

Blackrock College Newsletter



Special points of interest:

- Pastoral Care Programme
- Student Council
- The Science Department
- Careers and Counselling

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Christmas 2012

Dear Parents

Does Christmas matter?

You read this as a new year commences with the promise, hopefully, of great things. The celebrations are over. Gifts have been exchanged. Families and friends have visited, maybe returned from overseas and have now, sadly, gone again. Normality resumes. Our budgetary blues return.

Does Christmas matter? It certainly does. It matters because it makes us strong in the face of the struggles of life, at times of setback and disappointment. It is about who we are, about who God is and how far He will go for us. The birth of Christ is a reminder that the impossible is possible. It provides a time to reach out to our immediate family, to close friends but also to consider our brothers and sisters who may be unknown to us. The Dublin Simon Community's slogan this Christmas is '**On the street you feel invisible**'. The homeless, as Fr. O'Brolchain so vividly explained to the boys at the Carol Service, are our brothers and sisters also. That matters. Impossible made possible; invisible turned visible.

The Christmas message is that we do not just follow a light (star) but that we carry a light for the downtrodden and less fortunate in society, at home and abroad. And, of course, this light should be carried also for those who are close to us who may need encouragement, who are in darkness. The challenge is to ensure that the goodwill and understanding of Christmas is more than a seasonal thing, that we take time, always, to notice the needy, to see the invisible.

The frenetic pace of life can result in what we value being left behind. It has been inspiring in the build-up to Christmas to witness so many of our boys give of themselves for the disadvantaged. The St Vincent de Paul Appeal has brought a response from 2nd Year through 6th Year, with a myriad of fundraising events which define us as a Christian community. Through these events our boys realise the value of volunteerism, of giving without the expectation of return and appreciate that therein lies fun, friendship and fulfilment that no shop can sell, that social media cannot replicate.

Our Carol Service, for the first time in the Sports Hall with Willow Park 1st Year in attendance making a community 1,200 strong, was a compelling collective declaration that we are brothers and sisters to each other because God is Father to all.

Goodwill, Generosity of Spirit, Passion and Concern - we are truly blessed that these are in abundance at Blackrock. Evidence lies within the Parents' Committees and Council, the selfless service of my colleagues in teaching, administration, health care, catering, household, grounds and maintenance, the guiding light and supportive prayers of our Spiritan Community, the loyalty of our College Union, the Stewardship of our Board and Trustee Body, the D.E.A. and, of course, in our boys. To all, I say a heartfelt Thank You. Does Christmas matter? – I leave the last word to **C.S. Lewis**:

"The Son of God became man to enable men to become sons of God".

Yours sincerely

ALAN MacGINTY
Principal



Second Year



The Second Year boys have finished a busy and fruitful first term in the College. **The House Competitions** have continued apace, with the Table Tennis competition still continuing and the Chess competition just beginning. Each of these will reach a climax before the mid-term break in February, hopefully. The Rugby Blitz medals were presented to each member of the Winning and Finalist teams at Assembly by Mr MacGinty.

The **College Musical** this year was entitled *Hercules* and although we had no direct Second Year involvement, many boys attended and enjoyed a performance. This was good preparation for the 2nd & 4th Year Production that will be taking place later in the year. **Science Week** was held this half term, with Mr John Daly giving the boys an exciting and interactive demonstration of the wonders of Chemistry.

Our **extra-curricular** activities involve great numbers of boys in Second Year, essential to each student's overall development. Rugby is certainly the most popular sport, with Rowing making a good showing in second place. Other activities availed of include table

tennis, cycling, badminton, squash, swimming, cross-country, debating, public speaking, the Art club, the Science club, chess, the orchestra, Judo, cricket, with tennis beginning after Christmas and athletics in the final term.

During this half-term we also had our **Carol Service** for the season of Advent, with the whole College in attendance in the new Sports Hall. It was both a festive and prayerful occasion. The boys should be proud of the efforts they made at fundraising for the **St Vincent de Paul Society**. They organised a Duck Race and raised over €3,000. This was a great achievement and by giving this assistance for the benefit of the less fortunate, represented the true spirit of Christmas.

When the new term commences, we ask parents to congratulate their son on his weekly Application Card, which he takes home each Monday. This is a very good opportunity to reinforce the good behaviour and practice that is acknowledged on the Card. A regular check on each boy's Homework Diary would also be worthwhile, to assist him in the organisation of his daily homework and revision.

Third Year



As we look back on the first term it is difficult to believe it has passed so quickly, no doubt the boys would concur with this. On our return after what we hope and pray has been a restful and enjoyable Christmas it is very important that early re-emersion into school life is the priority for each boy. Parents are urged to insist on getting the weekly card every Monday night, the fact that one's son is one of those doing night study, I respectfully suggest, ought not be accepted as an excuse from him. The Cards are a wonderful opportunity to affirm the positive, of which there is much and challenge any mediocrity of effort. Extra Curricular involvement has been a feature of the year group across array of disciplines. Boys whose involvement outside school precludes participation after the 3.45PM finish are strongly urged to commit to doing a cross country run on Wednesdays before leaving the school campus. A number have responded very positively to this challenge. It would be very important, if any parents feel their son is missing out on this most important aspect of their overall development, that they contact the Dean.



Serious concentration at 3rd Year Quiz during Science Week

The Family Mass took place on Sunday 2nd of December, the first Sunday of Advent. In his homily Fr. Aquinas Duffy, Parish Priest of St Pius 10th in Templeogue reminded the boys that Advent is a time of waiting, a countdown to Christmas. However, waiting should never be passive. Our awaiting is one of active preparation and a great opportunity to reflect. Such

reflection can be a great aid to getting the balance and indeed our priorities right in our lives. He thanked all who had clearly put in a lot of work preparing a wonderful liturgy, something that all in attendance would agree with.

As is tradition in Third Year the boys have their **Day of Reflection** early in the New Year. This most important opportunity facilitated by Mr Gerry Keegan sharing his life story, including the place of the Eucharist in it, with the aid of musicals interludes has the potential to empower them as they face the challenges and opportunities that await them on life's journey. **Please read the Letter enclosed for details.**

Mobile Phones: The Boys have no permission to check their phones between classes for text messages. Parents needing to contact their son's urgently should contact the Reception. Furthermore under no circumstances should boys use the camera facility of their phones while on the School campus.

Night Study: We strongly recommend that all boys who are signed up to do Night Study attend the Friday session (4.30 – 6.35PM) In addition all boys should take their books home at the week- end where at least two & a half hours of revision should be undertaken.

Duck Race & Shoe Box Appeal: A very sincere thanks to all who supported the annual St. Vincent de Paul appeal. As Fr Aquinas said at the Family Mass it is a real sign of Christianity in action.

**Parent Teacher Meeting Thursday
24th January 4.15- 6.45 P.M**



Transition Year

Blackrock College Radio 94.3 fm Nov. 19th – 23rd

Approximately 180 students took part in a very successful week of broadcasting. Guests during the week included Micheál Martin, Richard Boyd-Barrett, Peter Mathews, Ruairí Quinn, Denis O'Brien, Brent Pope, Senator David Norris and many others. This unique project is a mammoth undertaking. The ability to broadcast programmes and live shows for 47.5 hours is the product of tremendous teamwork. Congratulations to all the students who participated in BCR and a special word of thanks to Owen Brennan, Garry Sullivan and the many teachers who helped produce such wonderful programmes.



Senator David Norris with K. Mc Donnell, J. Condon & A. Carroll during BCR week

Soccer Marathon Nov 30th – Dec 1st

The Soccer Marathon raises funds for the St Vincent De Paul Christmas hamper project. This year's marathon was a tremendous success, albeit many of the one hundred and five students involved complained of muscle strain and fatigue afterwards. Special thanks to Mr Owen Brennan for his organisation and running of the event. The students raised €15,000!

Christmas Tree Project

This year I was inundated with applications from students who wished to get involved in helping to sell Christmas trees in the College car park (another very important St. Vincent De Paul fund-raising project). The boys' energy, good humour and

sense of fun are wonderful to behold. It never ceases to amaze me how they transform into connoisseurs of Nobilis and Spruce. They make wonderful salesmen! This year, the freezing weather conditions made their involvement all the more heroic! Well done to all involved.



TY Christmas Tree Project in aid of VdeP

Mince Pie Morning

The Transition Year Mince Pie Morning raised €414.56 in aid of the St. Vincent de Paul Christmas Appeal. The event was held on Tuesday 11th December in the Home Economics Room. We were delighted to welcome parents and teachers alike to this most enjoyable annual fund-raiser. A large number of parents attended and were suitably impressed by the boys' culinary skills! Special thanks to Ms Karen Marren and her students for organising this very special event.

Hampers

At time of writing, we are preparing for the culmination of the St Vincent De Paul Christmas project; the packing and distribution of Christmas hampers. This year we have committed ourselves to producing 220 hampers – no mean feat. On Friday 14th December, approximately 80 students will help with the packing and on Saturday 15th December, the hampers will be distributed to people in need. The boys will assist their parents in delivering the hampers and will therefore have the opportunity to witness personally the delight of the recipients. It is important for the boys to realise how their soccer sponsorship and other fund-raising activities really do make a difference to people! The support of parents and past students in helping us to deliver these hampers to Killinarden is always very much appreciated.

Leaflet Distribution for the St Vincent De Paul

On Wednesday 5th December, approximately sixty students were involved in a leaflet drop in the Booterstown/Blackrock area to publicise the urgent need for funds for the St Vincent De Paul Society this Christmas. They did a great job of spreading the word.

AXA Road Safety Show

On Monday 26th November, all 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 member of the Gardai, a paramedic, a firefighter, medical professionals, a mother of a road traffic victim and a survivor of a horrendous road accident. 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 entrepreneurial workshops on 28th November for the boys interested in entering the Dragons' Den competition next term.

Lecture Series

On 29th November a speaker from FOCUS IRELAND talked to the students about the work of this great organisation. The YSI class, under the leadership of Mr Adam Conry, organised this lecture as part of their project on Homelessness.

Gaisce

About one hundred and fifty students (a record number) have signed up to work towards achieving their bronze Gaisce award. One hundred and twenty have already completed their Gaisce adventure component, having participated in the hike and retreat run by Mr John Forrest in the wilds of Wexford. They should be working hard at the moment doing their community service and other tasks in order to attain their award.

Transition Year Parents' Social

The Transition Year Parents' Social will take place in the College on Friday, February 1st. This is always a most enjoyable night out and a great opportunity to meet the parents of other boys in the year group. A leaflet with more information about the Social is enclosed with this newsletter.

Young Scientists' Exhibition

All Transition Year students will visit The Young Scientists' Exhibition in the R.D.S. on **Friday, January 11th**. That morning the boys will go directly to the R.D.S. and check-in there at 9.30 a.m. They will return to school for afternoon classes. The entrance fee will be collected when the boys return after the holidays.

Evening Courses

A new series of evening courses including Legal Studies, Driver Education, Indonesian Silat, Yoga and First Aid will run again in the second term. Application forms will be available in mid-January.

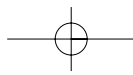
Work Experience

Mr Garry Sullivan wrote to the parents of Transition Year students recently regarding Work Experience which is due to take place from 15th - 19th April 2013. Please find enclosed with this Newsletter a further update on this matter for your information.

If you are planning to organise other Work Experience placements for your sons outside the assigned dates (15-19 April), Ms Nulty must be informed **at least ten days** prior to the commencement of the placement.

Other News

Congratulations to Joshua Gorman-Climax who represented Ireland recently in an international Science Olympiad in Iran. He won the bronze award. We are all delighted at this great achievement. Well done Joshua!



Fifth Year



Fifth Year students continue to make significant contributions to the extra-curricular life of Blackrock College in many diverse fields as the second half of the first term draws to a close. The Fifth Year footballers are going from strength to strength! The Fifth Year footballers, playing on the senior squad with sixth years, have had an impressive season so far, with many performing particularly well. While they qualified from their league group to a Metropolitan quarter final, they were defeated by a very strong side from St Colmcille's, Knocklyon. In the Leinster cup they are as yet unbeaten, having thus far seen off St Brendan's (Bray), St Kieran's (Kilkenny) and Maynooth PP. This great run brings them to their next competitive fixture, a quarter final against Athlone CC. In their friendly matches so far, they have beaten St Michael's (twice), Clongowes, and Castleknock. We wish them every success.

Music: Between the 19th and 23rd of November, the talents of fifth year students made a highly significant contribution to the success of this year's musical *Hercules*. All dimensions of the production i.e. cast, crew and band had a very strong Fifth Year presence. Special thanks must be given to the contribution of stars such as Ciaran Crangle, Jack Brophy, Ross O'Leary and Geoffrey Wheeler. Also Alex Chernitchov, Jack Hanrahan, Luke Fitzpatrick, Eoin Galligan and David Roper Nolan deserve particular mention for playing hilarious and challenging roles. Their stunning performances impressed and flabbergasted many of the audience.

The Musical talents of this particular year group were also very much in evidence during the College Carol Service on December 12th when many fifth years were part of the Leman Choir that led the assembled school community in song. Well done to all!

House Rugby: Since mid-term the House 2nds have really turned the heat up with great performances against Marist College, Ballyclare, and Kings Hospital, while the 3rds remain unbeaten. The competition for places has become intense with competition high at training. Many of the 5th years are heavily involved with the Seniors and we wish them well throughout Christmas and onto the Cup Campaign. The House teams and coaches are looking forward to the Leinster Leagues in January with a sense of anticipation and confidence.

Rowing: A successful outing took place on Blessington Lake as Blackrock put two Eights and a Quad forward in the Neptune Head of the River Event. The first Eight came 4th out of 11 in their junior under 18s category, an outstanding result. The fifth year Blackrock rowing team are currently in training for the regattas and heads of the river this season by putting in tireless hours on the water and on the rowing machines. Their next event to look forward to is the Irish Indoor Rowing Championship in which last year's Fifth Years came 5th in their category.

The Blackrock **Senior Golf** Team played the Leinster Schools fourball Championship the team consisted of a number of fifth years including Ted Collins, John O'Connor and James Grogan, who played Dublin Oak Academy in the first match of the group stages. Blackrock got off to a good start in the group stages and won both matches 14 up after 18 holes, combined 28 up. The golf team won the second round of the group stages of the 14 up against Clonkeen College, Blackrock. The team played the last round of the group stages against St. Gerards. Needing a win to advance to the next round, the team lost the match 3 down. However, due to St. Gerards losing their next match against Clonkeen, Blackrock advanced to the next round, after countback. The team will be playing their next match against Castleknock to reach the quarter finals at the end of this school term.

Congratulations to Harry Lawlor on making the under 19 Leinster Schools Waterpolo team. The Leinster team were victorious in the inter pros tournament beating Connacht 6-0 and Ulster 2-0.

The Blackrock Swimming Gala took place in the College pool at the earlier date of 23rd October this year. There was an excellent turnout from the whole school with a notably strong turnout from 5th year. Many events took place throughout the evening with the main race in 5th year being the 50m freestyle. This was a fiercely competitive race contested between Harry Lawlor, Frank Vaughan, Ryan O'Dea, Paul O'Dea and Sean Joyce. The race was won in the end by Paul O'Dea with Frank Vaughan finishing a close second. Paul O'Dea and Frank Vaughan also competed in the President's Race along with the four other best swimmers the school has to offer. There is a wealth of talent in fifth year this year, and congratulations to Frank Vaughan and Harry Lawlor who have been appointed Captain and Vice-Captain of swimming in the college.

On Wednesday 14th November, the first round of the East Leinster cross country league was held in Blackrock College. The senior team was well represented by boys from fifth year. In unfamiliar weather with the sun shining, the senior team managed an impressive first place. Congratulations to James Grogan, Sean McCann, Jonathon Hunter and Luke Fagan.

The senior **basketball** team have had a very good start to the season, defeating teams such as St. Columbas, Clonkeen College, Holy Child, and Colaiste Pobail Setana to reach the Semi Final of the East Leinster Basketball Ireland competition, played on Wednesday 5th of December. This match was a testament to all the hard work that the boys have put in since September and saw them earn a well deserved victory over King's Hospital. The fifth years involved in the squad in the semi - final were Darragh Larkin, Seafrá O' Faolain and Cormac Fenton all of whom were pivotal to the team's victory.

In English debating, Kevin Heavey, Conn McCarrick and Niall O'Sullivan have all qualified for the next round of the Leinster Schools Debating Competition. This is the most prestigious competition on the English Debating circuit. The standard of debate was very high and the boys did very well to win their debates against tough opposition. We wish them well in their next rounds. In Spanish Debating, the Spanish debating team of Darragh Larkin (Team Captain), Michael Marren, Oisín Flynn and Chris Butler competed against St MacDara's in the ATS (Spanish Teachers Association) organised event. Although the team were unsuccessful, we are delighted that they performed well. In Irish Debating, the second round of the Irish debating competition; the Gael Linn Comórtas Díospóireachta Uí Chadhain took place on Tuesday the 4th of December. The Team of 3 fifth year students were Conn McCarrick (Team Captain), Eoin Galligan and Simon Curran. The standard of debate was very high, and despite excellent performances, the boys did not get through to Round 3.

Model United Nations: A delegation of fifth year student took part in the Model United Nations conference in Rathdown School on the 17th November 2012. The boys made up the German delegation and were represented on various committees. They made a significant contribution at both Committee level and to the General Assembly itself. Congratulations to all the boys for taking part in this event and for their significant contribution to the conference.

Congratulations to Simon Curran, Rían Doris and Cormac Stafford who represented the College at the Regional Finals of the Junior Dragons Den Competition, sponsored by Bank of Ireland. Eighteen of Dublin's finest young entrepreneurs attended this event at the Royal Marine Hotel on 21st November.

As part of the Faith Friends Programme in Transition Yr, many students signed up to do the John Paul II Award. Current Fifth Years Joseph Horan, Cormac Stafford, John O'Connor, Marcus Rafferty, Geoff Sheehan and Phil O'Dwyer have all been awarded Gold Medals based on record cards of weekly activities and essays. They received their awards in St Paul's Church, Arran Quay on December 13th 2012.

Annual & DVD: During the first week of November, the 2011/12 Annual and Showcase DVD were distributed to all. Congratulations to Mr. Vanstone, Mr. Keogh and Mr. Aylward on their respective productions that rekindled many memories of the 152nd Year.

St. Vincent de Paul Christmas Appeal: The Fifth Year House Representatives organised and co-ordinated the Annual Fundraiser in aid of the St. Vincent de Paul Christmas Appeal, on Tuesday 27th November. This event saw over 120 students participate in a Poker Classic and a FIFA PS3 Soccer Tournament. The event raised over ?2700 with Tom O'Reilly winning the Poker Classic from Daniel Di Lucia, while Luke Hanrahan defeated Ross Butler in the final of a most exciting PS3 tournament. Many thanks to all students who participated on the night and in particular to Mr O'Farrell for his smooth running of the Poker Classic. A special thanks also to Sika Ireland, Gleasons of Booterstown, Synchro Solutions Ltd and Facet Jewellers Dun Laoghaire for donating spot prizes on the night.

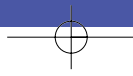
Important Dates for your 2013 Diary

5th Year Parent Teacher Meeting – Thursday, Feb 7th (4.15pm-6.45pm)

5th Year Family Mass – Sunday, March 10th

Student Career Talks 5th/6th year, Saturday 12th January and Saturday 26th January.

It is hoped that as many parents as possible will be able to attend these important events in the Fifth Year Calendar.



Sixth Year



The second half of Term 1 has been a very busy and productive period for the class of 2013 who continue to show excellent leadership in all aspects of life in the College...

Academic:

Since mid-term many departments have facilitated the final year students in engaging with Leaving Certificate content outside of the classroom; the **Music** department arranged for students to attend orchestral performances in UCD and the NCH, the **Irish** department accompanied students to a performance of 'An Triail' in the Pavilion Theatre, the **English** department accompanied students to 'Macbeth' in the Helix Theatre, Ms. Harlowe and Ms. Dobbyn travelled with **History** students to the city of Derry, students of **LCVP** undertook a field trip to a chocolate factory, while Ms Shevlin accompanied the **Agricultural Science** students to a beef and sheep farm in Tipperary.

Just before midterm Sixth Year students filled the first seven places in the Annual Science Quiz. The winner was Cillian Yeates, followed by David Kelly and Tim Sheedy. These students then came together as a team to finish runner-up the ISTA Greater Dublin Regional Senior Science Quiz in TCD on November 15th. In the All-Ireland Final on Saturday 24th November, Cillian, David and Tim finished a very creditable 6th of 38 teams. Many thanks to Ms. Sweeney for her facilitation and organisation of the Senior Science Team.

The application to study has progressed well with Credit List numbers, while slightly lower than before midterm remaining at encouraging levels; as they enter the New Year the Class of 2013 have been encouraged to press ahead with their study plans and schedules.

The 2011/2012 Annual and showcase DVD were distributed to all 6th Year students recently and on Monday 26th November, Mr. Kehoe organised the photographing of individual 6th Year students for the 2012/2013 Annual. Any student who missed this event will be facilitated later in the year.

Outreach:

As part of the college's annual Christmas fund-raising for the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, the 6th Year House Representatives organised a 24-hour sponsored fast between the 29th and 30th of November. Alongside this, the 6th Year Parent's committee under the leadership of Mr Jurgen and Mrs Nicola Whyte held a Parent's Raffle. 79 students participated in the fast and both events raised ?4554 in total. The ending of the fast was celebrated with a special meal in the College Dining Room for those who participated, during which the Raffle was held. The parents of Hugh Cronin were winners of the first prize. Many thanks to Albert, Catherine and their team for the wonderful meal that they served up.

On 30th November, Mrs. Orla Fitzgerald and Mr. Peter Conlon addressed a combined group of parents and students on the final itinerary for the immersion trip to Machakos / Sultan Hamud next summer. By December 10th a group of 40 students and 16 parents had made a commitment to travel, the largest group to travel to Kenya yet. We wish them well with their fundraising efforts in the New Year.

Extra-Curricular:

Hercules: A total of 21 sixth year students took part in this year's musical **Hercules** between the 19th and 23rd of November. All dimensions of the production i.e. cast, crew and band were represented and the performances of Charlie Rock (Phil) and Cian Godfrey (Panic) deserve particular mention.

Rugby: We wish Charlie Rock and the rest of the SCT squad well as they prepare for their opening Cup match against Gonzaga College at the end of January. The Cheerleading team for 2013 will be led by Ryan Conlan, with assistance from Ray Crotty, Shane Kelly, Michael McDermott and Dylan O'Reilly. Despite struggling for numbers from time to time, the Castle rugby squads have completed their first term of fixtures and are planning for their league campaigns after Christmas. We

hope that the 6th Year students will bring the success enjoyed in other sporting disciplines with them on their return to Castle rugby in January.

Soccer: The Senior Soccer squad under the leadership of Sam Walsh have enjoyed a most successful term of football. An excellent win in Maynooth qualified the team for the quarter-finals of the Leinster Senior Cup, our best run for many years, and at the time of going to press they are preparing to play Marist College, Athlone. We wish them ongoing success.

Basketball: Our Senior Basketball squad have enjoyed a magnificent start to life in the Des Places Sports Hall as they qualified for the East Leinster Basketball final as a result of their pulsating 50-48 semi-final victory over King's Hospital. David Lynch (28 points) was top scorer on the day and we wish him and the rest of the squad well in their future endeavours.

Swimming Gala: Just before mid-term 43 sixth year students completed in the annual Swimming Gala. On a most enjoyable and competitive evening, Leman House captained by Mark Murray and Dermot O'Flynn emerged victorious. Congratulations also to Vinfig Leavy who won the prestigious President's Trophy on the night.

Cross Country: Andrew Cullen and Philip Lawrence were members of the Senior Cross Country team that won the East Leinster Invitational in the College on Wed. 14th November. An excellent run by Andrew saw him finish second in the individual race too.

Hurling: Congratulations to Neil Gorey, a member of Kilmacud Crokes GAA club, who was selected at full forward on the Dublin South Colleges Team for the Leinster Senior Hurling League. Victory over St. Brendan's of Birr was followed by a narrow defeat to Castlecomer CS of Kilkenny.

Careers:

On Tuesday 6th November, Ms. Carleen McGee gave a most informative presentation on the CAO process to the 6th Year Parents. Information presented on this night has been made available to the students and is also available online via the College website.

Since mid-term, a speaker from the Science Department in TCD visited the College to speak with students who have expressed an interest in this field of study and many of the year group have availed of the Saturday Open Days in UCD, TCD and DIT.

The HPAT preparation course has continued on Saturday mornings and results of a mock examination have been returned to the participating students with accompanying suggestions for consideration.

There will be an opportunity for up to 90 sixth year students to participate in mock interviews in a career area of their choice in January. These interviews are arranged by the Blackrock PPU. Students will have to prepare a letter of application and curriculum vitae that must be submitted in early January. These 'mock' interviews have proved to be a most valuable learning experience for Leaving Cert students in previous years and we recommend them very strongly. Places will be limited.

Liturgical:

On Tuesday December 11th, the 6th Year students led the School Community in the celebration of the annual Carol Service for Christmas. The event was marked by wonderful communal singing as well as beautiful seasonal pieces performed by the College Choir under the direction of Ms. O'Connor. Many thanks to Cian Godfrey for 'O Holy Night' and to the 6th Year readers who set such a respectful tone for the event. Another treasured memory to store during this final year in the College and a challenge too from Fr. O'Brolchain to the Class of 2013 when he asked 'Who is my brother?' and 'Is that the best you can do?'

Important Date for your 2013 Diary

Thursday 10th January - 6th Year Parent / Teacher Meeting
4.15pm > 6.45pm



Commerce & Economics Society

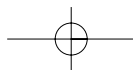
On Tuesday 4 December, the Commerce and Economics Society was delighted to welcome Ms Joan Mulvihill to Blackrock College. Joan took up the position of CEO in the Irish Internet Association in November 2009. Joan has worked across a range of industry sectors; retail, manufacturing, consultation and professional services in London, Amsterdam and Dublin. She has experience in a variety of roles also: anything from founding business to voluntary work to managerial roles.

Joan gave an overview of her career to date, outlining the highs and the lows.

The underlying message was to forge on, and never ever give up. There were lots of questions for Joan from the boys at the end of the evening and we are delighted Joan gave up her time to be with us.



David Harte (Vice-Auditor), Shane Kelly (Secretary), Joan Mulvihill, Gavin Ho (Auditor), Conor McCabe (Member), Conor Murray (Member). Absent: Fred Garvey (Treasurer).



Pastoral Care Programme



On Nov 26th it was the turn of 4I.R.E. to head into two weeks of Pastoral Placement in 13 centres which cater for the needs of people with varieties of disabilities and particular needs. The boys' preparation for these two weeks is crucial. It is important that they have a clear understanding of the purpose behind this opportunity. We are happy to say that our current TYs have responded admirably. At the end of their preparation they are asked to reflect on the Raison d'être of the programme:

"This is an Education of the Heart.

It challenges you to growth:

to see beyond the disability;

to respect the person;

to see the beauty in the old and infirm;

to find God in the wounded;

to recognise what gifts the disabled can bring;

to ask what these gifts can do for

you, your family, your world.

It challenges you:

to recognise your own vulnerability,

your own fears;

to find the courage;

to be unafraid to show your own disabilities;

to find God in the service given by carers;

to hear His call in your own heart;

to find the Church fulfilling its mission of love;

to recognise the joy that comes from

service, giving, caring.

It challenges you

to begin to see the purpose of life;

to find a quiet place....to reflect.

Take time to think....and then write your report."

We are indebted to the Centres that receive and support our boys so wholeheartedly.

During the month of November, the month of all saints and all souls, Religion teachers reminded students about our Catholic tradition of remembering our loved ones who have died. Some classes remembered the dead of their families

in their classrooms while others held prayer services in the chapel. All students were invited to have their loved ones remembered at the College Mass of Remembrance on Wed. 28th Nov. On that evening Fr. Malachy Kilbride presided, joined by fathers of the Spiritan Community and staff of the College. Those who had been bereaved during the past year were invited to light a candle to the memory of those who had died. Many visitors commented very favourably on the demeanour of the students who served during the Eucharist and at the reception afterwards.

The 3rd Year Family Mass was celebrated on the First Sunday of Advent and we were delighted to welcome a past student, Fr. Aquinas Duffy, Parish Priest of St. Pius X Church Templeogue, to act as main celebrant for the occasion. He remembered with affection and gratitude his own years in the College. He drew the boys' attention to the thankfulness they should foster in their own hearts as they call to mind the care of family and College staff.

He congratulated them on their willingness to share their blessings, through fundraising, with the wider community during Advent. Such outreach, especially during Advent, was a feature of every Year Group. Sixth Years gave the lead, despite pressure of impending exams, in a very successful sponsored fast. We recognise this same spirit in Fr. Aquinas' own serving on the Board of Management of the College.

November/ December saw other pastoral 'events': meditation in 5th & 4th Year religion classes; Faith Friends in T.Y.; 22 boys accepted for the Camino Pilgrimage; the awarding of the J.P.II Awards to 6 of our 5th Years by the Dublin Diocese and preparations in place for the Third Year Days of Reflection during the first week of their return after Christmas.

And the Carol Service! This term just wouldn't be the same without it. For the first time we could invite the 1st Years up from Willow, taking advantage of the space offered by the Des Place Sports Hall. How well the Sixth Years led the student body! Their rendering of the readings and prayers was well paced and reflective. The choir and orchestra ensured that our hearts were uplifted. We pray that the spirit celebrated in the Christmas Carols inform our festivities and enliven our homes over this holy season.

Student Council



The Student Council is a powerful resource for building community in Blackrock College. The Council represents all strands of student life, and is a meeting point of Student discussion. It provides students with the opportunity to:

Enhance communication between the students, management, teachers and parents, become actively involved in the affairs of the school, and also to represent the views of the students on matters of general concern to them. This year's Student Council, under the Chairman Dylan O'Reilly, ably assisted by Secretary Conn McCarrick has had a most successful and productive term. It has worked on a number of Student-led initiatives including the development of Vertical Links through the Houses, proposals for Student Identity Cards, the establishment of a Leadership Training Programme, as well as advising on day-to-day issues in the College.

Meetings take place fortnightly and the Council would welcome any suggestions from the Student Body during the year.

The Student Representatives on the Council for the Academic Year 2012-2013 are:

6th Year:	Dylan O'Reilly (Chairman)	Mark Murray
5th Year:	Conn McCarrick (Secretary)	Simon Curran
4th Year:	Ross Finnegan	Joshua Kieran-Glennon Roghan
3rd Year:	Alan Horgan	Stephen Rooney
2nd Year:	Bill Madigan	Christopher Wong
Boarding School:	Hugh McGuinness (6th)	Rory Patterson (3rd)

LEMAN FESTIVAL CONCERT XXVII



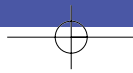
LEMAN FESTIVAL CONCERT XXVII IN THE NATIONAL CONCERT HALL
SUNDAY 20TH JANUARY 2013 7.30 PM.

PLEASE NOTE STARTING TIME. ADMISSION €20

TICKETS ON SALE FROM TUES 8TH JANUARY 2013

Available from THE NATIONAL CONCERT HALL BOX OFFICE

Telephone: (01) 4170000 Online Bookings: www.nch.ie (no booking fee)





The Science Department

Science Olympiad

In late October we happily learnt that Joshua Gorman Climax was a Gold Medal winner in the 2012 Irish Junior Science Olympiad (IrJSO - 2012) held in DCU on Saturday 27th October. He came second overall. The top six students at the IrJSO were invited to represent Ireland at the 2012 International Junior Science Olympiad (IJSO) in Tehran, IRAN in December 1st - 10th 2012. Joshua was awarded a Bronze Medal. Congratulations to him on this wonderful achievement.



Joshua Gorman-Climax (TY), Bronze Award recipient at the International Junior Science Olympiad in Tehran recently, with Prof. Mazno, President of the Olympic Organising Committee and Páirc James, leader of Team Ireland and Vice President of the OOC representing Europe.

BT Young Scientist

The projects of the following students were accepted for the BT Young Scientist 2013 competition: William Britton, with a project entitled 'A study into how echinoderms (sea urchins) help the survival of marine life.' Joshua Gorman Climax & Jay Dolan with their project entitled 'Bottling Bull Belches & Collecting Cow Pats'.

Science Week Events

During Science Week (Mon 12th to Fri 16th Nov) the following events were organised:

On Tuesday Mr. John Daly gave two exciting 90 minute lecture demonstrations on the topic of 'Molecules Matter' to all our Second Years. The Lecture Hall reverberated to the sounds of pops and explosions, much to the amusement of all present, as Mr Daly clearly demonstrated some important scientific principles.

On Thursday 44 Fifth & Sixth year Agricultural Science students travelled to 'Coorevin Farm' in County Tipperary, where they learnt how to put their theory into practice on a beef and dairy farm.

On the afternoons of Thursday and Friday a science table quiz was held for all the Third years in the Lecture Hall. For each afternoon, twenty five teams of four had been selected beforehand by randomly taking one pupil from each of the four science

classes present.

Prizes for the first three teams were presented at the end of the quiz.

The winning teams were as follows:

Thursday

1st: Oisín O'Callaghan, Rory Patterson, Conor Murphy, Marcus Ó Faoláin.

2nd: Tiernan O'Hagan, Stephen Rooney, Oisín Murphy, Rory O'Brien.

3rd: Paul Cullen, James Huggard, Mark Hartnett, Matthew Long.

Friday

1st: Patrick Kavanagh, Jack Handrick, Hugo Burke, Stephen Conboy

2nd: Brendan Keenan, Joseph Peters, Patrick O'Callaghan, Laurence Shields

3rd: Ethan Forde-Connolly, Niall Murray, Brian Masterson, Rory Murphy

On Thursday evening our Senior Quiz teams participated in the Dublin Regional Final of the ISTA Senior Table Quiz in TCD

Our Team A comprising of David Kelly, Tim Sheedy and Cillian Yeates came second out of a field of 62 teams. They won a prize of ?50 each.

Our Team B comprising Ali Al-Mukhaizeem, Ed Browne and Andrew came 18th.

Team A progressed to the All Ireland Final which was held in Trinity College on Saturday 24th

November. They managed to achieve a commendable joint 6th position in a closely fought Final.

On Friday morning, Dr Emma Teeling, Dept of Zoology, UCD, gave a very interesting lecture on 'becoming a zoologist' and on her research, to Transition Year students in the Senior Biology lab. The focus of Dr Teeling's work is bats, primarily addressing the question of how bats developed their unique adaptations of flight and echo-location.



Demonstration by Mr. John Daly during Science Week

Careers & Counselling



The current 6th years are seriously researching their CAO options and in particular their order of preferences. Students are encouraged to use www.qualifax.ie and www.careersportal.ie to aid them with their course exploration. Each 6th year has received a CAO handbook and a talk from Ms McGee detailing the application process. A CAO information talk was also held for parents in early November where CAO and UCAS applications were explained. The majority of students will apply online at www.cao.ie. It is important to remind all 6th years that a reduced fee of €25 applies to all who make their application online before January 20th 2013. The regular fee of ?40 applies to applications made between January 20th and February 1st. If any student has a learning disability or a medical condition it is important to tick the appropriate box on page one of the CAO application and if a DARE/HEAR application is appropriate then apply as soon as possible. Students with exemptions must also take necessary action to notify the relevant HEIs of their exemption and to submit any supporting documentation the HEIs require. Please refer to the relevant individual HEI websites for further information.

Furthermore, it is necessary for students applying for entry to medicine in 2013 to register for CAO to receive their CAO number so that they then can register for HPAT-Ireland. HPAT-Ireland registration will close on January 20th 2013 with the actual test taking place in various centres on March 2nd 2013. 6th year students have been taking part in a HPAT preparation course on Saturday mornings in the school and have had the option of sitting a practice test. RCSI are holding an open day on January 3rd 2013; any student wishing to attend must register online.

A number of 6th years have completed their UCAS applications for the universities of Oxford and Cambridge. Some have already attended for interview while others are making currently preparations. Any other 6th year who is considering making a UCAS application should indicate this to Ms McGee as soon as possible as January 15th 2013 is the deadline.

6th year students will have the opportunity to partake in Career Interviews/Coaching which will be held in the College on Wednesday 30th January 2013 at 7.00 p.m. These interviews will be conducted by professionals (many past students), in specific career areas chosen by you, the students. In addition to facilitating individual interviews, these professionals will also give feedback to students immediately after the interview. Students are encouraged to participate in the interview programme as it has proved in previous years to be a very valuable experience.

Since September a number of professors and lecturers from UCD, TCD and DIT visited the school and gave talks to the 6th years regarding courses offered in their third level institutions. Students have also attended the Higher Options as well as other open days at UCD, TCD, DCU, NUIM, DIT and IADT.

Fifth year students have now settled well into their studies after their creative involvement in the transition year programme. Fifth year student Conn McCarrick was selected to represent Blackrock at the Model Parliament hosted by the Department of Law at NUI Maynooth. The event is a simulated sitting of the Dáil and is chaired by An Ceann Comhairle, Sean Barrett T.D. The subject of debate this year was the Children's Rights Bill. Over 60 school students from all around Ireland took part in the event. It was a great experience and I have no doubt that we may see Conn doing similar work in Dáil Éireann in the future!

Fourth year students have received the results of their EIRQUEST and Cambridge profiles. Third and second year students are engaging well with their academic subjects as well as partaking in a range of extra-curricular activities.

Regular counselling continues for all students from second to sixth year and preparations for the school's second Bullying Awareness Day in January are well under way.

Sport



The first term of the 2012/13 academic year was a very good one for the 'Rock Basketball Teams who continue to build upon recent success. The U16s and U19s defeated Newpark by 26 – 5 and 35 – 32 respectively. The U16 'Cadet' squad had an excellent victory over St. Killian's (32 – 16) , the Senior Basketball Squad produced a magnificent performance to qualify for the East Leinster Semi-Final with a home win to Pobalscoil Setanta with David Lynch (6th year) scoring 26 points. This was followed up with a hard fought and dramatic Semi Final victory in the Des Places Hall to Kings Hospital 48-50. Unfortunately the squad missed out in the East Leinster Final to very impressive opposition. They do however qualify for the All Ireland

competition which will take place in the New Year.

The College 2nd Year House 7's was a huge success. McQuaid House were the winners, defeating Duff in a close final. De Valera and Leman were the beaten semi-finalists. Shanahan defeated Ebenrecht in the 5th v. 6th place play-off. In the 'B' competition Duff beat Leman with



Dylan Murphy (6th Year) in Semi-final of East Leinster Basketball Competition

DeValera and McQuaid semi-finalists. Ebenrecht were victorious over Shanahan in the 5th/6th place play-off.

Jonathon Mion captained the JCT on their trip to Sedbergh School in Cumbria, England. In an excellent encounter the JCT performed with organisation and determination to record a comfortable victory. The Colts Rugby Squad look forward to their first final this year as they take on Newbridge College after Christmas in the TY League Final, following victories over Terenure College and Castleknock College.

Senior Soccer continued their run with a 4-1 victory over Maynooth. This impressive performance made up for their narrow defeat to St Benildus in the previous match in the Dublin Metropolitan League. In their last Metropolitan League match before Christmas and playing on an unfamiliar Astro Turf Pitch, Sam Walsh (6th Year) and his Squad were defeated by an excellent St. Colmcille's, Knocklyon, but now look forward to their Quarter-Final of the Leinster Senior Cup in the New Year.

A total of 104 Transition Year students participated in this year's annual 24-hour soccer marathon. The boys managed to raise just under ?15,000 raised for the St.Vincent de Paul Appeal.

The Transition Year Junior Gaelic Footballers enjoyed an

impressive 6-point win in a hard-fought contest against St. Mark's Community School. Captain Mark McCallion led from the front and scored their vital points. This was followed by a victory over Firhouse C.S which confirmed them as winners of their group, qualifying for the next round in the New Year.



Winners of TY Soccer Marathon in aid of St. Vincent de Paul

On Wednesday 14th November 2012 Blackrock College hosted the annual East Leinster Cross Country Invitational. More than 15 schools participated with over 550 athletes competing on the day. Blackrock took full use of the home advantage by winning three out of the four races they competed in. Outstanding performances by Luke McCann (3rd Year) on the Inter Team, who finished 3rd, and Andrew Cullen (6th Year) on the Senior Team, who finished 2nd, helped to bring home all four event titles on the day.

Other congratulations go to Neil Gorey (6th Year) on his selection as a member of Dublin South Colleges Team for the Leinster Senior Hurling A League; Harry (5th Year) and Ben (Transition Year) Lawlor who were members of the Leinster Schools U19 Water Polo Team that won the Interprovincial Series held in Trinity; Nicholas Timoney, Oliver Jager, David O'Connor (All 5th Year) and SCT Captain Charlie Rock (Sixth Year) for their inclusion in the Ireland Schools' Rugby Squad.



Jack Power supported by Sea'n Coughlan against Rockwell

Photos courtesy Rock Photography
www.rockphotography.ie