test itself on February 28th 2015.

On September 8th the first career seminar for parents of fifth year took place. Ms Carleen McGee, Head of the Guidance and Counselling Department in the College presented a career pack to parents. Mr Brian O'Neill (Past Pupils Union) chaired the seminar which saw the parents being addressed by Dr Patrick Prendergast, Provost of Trinity College on Career Opportunities in the Present Economic Climate. Mr Alan MacGinty, College Principal, then spoke about the Educational Objectives of Blackrock College.

The second career seminar for parents of fifth year took place on September 15th. On this evening parents were addressed by Ms Carleen McGee on the current Senior Cycle Careers programme in the college. Guest speaker on the evening, Mr Stephen McCarthy, Director of Allsop Space Auctions spoke to parents about business, entrepreneurship and the use of social media in relation to business. Three more past pupils also spoke of their career paths to date on the night, Mr Brian Kingston, Mr Carl Murray and Mr Billy Norman. The quality of speakers on both of the seminar evenings was fantastic and it is hoped that parents gained lots of useful information. All fourth year students participated in the Eirquest Profile Programmes at the end of August and the results of this programme are currently being communicated to them.

Monday September 15th saw students from all year groups and school staff engage with the first Bullying Awareness Day of the school year. The key focus on this Bullying Awareness Day was on the lasting impact that bullying can have on individuals. On this day, we unequivocally re-affirm to each other that bullying is unacceptable at Blackrock, be it Physical, Verbal, Written or Online. We encourage everyone to commit to the ABC of Bullying prevention: A - Avoid Aggression, B - Be Tolerant and C - Care for others. All students are urged to become more aware of the vulnerable in our community. If they are a victim of bullying or a witness of bullying; be it from name-calling to isolation, we urge them to have the confidence to TELL ...TELL ... TELL, be it to a Dean, Teacher, Counsellor, Parent, an Adult or a Friend. Each student is entitled to an education free from fear and intimidation and bullying is not tolerated in Blackrock College. A second Bullying Awareness Day will be held in January.

Monday, October 13th saw students from all year groups engage with the College's first Mental Health Awareness Day. This day saw all students receive a talk on Mental Health from Teen-line, Mr Fionbarr Walsh of the Donal Walsh Live Life Foundation and Mr Donal Scanlan from Saint John of God's Hospital. The message imparted on the day was that you don't have to be an expert to talk about mental health and that students and staff alike need to become mindful of their own mental health as well as that of those around them. Students also received a card with tips to help them talk about mental health as well as a letter detailing different organisations where they can seek help. Also, there is a counsellor in every year group that they can avail of too.

Coupled with all the activities mentioned above, every student in each year group will be met by the counsellor of the year, individually or in small groups in order to ascertain appropriate engagement with their academic and extra-curricular programmes throughout the year. Appointments are made on a billet basis throughout the year but a student can approach a counsellor for an appointment at any stage.





Debating

Junior Debating

The Junior Debating Society meets weekly and students are offered many opportunities to take place in debates both in and outside the College. So far this year a number of students have represented the College in the Belvedere College Mace, and the first three rounds of the Matheson Junior Debating National Mace travelling to Meath, Kilkenny as well as locally to Wesley College. These were all very enjoyable and worthwhile experiences for the students involved and of particular note this term is Oisín Ryan's achievement of 2nd best speaker out of sixty overall in the Colaiste na hInse Mace. Well done Oisín.

Two teams have also competed in the first round of the UCD Junior Schools' Debating competition and we wish them well in the upcoming round.

We are delighted this year that senior debater Scott Donohoe has begun working with debaters in Willow Park First Year who are also competing in and performing well in the Mace competitions.

These have all been excellent occasions for students to develop their confidence and debating skills as well as meeting many debaters from other schools. We look forward to the upcoming Matheson and UCD rounds.

The Junior Debating Society meets on Tuesdays at 4pm and all enthusiastic 2nd and 3rd year students are welcome to attend.

Senior Debating

This has been a very busy half term for the senior debating society, with several competitive events taking place. In the Leinster Senior Schools competition, James Quinn, Joshua Kieran-Glennon and Michael Golden all progressed to the next round, with Tomas Beecham and Joshua Gorman-Climax being squeezed

out by some very high class opposition. In the UCD Literary and Historical Society's competitive weekend, Joshua Kieran-Glennon and Stephen Rooney (5th year) reached the semi-final stages. The society is looking forward to a busy end to the first term in the lead up to Christmas.

MUN (Mock United Nations)

A group of students attended the MUN Royal Russell conference from Saturday the 18th to Tuesday 21st of October. Royal Russell School was the first British school to set up an annual MUN conference and has been hosting their conference for over 30 years. The conference is one of the few British conferences affiliated to THIMUN.

Topics debated included, the question of Malaria, the question of banking reforms, the use of drone attacks, and euthanasia. Resolutions were debated in committee rooms and in the general assembly. Blackrock represented the countries of Estonia and Qatar. The opening ceremony began on the Saturday and each country was given one minute to deliver a speech to the General Assembly, relating to its role in the United Nations and to the issues about which it feels most strongly. Michael Golden gave this speech for Estonia and Joshua Kieran-Glennon gave the speech for Qatar. In addition to the debates there were many other activities including X factor live and a tropical themed disco. Blackrock formed the only boy band and their performance was shown live on the big screen in the quad on Sunday evening.

Blackrock received a distinguished delegation award for representing Qatar and 5 individual distinguished delegate awards.

Science Department



SENIOR SCIENCE QUIZ

This year's Senior Science quiz was held during lunchtime on Tuesday 7th October and the results were as follows:

First Place: Joshua Gorman Climax

Second Place: Rory McCluskey

Third Place: Andrew Ryan

Runners up in order of merit: James Quinn, William O'Flaherty, Sammy Al-Mukhaizeem, Ivan O'Keeffe, Ronan Doherty and Richard Grainger.

Two teams have been chosen to represent the College at the ISTA Schools Science Table Quiz which will be held in TCD on Thursday 13th November.

Valencia Science Trip

During the October mid-term break forty second year students accompanied by four of their teachers will visit the Science Centre in Valencia Spain. They will travel to Spain on Monday morning and return on Friday afternoon.

Irish EU Science Olympiad

The State Examination Commission has identified five of our students as high achievers in Science and Maths in the 2014 Junior Certificate Examination. Chris Aylward, Cillian Boland, Oisín McEnroe, Joseph O'Donnell and Cian Reilly have been invited to participate in the Irish EU Science Olympiad which will be held in Dublin City University on Saturday November 1st. Six students from this competition will be selected to represent Ireland at the European Science Olympiad which will be held in Klagenfurt, Austria from 26th April to 3rd May 2015.

SciFest Final

Having won the SciFest regional competition which was held in the Institute of Technology, Blanchardstown last May, our team of Second Year science students now progress to the SciFest 2014 national final which will take place this year in the Marino Conference Centre in Dublin on the 7 November. Team members are Ben Brown, Cian Dunne, Sean Hannon and

their project title is 'E-Receipts'.

Young Scientist Competition

The following students have entered projects:

(2nd years)

'E-Receipts' Ben Brown, Cian Dunne, Sean Hannon

(Transition years)

'An Analysis of Teenagers' Knowledge of the Ebola Virus and Current Crisis' - Scott Donohoe

'Bike lock alarm' - Charles Lawless, Mark O'Connor

'Energy on Sail' - Declan Norton

'NonNewtonian liquids' - Ivan Golitsyn

'Cost efficient ways to clean water in Third World countries.' - Chris Aylward, Eoin Bleakley

'The science of facial expressions' - Joseph O'Donnell, Luke McCormack, Robert Sheedy

Real Life Science Video Competition

Four second years: Tom Dwan, Adam O Sullivan, Matthew Rockett and Conor Murphy are taking part in the real life science video competition. Their video is on solar disinfectant.

We send very best wishes to all our students for their endeavours in all the competitions that they will be taking part in.





Sport



Rugby

SCT rugby has been up and running since the 14th of July. The first period of the season has seen the squad commence their strength and conditioning and training programs. To date the squad has played two internal and eight external matches. The stand-out fixture being the game against Truro College played in glorious sunshine on the front lawn in late September, with the side emerging victorious against physically bigger opponents.



James Fennelly & Michael Reidy of SCT against Truro College, UK

In excess of 50 students have been involved in these series of games with commitment levels exceptionally high. The Clongowes rugby festival, commemorating 200 years of the college, is upon us and a hard fixture list awaits in November and December.

The changing seasons signal the tough path that starts between the ending of the mid-term break and culmination of the first term.

Junior rugby

The junior rugby squad have started the season in promising fashion. Hard fought wins for the firsts against Kings Hospital, St Michael's, Campbell and Presentation Cork have been matched by victories for the seconds against Castletroy, St Gerard's and St Michael's, amongst others. Competition for places is fierce, as always, but the squad have gelled well and are working hard towards their challenge match with Warwick School on October 25th.



Kyle Dixon (5th Yr) in action against Truro College

Cross Country

Cross country has had a good start to the year, starting with the Brother at Your Side Race, organized by Clonliffe Harriers in Santry on Wednesday 8th October.

The juniors were represented by Michael O Keane from 3rd year and Max McKenna from 2nd year. Both athletes ran extremely well with Max finishing 13th.

The inter team came third with Patrick Fahy (3rd year), Niall Murphy (TY), Conor Halpin (3rd), Mark Dignam (TY) Luke Demichel (3rd), Conor Hoffman (3rd), Shane Holohan (3rd), Richard Sheil (3rd), Jack Brown (TY) and Edward McKenna (2nd year) running.

The senior team also came third and was made up of Christian McKenna, Luke McCann, Aengus Meldon (6th year), Brian McGlone, Declan Norton, Bernard O Sullivan, Matthew McKenna, David O Farrell, Neil Stokes, Jack Stokes, Conor Murnane and Ross O'Reilly, (all 5th years except Aengus Meldon).

Basketball

U-19 Basketball

It has been a very unlucky start to the season for the U-19's, suffering a number of very narrow losses. The season started with a five point loss to Holy Child Sallynoggin, 35-30. Andrew Keenan (5th year), as he has been all season, was excellent on offence under the boards and Calum Henry (5th year) playing his first competitive game of Basketball was excellent. This performance was all the more impressive considering that in the previous year the gap between the two sides was much greater.

A heart breaking one point loss (30-29) to St.Conleth's followed. In the All-Ireland Schools Cup we came up against a very strong Pobal Scoil Setanta side which was comprised mainly of club players and they simply had more experience than us and were deserved winners on the day.

The most recent game was a 5 point loss to St.Columba's. Again, Blackrock were on top for a lot of the game but we just fell short in terms of turning the dominance into scores, losing out 43-38. Alex Jurado (6th Year - Captain) and the entire squad can be very proud of their efforts so far. Considering the team is comprised mainly of 5th and 4th years the future for U-19 basketball is very promising.



Philip Maguire (3rd Yr), Eoghan Somers (5th Yr) David Fitzsimons (2nd Yr) at the Sailing Regatta

U-16 Basketball

The U-16s had a similar start to the U-19's and lost a close battle with Holy Child Sallynoggin 30-27 in our first game of the season. The U-16 panel is also a very young panel and have formed a significant part of the Junior Panel. Similar to the seniors this looks very promising, going forward. Lessons were learned from the first game and in the second game against St.Conleth's Blackrock showed great character and held their nerve to win 29-27. The team fell short in the School's Cup against a physically very strong and well experienced Pobal Scoil Setanta side. Captain Rory Linane (4th year) has been excellent thus far and with our 2nd year contingent of Michael Ryan, Tadhg Egan, Abdullah Durrani amongst others complementing a very strong third year group, the season is looking very promising.

Photos courtesy Rock Photography
www.rockphotography.ie