

Blackrock College Newsletter

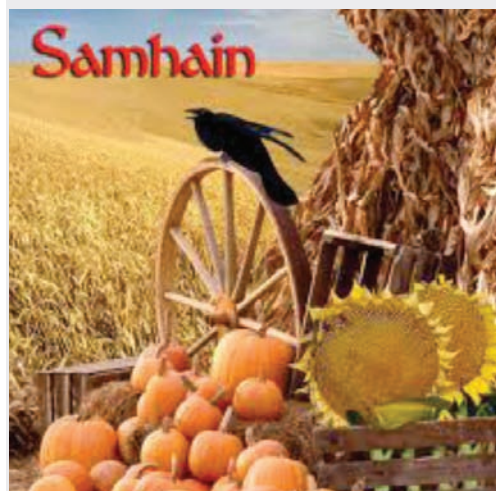


Special points of interest:

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

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Autumn 2013

Dear Parents

Our new Creative Arts & Digital Learning Centre, along with the refurbished Swimming Pool Area marked the start of the new school year and is a sign of our continuing commitment to campus enhancement.

Important as such facilities are, we must not forget that our greatest asset is people – the people who make up our school community. Firstly the boys themselves for the College is for them. We ought ask them about their involvement. How does my son identify with the College? What does he do? Where is his contribution made? But this is a question for ourselves too. Boys are happiest, at their best when their parents are embedded in the school community.

I salute our excellent Parents' Association – the Year Committees and School Council. Would you join? Will you be at the College Musical (18 – 22 November)? Attend the Year Mass? Be on the touchline? Were you at the Swimming Gala? Did you attend the parent evenings? Would you volunteer for a supervisory role in the new Learning Centre? Will you tune into B.C.R.? Do you see your son's Weekly Card? It is not easy, but, sometimes, even a small involvement by you can make a significant difference.

Matthew Sharpe (Class of 2013) certainly caught the attention of the boys and families at the **2nd Year Family Mass** held on Mission Sunday (20 October 2013). He told them about his **mission trip to Kenya** last July with 58 others – students and parents of the Class of 2013 – and the impact it made on his life. **“Real happiness comes from seeing that you've made a difference to someone else and you'd be surprised how much people appreciate even the smallest of gestures”**. Matthew went on to say **“it is not something that you have to travel to Kenya to do, you can do it at home, in school, in your community, anywhere”**.

Just 3 days before the 2nd Year Family Mass, Fr Peter McVerry, S.J. spoke to the 5th Year students from all the Spiritan Schools at the Spiritan Youth Day. He told them that **“the hardest part of being homeless is knowing that nobody cares”**.

From Kenya to the homeless of Dublin, to the classroom and our own homes, the message is consistent – that Be Caring, Be There, Be Truthful can often be about small, obscure acts of kindness. These could be as mundane as opening the door for a teacher, sharing a smile on the corridor, picking up litter or acknowledging someone's presence. The value of such acts far outweighs the cost involved. Real fulfilment, happiness, is making a difference to the lives of others. We are grateful for many examples of inspirational peer leadership, the contribution of our student Eucharistic Ministers, the dedicated service of our Student Council, House Captains, Green Schools Committee, the spirit of solidarity and support in Lourdes, on our Retreats and Pastoral Placements.

We are blessed to have a committed, vibrant and challenging school community led by inspirational priests, teachers, parents, administrators, household, grounds, catering and maintenance personnel who ensure that the boys have many excellent role models. So much happens here but in the words of Aldous Huxley, **“experience is not just what happens to you – it is what you do with what happens to you”**. We hope that the boys' Blackrock experience expands their horizons and fosters mature understanding expressed in greater compassion and care for others. This is what the College is about - giving the boys a deeper insight into what truly matters – an assurance that Gospel values underpin all that we say, that we do, that we believe.

During October, the month of Mission, Frs. Brendan Foley and Pat Clarke shared their life experiences with the boys. Their message calls us out of our comfort zone, challenges us, disturbs us. It is a calling that goes beyond our school days and a reminder that we are all part of the Spiritan Mission grounded in Fides et Robur.

Finally, Blackrock is full of inspirational people – Spiritans, my colleagues, parents, students, past and present. Brian and I are most grateful for your energy, endeavour and encouragement.

Yours sincerely

ALAN MacGINTY
Principal



Second Year



Our new Second Year boys have taken to the College with gusto. As each week goes by a larger number of them is achieving the Principal's List on the weekly **Application Cards**. These cards are a very important opportunity for teachers and parents to encourage good learning practice amongst the boys, not least by giving congratulations when good marks are achieved, and some direction when practice is less than it should be. The cards also record, on the reverse, each boy's involvement that week in any of the many **extra-curricular activities** that are provided in Second Year, which include rugby, table tennis, cross-country, squash, tennis, swimming, basketball, badminton, water polo, rowing, judo, art club, debating, chess, science club or public speaking. Each and every boy should be involved in some sport or activity, after class, in school.

During a commissioning ceremony in the College Chapel on 24th September, led by our Spiritual Director Fr Cormac O'Brolcháin CSSp, the **House Captains** were installed for the academic year. The captains are James Burke, Barry O'Sullivan, Hugh O'Leary, Louis O'Reilly, Art Lynch, Curtis Winklemann, Josh Slevin, Matthew Dillon, Charlie Cooke, Michael McGagh, Liam McMahon & Ted Godson-Treacy. These representatives act as important links between the school authorities and the student body, and we thank them for their willingness to serve.



One of the first jobs for the new Captains was to begin the **House Competitions** and so we have a full list of Second Year boys enjoying the Table Tennis Competition. This is progressing much faster than in previous years and so the final will be played in front of an enthusiastic crowd in early November. The House cross-

country will be held in early November and the House chess competition will begin then as well.

The **Family Mass** took place on 20th October with one of the largest crowds yet. A sizable number of the boys provided some act of service for the liturgy, in reading, processing, in singing or through music. The theme was very appropriately Mission, and the College Spiritual Director, Fr Cormac O'Brolcháin CSSp, began the celebration by introducing each of his Spiritan confreres who were in attendance, reflecting on the commitment shown to the Missions by each of these men. Our thanks also go to the organisers Mr Myles Ryan, Ms O'Kane, Ms O'Connor, the Religion teachers and especially the boys for contributing to a special celebration. Also during the first half term, each of the boys has already had a meeting with the Counsellor for the year, Mr Dónal Brennan, and the boys are currently being met individually by the College Chaplain, Fr Hyacinth CSSp.

On 2nd October we had the first of three parents' seminars, which was well attended. The topic was study skills, and was given by two speakers from the group Learning 4 Learning. The talk was very well received and we are grateful to the Second Year Parents' Committee for organising this and future events.



Finally, if any Second Year achieves some accomplishment outside school, in sports, drama, music, an academic pursuit or some community service, please advise us so that we can celebrate with your son. For example, Luke Brandon this year won the National Junior Championship in polocrosse, along with representing Ireland in Australia and the UK. We congratulate Luke on this success and wish him well.

Third Year



Overall it has been a very positive and productive opening half term. There is no doubt that the demands on the boys are considerable and therein lies the importance of being fully organised in all aspects of their daily routine. This includes having the correct books, copies, uniform, PE kit and always keeping their Homework Diary up to date. The numbers on the Credit and Principal's Lists some weeks have been on the low side. Parental insistence on viewing the weekly card, ideally on a Monday, should not be underestimated as an important contribution to consistent performance throughout the year. Also the opportunity to affirm the positive should never be underestimated. The second **Progress Card** will be given to the boys on Monday **November 4th**.

The Inter House competitions got off to a good start with the Rugby 10s on Saturday September 7th with Mc Quaid beating Leman in the A Final and De Valera having the better of Mc Quaid in the B Final. Cross Country, Swimming Gala, both scheduled for before the mid-term, Table Tennis, Sports Day and the A & B Soccer Leagues next May make up the remainder of the Inter House Sports programme.

The School policy is that all boys cycling to and from school should wear **cycling helmets**. We urge Parental support for this policy and with the arrival of dark mornings and evenings **bicycle lights** also fit into this category. A quick count showed that 75% of boys have locks on their lockers; we strongly encourage the remaining 25% to get a lock over the break. It is worth noting that the Lost Property Cage is full of items with no names on them, the break might afford all the opportunity to check belongings to see if they are named/labelled before their

return. The boys have been advised that if leaving their school bags in the Recreation Area while at extra curricular activities, the best place is in their lockers in order to avoid people taking the wrong bag home.

Following a very well received talk by Noel Canavan on Parent Teenager Relationships, he is once again facilitating a 6 Week Parenting Course commencing on Tuesday November 5th @ 7.00 PM. The Parents Committee have e-mailed the course outline which is also available on the College website. There are still a number of places available, those interested can contact Noel directly by email noelcanavanone@gmail.com or by phone 01 8452441 OR 086 2228155

We are very grateful to Mr. Frank O'Sullivan for the four Saturday morning Study Skills Workshops he ran in the run up to mid term. He will follow up on these with the Year Group prior to the Christmas and Easter Examinations.

There is great involvement in the Extra Curricular programme, the list of activities available is on the College website, and any parents concerned about their son not availing of same are urged to contact the Dean.

**Third Year Family Mass is on Sunday
November 24th @ 10.30 A.M.**
Please note change of Time



Transition Year

Student Induction Days

Transition Year students took part in an induction afternoon on 30th August where they were given an in-depth introduction to the Transition Year Programme. From 2nd – 6th September, each student attended a leadership course/workshop facilitated by Mr Denis Hevey.

Aptitude Tests

The Cambridge Profile Aptitude Tests

The boys completed the above tests during the Transition Year Induction Day on August 30th. An overview of the tests was made available to parents at the Transition Year Induction Night on Monday 2nd September. The boys should have received their

results booklet by now. Please see enclosure from Mr Garry Sullivan in this regard.

Work Experience

This year an extra week of Work Experience has been added to the Transition Year Programme. The dates for Work Experience are as follows:

Week (1): 10th – 14th February 2014,
Week (2): 7th – 11th April 2014.

Please note that it is the responsibility of the boys and their parents/guardians to source their own work experience placements. Mr Garry Sullivan will write to you regarding this after the midterm break.



Transition Year



Junior Certificate Results

Congratulations to Transition Year students for doing so well in their Junior Certificate Examination. I know that, as parents, you must be extremely proud of your sons.

Junior Certificate Appeals

According to the State Examinations Commission, the results of Junior Certificate Appeals will be posted to schools during the second week of November.

Parents' Evening - September 2nd

There was a very large attendance at the Parents' Introduction to Transition Year presentation on September 2nd. It is very encouraging to see such support from the parents of the students. Our hope is that your sons will enjoy and learn much in the coming year.

Pastoral Placements

All students in Transition Year go on a two-week block Pastoral Placement. These two weeks are an invaluable part of the Transition Year Programme and have a very positive impact on our students. Seventy five students have already gone on placement this term.

Transition Year Tours

To date, there have been two tour days. Tours have ranged from the G.A.A. Museum in Croke Park to rock climbing in *Awesome Walls*. Next tour date is November 5th.

Evening Courses

In excess of 130 students have taken up evening courses in Legal Studies, Sound Engineering, *Steer Clear*, First Aid, Yoga, Self-Defence and Driver Education.

E.C.D.L.

We have been very disappointed at the poor response to the E.C.D.L. course which was offered this term. 36 places were available over three evenings. As so few students applied, we could offer only one class on Tuesday evenings. We hope there will be a more positive response from the boys next term when the application forms are distributed. An E.C.D.L. qualification is well worth having.

House Representatives

Congratulations to the following students who were elected by their peers to represent them during the coming year: Emmet Burns, Robert Coyle, Hugh Egleston, Richard Fahy, Tadhg Fergus, Brian Grogan, Hugo Harvey, Stephen Kilgallen, James McGowan, Matthew Morrissey, Richard Mouatt, Tommy O'Brien, Marcus O'Faolain, Ross O'Toole, Jack Ringrose, Adam Stanley, James Trueick and Andrew Westman. We wish them luck in the year ahead.

House Points System

The House Representatives will be encouraging all students in their respective Houses to get as involved as possible in all of the activities on offer. Students will be awarded points in recognition of their engagement with the Transition Year programme. The House with the highest number of points at the end of the year will be rewarded with a very special treat.

Blackrock College Radio

We are delighted to announce that BCR will be on the air from **November 18th – 22nd**. Over 180 students have applied to take part in this very exciting project and many programmes are in the planning stages already. Sincere thanks to all of the teachers who have generously agreed to help with the running of the station and production of programmes. We hope that parents will enjoy listening to their sons' initial foray into the exciting world of broadcasting. The station should be available on the Internet.

Camino de Santiago Pilgrimage

Mr Myles Ryan and three sixth year students gave a very interesting presentation to Transition Year students about the *Camino* Pilgrimage. Application forms were distributed after the presentation. Students should have returned these to Mr Brennan before mid-term. The *Camino* pilgrimage will take place from 3rd – 10th May 2014.

Chinese Classes

This year, in conjunction with The Confucius Institute (U.C.D.), we are once again offering Chinese classes to Transition Year students. Approximately forty five students have availed of the opportunity to learn this very important language. Classes take place every Thursday evening from 6.00 – 7.30 p.m.

Fund-Raising

Transition Year students are often called upon to invest their considerable energy in fund-raising activities. On 19th September, they raised the highly commendable sum of €3,528.05 for the *Blackrock Hospice*. Well done to all involved! If the boys put the

same energy and commitment into the forthcoming Christmas fund-raising campaigns for the St Vincent De Paul, they should do very well.

Maths Trip to the R.D.S.

As part of *National Maths Week*, forty Transition Year students attended a Maths lecture in U.C.D. on October 15th. I would like to thank Mr Andrew Kimm and Mr Padraig Costello for organising this very worthwhile trip.

Gaisce Hike and Retreat

To date, many students have signed up to complete their *Gaisce* Bronze Award. By mid-term, about 130 students will have completed the adventure component of the programme. This is an extraordinary achievement!

Since 20th September, approximately 30-40 students have headed off to Gorey each weekend to do their 26 kilometre *Gaisce* hike. This is the third year we have incorporated the boys' annual Retreat with their hike. This has proved to be very successful. Under the excellent care of Mr John Forrest, the group leader for both the hike and the Retreat, the boys have had a really wonderful and spiritually fulfilling time. Needless to say, they have returned home exhausted!

Green Schools' Committee

Under the stewardship of Ms Clare, the Green Schools Committee is now up and running. The Committee's decision to focus on water conservation this year has resulted in an intense campaign to raise awareness of this very precious commodity. We have all been most impressed by the colourful posters and other visual displays throughout the school.

Website

The Website Team is doing trojan work in compiling a record of all the events taking place in the year. The team attended a full day's special training session given by Andrew Patton on Saturday 14th September. I would encourage parents to look at the website on a regular basis. It will give you an excellent insight into all that is happening within the year group. Logon to www.RockTY.com

AXA Road Safety Show

On Monday and Tuesday 14th and 15th October, Transition Year students attended a Road Safety Show sponsored by Axa and *Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council*. The event took place in The Royal Marine Hotel and was attended by TY students from a range of local schools. The show was hard-hitting in its approach to road safety. It featured a male teenage driver, a member of the Gardai, a paramedic, a firefighter, medical professionals and the mother of a road traffic victim. All spoke of their experiences in a frank, no-holds-barred manner. The stunned silence in the audience during the show spoke of how effective this presentation was. One would hope that all of our students who attended this event will be a lot more aware of road safety issues in the future.

Dragons' Den

Many thanks to Mr Cathal Copeland for organising the launch of the Dragons' Den competition on 3rd October. All Transition Year students attended an excellent presentation given by four of the Dragons. The students have all received a handout outlining deadlines and other requirements. I would strongly advise you to encourage your sons to enter this innovative competition. Deadline for entries is October 25th. The handout which your sons received is also available on the Transition Year website.

D.L.R.D. County Enterprise Board Idea Generation Workshop

Twenty five students attended this workshop in the Stillorgan Park Hotel on 16th October. The boys found it very informative and interesting. Once again, many thanks to Mr Copeland for encouraging the boys to attend this event.

Swimming Gala

At time of writing, the Swimming Gala has not yet taken place. We are immensely proud of our **three** Transition Year students, Christian McKenna, Matthew Long and Sean Hassett, who qualified for the prestigious *Principal's Trophy*. This 100 metre Freestyle championship competition is contested by the six best swimmers in the school and is the highlight of the Swimming Gala. Qualifying to participate in this competition is, therefore, no mean achievement. Congratulations again!

Special Achievements

Congratulations to Transition Year students who participated in the online *Vocab Express European Languages Championship*. They achieved **4th Place** out of approximately 250 schools across the U.K. and Ireland. In-house prizes will be awarded to our top three highest scoring students: Sean Hassett (1st); Brian Masterson (2nd) and Rory Murphy-Rogers (3rd). Well done to all involved. Congratulations also to Caelan Doris and Conor Dean who were members of the S.C.T. squad that travelled to Filton in the U.K. just before the mid-term break.

Fifth Year



Fifth Year got off to a busy start and this term has seen a number key events and activities within the year group.

The Career Guidance Department and Past Pupils Union combined to organise two very thought provoking and extremely well attended Career Seminars for the parents of 5th year students in September. Over these two evenings, Dr. Hugh Brady, UCD President, Alan MacGinty, Principal, and a number of past pupils addressed many aspects of future educational and career opportunities.

Also in September as part of Mission Awareness Month, the 5th year students were addressed by Fr. Brendan Foley CSSp and members of the Past Pupils Mission fund on the work of the Spiritans across the globe.

On September 24th Fr. Cormac O'Brolcháin, College Spiritual Director, commissioned the Fifth Year House Representatives. The twelve students elected to represent 5th year within the College community are Ronan Holohan, Ben Reynolds, Jeff Kirwan, Louis Hoffman, Fiachra Bourke, Roghan McMahon, Richard Heapes, Donncha Crowley, Hugo Kean, Jake Warde, Conor McCormack and Ryan Murphy. We wish them well for the year ahead.

The College Sailing Regatta in Dun Laoghaire this year started off being raced in a testing 15 knots of breeze reducing to a much more comfortable 8 knots for the end of the day. The format for the racing this year was 5 and 6 boat teams racing against each other and finally the individual boat race. The organisers in the INSS did an excellent job and 5th year Mark Bolger captained the winning team.

On Tuesday October 8th, the 5th year Day of Reflection was held in a number of different retreat centres. Days of Reflection are an integral part of the Blackrock Educational Programme. In every year of the boy's schooling along with the College Liturgies and other Pastoral initiatives, these days offer a valuable opportunity for Education of the Heart, without which, no education is complete. The day finished with a prayer service and a reflection on the day. This was a very informative and challenging day co-ordinated by Mr. Myles Ryan, the House Representatives and the RE Department.

The Model United Nations (MUN) group got off to a flying start this year, with a great victory in the Terenure College Conference. The delegation of Luxembourg, consisting of James Brandon, Fiachra Bourke, Richard Grainger, Scott Kinsella, Joshua Kieran-Glennon, James Quinn and Ivan O'Keefe winning the Outstanding Delegation award. All members also received individual Distinguished Delegate awards. The Georgia Delegation, of Joshua Gorman-Climax, Rory McCluskey, Ronan Hearne, Michael Golden, Conor Linnane and Scott Donohoe (3rd Year) also picked up a Distinguished Delegate award through Joshua Gorman-Climax. The group are now preparing diligently for the upcoming conference in Rathdown School in mid-November.

In Senior Debating the society is up and running again this year, under the guidance of Mr. Sheil. Competition has already begun for the society, with Joshua Kieran-Glennon and James Quinn progressing to the second round of the Leinster Senior Schools Competition. A series of lunchtime debates is being organised, which will be open to any student who wishes to see the society in action. All are encouraged to attend.

This year the Des Places Education Association organised a Spiritan Youth Day for all the Spiritan secondary schools in Ireland. The schools participating were Blackrock College, St Mary's Rathmines, Templeogue College, Rockwell College, Holy Family Community School Rathcoole, and St Michael's College. All Fifth year students from Spiritan schools came together on the 17th Oct 2013 at the Ballsbridge Hotel Dublin 4. The Spiritan Youth Day is about our mission, being a community of people with 'one heart and one spirit' who share a common vision inspired by Gospel values. The aim is to encourage students to

believe in themselves and each other as well as enter into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Special thanks to Orla Walsh, Faith Development Officer, Des Places Educational Association, and all the DEA Team, for organising this special day.

5th years are well represented in the Libermann Choir which will perform in the All-Island Final in the Titanic Centre, Belfast on Sunday 24th November. They won the Leinster Regional Final against formidable fellow finalists in Maynooth on October 22nd. The Final will be televised live on RTÉ. We wish them the best of luck.

In 5th year there are currently eight people on the senior soccer team, Conor McCormack, Sean O'Dowd, Alan Murphy, Andrew Hickey, Andrew Kilmartin, Daniel Doyle, Gavin Hartnett and Dylan Salmon. They have succeeded in the 1st round of the Leinster Cup after beating Palmerstown CBS 6-0. They will be playing St. Benildus in the 2nd round. Training has been going extremely well under the watchful eye of Mr O'Brien. We wish them continued success.

The House rugby team has started off well this year with two wins against RS Armagh and The Castle. The players have been training hard and are looking forward to the rest of the season. Several boys have also been training with the senior squad and are currently involved in matches against the New Zealand team Palmerstown North, St. Marys and Terenure College. We wish both teams the very best of luck with their campaigns for the rest of the year. We congratulate Duff on a valiant victory over Shanahan in the final of the House 10's Competition. Congratulations also to Hugo Kean, who represented the Leinster under 18s in the interprovincials.

In Athletics, the first race of the season got off to a good start in Santry on the 9th of October. Aengus Meldon was the sole representative from 5th year on the senior team. He finished in 16th position, helping the team to finish an excellent 2nd place overall. Hopefully there will be more 5th years representing the College in the next cross country race which is held in Blackrock.

The Senior Basketball Team has had a difficult start to the season with three losses. The level of effort from the boys in training and in the three matches so far has been fantastic. They have been unfortunate, coming up against two top teams in St. Columba's and Holy Child Sallynoggin. A much improved performance against Larkin Community College saw 'Rock U19's' lose a closely fought game by 9 points. The team is improving all the time and we welcome our new members in the squad (Alex Jurado, Alvaro Lopez and Antoine Vidalinc.) The season is most definitely on an upward curve as we look towards the upcoming All-Ireland Schools Cup versus Clonkeen College.

The Table Tennis Team have hit the ground running and have been in training and competing in tournaments since the start of summer. They are hoping to emulate the success of last year's team and are looking forward to another strong season. The 5th years competing in this year's campaign include Andrew Campbell, Conal Molumby, Stefan Kelly, Edward Kennedy, Paul O' Kelly, Sam Hardiman and Geoffrey O' Connor.

The Water Polo team has only recently returned to training, due to the ongoing renovations on the swimming pool. A match is scheduled at the end of October against St Mary's Drogheda. Team members include Ben Lawlor, Matthew Sheedy, Stephen O'Hurly and Andrew Ryan.

5th years are well represented in rowing, and all have been training very hard. We wish them well for the rest of the competitive season. Finally, a special thanks to all the 5th Years who have taken to the new school year so enthusiastically and have embraced the challenges it brings. We wish them continued success throughout the year.



Sixth Year

The 6th Year students have settled in well on the final lap of their journey through Blackrock. It has been a very busy nine weeks and the highlights of this half term are summarised below...

6th Year Retreats

The 6th Year Retreat Programme took place between Sunday 22nd and Tuesday 24th of September. It began on the Sunday morning when a very large attendance joined in the celebration of a Mass for Families of Sixth Year students led by Fr. Larry Behan. That afternoon, the year group dispersed to fifteen different locations covering nine counties of Ireland. The weather was kind for this year's retreat and the positive feedback provided by the students on their return and received from the retreat directors around the country showed clearly the benefit of taking time out, in small groups, for prayer, reflection and discussion at the start of a very busy year for the Class of 2014. Many thanks to Mr. Myles Ryan for his meticulous organisation of one of the highlights of the final year in Blackrock for 6th Year students. Thanks also to the fifteen members of staff who agreed to accompany the students for these days away. Without this unselfish giving of time, this event could not happen.



Conn McCarrick, 6th Yr, with family members at 6th Year Family Mass

During the Family Mass, Conn McCarrick and Oisín Flynn were commissioned as Ministers of the Eucharist for the academic year and they join fellow sixth year students Conor Nolan, James Fox and Seafra O'Faolain who were commissioned at the Boarder Family Mass on September 15th. We thank all for undertaking this important ministry of service within the College community.

Lourdes

Six final year students participated in the Dublin Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes between the 7th and 12th of September. George Brassil, Eoin Galligan, Joseph Horan, Ryan Kavanagh, Jonathan Ng and Geoff Sheehan accompanied by Mr. Sullivan spent a busy but most rewarding few days in the company of pilgrims who needed special assistance. We thank them for undertaking this act of selfless service and for being such fine ambassadors for the College during their time away.

Careers

Since the start of term, all 6th Years have undertaken the Centigrade Test and have received their results along with a copy of the CAO handbook for 2014 from Ms. McGee.

On Wednesday 18th September the year group attended the Higher Options Conference at the RDS and there was general agreement that this was a most worthwhile experience. Fifteen students have signed up to attend a HPAT Preparation Course which started on Saturday October 5th in the College. This will continue after mid-term.

There have been two career talks since September. The first looked at studying Law in UCD and the second was for students interested in studying Computer Science in TCD. Many thanks to Ms McGee for organising these most informative meetings.

House Representatives

On October 25th, Fr. O'Brolcháin will commission the Sixth Year House Representatives in a ceremony in the College Chapel. The twelve students elected to represent 6th Year for 2013/2014 are Haashim Bari & Dillon Coghlan (DeValera); Jeff Burke & Simon Curran

Sixth Year Cont'd



(Duff); Jack Dwan & Joseph Horan (Ebenrecht); Gavin Kilgallon & Geoff Moylan (Leman); Luke Fagan & Conn McCarrick (McQuaid); Edward Bickers & Darragh Larkin (Shanahan). We congratulate the House Representatives on their work for the Rugby 10's (won by Leman House captained by Ian Kinsley) and the Swimming Gala so far and wish them well for the rest of the year ahead.

Whole School Assembly

On Wednesday 2nd October, the 304th anniversary of our founder Claude Poullart des Places, the Class of 2014 showed wonderful leadership in reading, singing, music and participation as Fr. O'Brolchain and Mr. MacGinty addressed the whole school community to officially mark the start of the school year. During the event, the Libermann Cup was awarded to Jeff Burke and Simon Curran on behalf of Duff House, the overall winners for the 2012 / 2013 academic year.



Mr MacGinty with Duff House Captains L to R
Mark Nealon 3rd Yr, Jack Ringrose TY,
Jeff Burke 6th Yr, Jack Stacey 3rd Yr,
Simon Curran 6th Yr

Mission Awareness

On Thursday 10th October Fr. Brendan Foley CSSp and members of the Blackrock PPU Mission fund addressed the year group about Spiritan missionary activity in the Developing World today. Using the experience of a recent past pupil doing lay missionary work in Madagascar, Fr. Brendan challenged the Class of 2014 to consider giving some of their time and talents to this missionary work in the future. The Spiritans are now offering lay missionary immersion programmes from 6 weeks to 2 years duration.

Extra-Curricular Activities

There is a high level of 6th Year participation in the extra-curricular programme of the College with enthusiastic involvement in the Games Programme, Choir and Debating Society, while preparations for this year's musical 'Fiddler on the Roof' are gathering pace.

The Senior Soccer Team, captained by Fred Kenny have moved confidently into the second round of the Senior Cup with victory over Palmerston Community School and have also qualified for the next stage of the Dublin Metropolitan League. We wish the squad continued success.

The SCT has made a very promising start to the season with an excellent victory over Palmerston North Boy's High, New Zealand being the highlight. The squad have two big

fixtures before mid-term, the first in the UK against Filton Academy on Oct 19th (David O'Connor will captain the touring squad) and this will be followed by a home fixture against Ivybridge on Sat. Oct 26th. We wish them well.

We congratulate Ms O' Connor and the Libermann Choir who won the Leinster Regional Final of the All-Island Schools' Choir competition in Maynooth last Tuesday 22nd Oct. They will perform in the Final in the Titanic Centre, Belfast with the other 3 regioal winners on Sunday 24th November. It will be televised live on RTE1.



Sixth Year Retreat group on Croagh Patrick

Other achievements of note during this half-term were...the selection of Joseph Carbery, Jack Dwan, Jeremy Loughman, Conor Oliver and Nicholas Timoney (U19) and Jack Power (U18) on Leinster Rugby squad; the award of the Gaisce Gold Medal to Karl MacCabe, the first time that a current student has achieved this award; Daniel Di Lucia achieving a Grade 8 Distinction at the Public Speaking Exams; Simon Curran, Kevin Heavey and Jonathan McDowell's success in the College Senior Science Quiz; Jonathan Hunter being awarded the best speaker prize in the 'Joutes Oratoires' in the Alliance Francaise despite a narrow defeat to Colaiste Iosagain and the commitment of Mark Twomey and our Senior Basketball squad as it competes with distinction in each league fixture played.

6th Year Parents Committee - A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

Ms Carleen McGee will give a talk on the CAO Application process to the 6th Year Parents on **Tuesday November 5th at 7.30pm in the Lecture Hall.**

It is hoped that as many parents as possible will be able to attend this most informative and helpful evening.

This event has been organised by the Sixth Year Parent's Committee who have been very active and have also set in motion many other projects that will be undertaken this year.

The Committee hope that information on the planned immersion trip to Kenya in July 2014 will also be available on this night.

Our best wishes go out to the sixth year students and we wish them a happy, peaceful and fulfilling final year in the College.

Boarding School



On the 27th August 2013, 82 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 (with the usual Spanish inquisition) 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, public speaking, Wednesday evening Mass in the Oratory, Boarders' Choir, Boarders' Book Club in the College Library, and Boarders' Cookery Class for 5th and 6th years starts 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 undergone a team building event on campus; have made trips to Trinity College, The Shackleton Exhibition, Leopardstown Races, Book of Kells and The Natural History Museum. Also, they have had a number of excursions to the cinema, bowling alley and have gone shopping.

We have had a number of in-house competitions in pool, table tennis and baseball; there is always great competitive spirit due to the obligatory Pizza at stake. The new Des Places Gymnasium has added another fantastic resource to the Boarding School and the Sports League has commenced under the expert eye of Mr. Pickering. 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. Malachy Kilbride. This was then then followed by a relaxing cup of tea in corridor. Thanks to all the community who help make Mass such an important part of the Boarding School week. Congratulations to James Fox and Conor Nolan (Both 6th Year) who became Eucharistic Ministers. We wish them well in their Ministry. All are welcome to join us at any Sunday Mass in the College Chapel at 10am.



Boarders' Family Mass

The Castle continues to be renovated and all the corridors are now refurbished. All 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 team, 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 22nd November, when they will attend the College musical "Fiddler on the Roof". 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 weekly basis and any concerns, issues or initiatives are discussed and implemented.

We would like to welcome to the Castle staff Mr. Eoin Daly and Mr. Colton Cariaga. We wish them well in their year in the Castle.



Pastoral Care Programme



Everybody hits the ground running when a new school year begins. Now as we approach mid-term it is good to look back and take stock. Everything that happens in Blackrock is pastoral because the welfare of the students is the common denominator behind every programme: the work done in and for the classroom; the extra-curricular activities (and they are many!); the coaching and games in the sports hall, on field, court and water; the fun around the campus, in choir, orchestra, debating and on stage; board games and interactive digital sessions....everything brings us into relationship with one another and the world and it is in and through these relationships that the Holy Spirit moves, calling us to be our best selves and to work and play together for the good of the whole community.

But there are of course the more directly Pastoral events where our awareness is drawn to the significance of all this living. We direct our attention to God who gives all good gifts and we commit ourselves again to the Christian vision and the building of the Kingdom.

So we have had our Leadership Seminars for House Captains; The Sixth Year Pilgrimage to Lourdes; Reconciliation Services for all students; Pastoral Placements up and running in Transition Year; Bronze Medal Gaisce Adventure Hike Retreats; A

Family Mass for Boarders; The Boarders Retreat; Our Bullying Awareness Day for the whole school;

The Sixth Year Family Mass launching the Sixth Year Retreats in fifteen centres countrywide; The Commissioning of House Representatives; The Whole School Assembly in the wonderful space that is the Des Places Sports-hall; Fifth Year Day of Reflection in four different centres around Dublin; Mission Awareness Day when the Directors of the Union Mission Fund addressed the boys and Fathers Brendan Foley and Pat Clarke offered insight into the Work of the Spiritans worldwide.

And before the half term draws to a close we have scheduled the Spiritan Youth Day, the Second Year Family Mass and we continue with preparations for further initiatives planned for the remainder of the school year.

May the Lord bless the endeavours of our Blackrock College community that, despite our shortcomings, our inner selves may grow strong and we find that peace which only He can bring.

Guidance and Counselling



Early in September the sixth year students completed the Centigrade Profile to assist ascertain what courses/careers they are interested in and suited too. Each student has now received an individual student profile report from Centigrade. 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 18th all sixth years 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 and other European countries.

A number of sixth years have already submitted UCAS applications to study medicine and to study engineering and law at Oxford and Cambridge Universities in Great Britain. Where necessary these students took the UKCAT, BMAT, LNAT and PAT admission tests. 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 2014.

Leaving Certificate students have recently received a hard copy of the 2014 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 2014. In order to assist the sixth year students with their CAO choices a number of Career Talks have been arranged for before Christmas. The School of Law from UCD and the Computer Science and Statistics Department from TCD have already delivered talks to the students. Further talks will commence after the midterm.

On September 9th 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 Eunan O'Carroll (Past Pupils Union) chaired the seminar which saw the parents being addressed by Ms Lavinia Morris (Head of I.T Operations, Friends First Group) on Careers in Computing. Parents were also addressed on a range of different career paths by past pupils of the college, Malachy

O'Doherty (B.A student, UCD), John O'Shea (Platinum One Sports Management and Events), Mark Scott Lennon (Director and Executive Manager, Fitzpatrick's Castle Hotel, Killiney).

The second career seminar for parents of fifth year took place on September 16th. On this evening parents were addressed Ms Carleen McGee on the current Senior Cycle Careers programme in the college. Guest speaker on the evening, Dr Hugh Brady, UCD President on spoke to parents about Career Opportunities in the Present Economic Climate. Mr Alan MacGinty, College Principal, then spoke about the Educational Objectives of Blackrock College. 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 and Cambridge Profile Programmes on August 30th and the results of these programmes are currently being communicated to them.

Monday September 16th 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 the concept of the bystander and how a bystander's reaction or lack of reaction to a bullying situation can be so significant. 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. Every student in each year 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.

CREATIVE ARTS & DIGITAL LEARNING CENTRE

Volunteers wanted from the Parent body to act as supervisors in the new Creative Arts and Digital Learning Centre

Names to amacginty@blackrockcollege.com



Debating



Senior Debating

Two teams have so far advanced to the Second Round of the Trinity/UCD Debating Competition. Our performances in competition have been strong and one hopes for a successful year ahead.

A very well attended lunch time debate has been the highlight of the year so far. The motion was that "This house believes that private schools are detrimental to society". Unsurprisingly, the house voted to oppose. Mr Niall Byrne, our wonderful Chairman for the event, entertained the audience with Green Party propaganda (as if he would).

The Secretary of the Debating Society, Joshua Kieran-Glennon, is a strong and motivating force. Look out for further lunchtime debates in the Creative Arts and Digital Learning Centre (which is a great venue). We are sending a challenge to teachers to meet us in the debating chamber. That is something to look forward to!

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, the Belvedere College Mace and the first round of the UCD Junior Schools' Debating competition. These have been excellent occasions for students to develop their confidence and debating skills as well as meeting many debaters from other schools.

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

French Debating

Four 6th year students recently represented the College in the Jouets Oratoires competition organised by the Alliance Française. Seasoned debaters Jonathan Hunter, Conn McCarrick, Simon Curran and Kevin Heavy, under the guidance of Ms. Collette McCaffrey opposed the motion "...que notre système scolaire ne répond plus à nos besoins" ("Our school system no longer meets our needs") against a victorious Coláiste Íosagáin. Jonathan Hunter was awarded the prize for best speaker in the debate.



Science Department

During the last week in September twenty four Agricultural Science students accompanied by their teacher, Ms Fitzroy, travelled to the National Ploughing championships in Ratheniska in County Laois.

They had a very enjoyable day, seeing pure bred animals and the latest farm technology in action. This experience is invaluable for the practical work component of their Leaving Certificate course.

Approximately 40 Fifth and Sixth year students took part in the Annual Senior Science quiz during lunch break on Tuesday 1st October.

The Quiz is open to all 5th & 6th year students that are studying any or all of the science subjects.

The format is a 10 question short answer quiz, in each subject area. Congratulations to Fifth Year student Joshua G Climax who won overall first place by scoring highest across the three subjects.

Overall First Place:	Joshua G Climax
Biology Book Prize:	Simon Curran
Chemistry Book Prize:	Kevin Heavey
Physics Book Prize:	Johnathan McDowell

On the basis of the results two teams of Sixth Years will be selected to take part in the ISTA Schools Science Quiz which will be held in TCD on Thursday Nov 14th, during National Science Week.

This year, with the help and encouragement of their science teachers, a large number of students have entered stage one of the **2014 BT Young Scientist** competition. These include:

Transition Years

Declan O'Sullivan & Bernard O'Sullivan: Designing Carbon Neutral National Schools

David Hardiman & Hugh Caslin: Can Coconut Oil and Omega 3 Oil be used to Improve Short Term Memory

Eoghan Sommers, Michael Launders & Sam Moreland: Does Fear Influence Performance

James Huggard & Pengbo Wu: The Effects of Video Games on Irish Teenagers

James O'Donnell & Cal Roughan: A Solar Charger

Matthew Long: How to Improve your Sleep

Sean Hasset - The Effect of Isotonic Sports Drinks on Endurance Performance and Physiology

Rory Patterson - Why do we laugh at others in pain?

Alex Murphy and Tim Maguire - To examine whether or not Paddy Power bookkeepers are correct with their distribution of the favourites tag for premier League football matches in England

Colm O'Flaherty, Shane Marmion and Greg Carroll - The cooling effects of everyday materials.

Declan Norton: A Comparison of a single-lift hovercraft vs. quad-lift hovercraft

Third Years

Chris Aylward - Improving Battery Life at Low Temperatures

Scott Donohoe - To Investigate the Effects of Energised Water on Worms and Compost to see if there is an Increase in Photosynthesis

Robert Somers - Can a placebo have an effect on rowing/sprinting performance?

Second Year

Oisín Ryan - To investigate subconscious bias in children.

We send our very best wishes to both our Senior Quiz teams and Young Scientist competitors for success in their endeavours.



Annual Science Quiz for 5th & 6th Years

Sport



Rugby

With the first day of school comes the beginning of the rugby season. After fiercely competitive trials throughout the age groups in the first weeks of school, teams then hit the training fields and matches were underway before long. The schools grounds have been a hive of activity on both Wednesday and Saturdays with plenty of fixtures taking place from under 14 to senior. The seniors had a first game loss to a very impressive CBC Monkstown side, from there they have started to build game by game with the highlights being their winning performances over Palmerston North Boys' High from New Zealand and Filton College from Bristol. The junior team have also had a very busy half term and at this stage are progressing nicely in their friendly season fixtures, culminating in impressive away wins versus St Michael's College and Warwick School (England).



Dane Fitzpatrick in match v Palmerston North, NZ

Congratulations must go the under 14's for a record score again Sedbergh from England and to the junior 2nds for their win also against English side Merchant Taylor. We congratulate Joe Carbery, Jack Dwan, Jeremy Loughman, Conor Oliver and Nicholas Timoney (all 6th Year) who were selected on the Leinster U19 side, with Hugo Kean (5th Year) and Jack Power (6th Year) being named in the Leinster U18 Schools' side that won this year's representative series.

O'Reilly) and McQuaid (Max Airey) were from different Houses. All in all it was a wonderful occasion and we congratulate everyone for the commitment shown to their respective houses. The following weekend the 2nd year competition took place with Hugh O'Leary captaining Duff to victory.



10 a-side Rugby Tournament

Soccer

The senior soccer team are captained by Fred Kenny (6th year) and have had a solid start to the season. Two wins from three competitive games started with a 6-0 victory in the 1st round of the Leinster cup. An entertaining 3-3 draw with Clonkeen College was followed up with an 8-2 victory against Moyle Park. The team's attacking style of football has allowed for entertaining matches, hopefully this attacking style of football can guide the team into the next round of their Leinster cup when they play Drimnagh Castle in the 2nd round.

Basketball

The Basketball season has been an extremely busy one. The Senior Squad has a lot of new faces on the panel with a significant fifth year presence and is in a development phase. The early part of the Seniors season has been difficult with the team yet to register a win after losses to St. Columbas, Holy Child Sallynoggin, Larkin C.C. and O'Connells. However Captain Séafra Ó Faoláin and the rest of the squad have been training hard and improving with each game and hopes are high as they move into the All-Ireland schools cup match.

The U-16s have had an excellent start to the season with good performances against Holy Child Sallynoggin and Larkin C.C., with the only loss being to an excellent Rosmini team. This has left the squad in a strong position to qualify out of the group for a Leinster quarter final. The numbers at U-16 level have been so strong that two teams have been entered for the first time. The second team have only had one match which resulted in a narrow loss but displayed plenty of potential to build on for future fixtures.

Hurling

The Junior Hurlers reached the knock-out stages of the championship this year, only narrowly losing out on a semi-final position following a tight game against a tough Coláiste Choilm side. They opened their championship campaign with a bang. In a great display of hurling, Blackrock managed to hold the hurling powerhouse which is St. MacDara's to a point. Despite Blackrock leading the game during many periods, the opposition prevailed with a last minute goal. Their coach, Dublin hurler Ryan O'Dwyer had nothing but praise to for the Blackrock team.

Blackrock went on to secure qualification for the knock-out stages of the competition by emphatically beating neighbourhood rivals, Oatlands, by 14 points. However, the hurlers did not manage to overcome a well-drilled Coláiste Choilm team in the quarter finals. The team was led by captain Evin Comerford and vice captain, Alex Considine.

Rowing

Blackrock kicked off their rowing season with 23 students competing in the annual Dublin Sculling ladder on the 12th of October. With over 200 competitors the Blackrock boys did very well with James O'Sullivan getting the fastest time of 7:09 coming 58th overall. Some other impressive performances were from Eoin Gleeson, Rob Brown, Hugh Mohan and Charlie Lawless. Neptune Head of the river is the next big event on the 9th of November followed by the Irish Indoor Championships on the 23rd of November.

Sailing

The Blackrock College sailing Regatta was held in near-perfect conditions in Dún Laoghaire Harbour on Monday 23rd September. 28 Boys participated with 4 teams of 7 competing in a round robin style event. There were 10 races in all. Each team got to race every other team culminating in a Semi-Final and Final with Team B led by Mark Bolger (5th Year) the winners of the Team Racing L'Afrique Trophy. The individual "Brouder" Trophy went to James O'Connor (3rd year) for displaying great eagerness, team racing tactics, ability and skill which in no small part helped Team B to victory time and time again throughout the day.



Luke Moore-Kinsella, 2nd Year at Sailing Regatta

Rugby 10s competition

The annual Inter-House Rugby 10s Competitions were held on Saturday 7th September. Despite the weather there was a great atmosphere and spirit around the various age group competitions. Leman (Captain Ian Kinsley), Duff (Donncha Crowley), Ebenrecht (Hugo Burke), McQuaid (Bill Madigan) and De Valera (Joseph O'Donnell) won the 6th Year, 5th Year, 4th Year, 3rd Year 'A' and 'B' competitions respectively. It is interesting to note that a different house won in each competition and also the runners up in each Competition, Duff (Jeff Burke), Shanahan (Jake Ward), De Valera (Jack Gardiner), Leman (Peter



Winners of Leman House Rugby 10s

Photos courtesy Rock Photography
www.rockphotography.ie