

Blackrock College Newsletter



Special points of interest:

- Debating
- Science Department
- Pastoral Care
- Business News
- The Boarding School
- Careers & Counselling
- Student Council

Inside this issue:

Second Year	2
Third Year	2
Transition Year	3/4
Fifth Year	4
Sixth Year	5/6
Sport	8



"Anois teacht an Earraigh
Beidh an lá 'dul chun síneadh....."

February 2013

Dear Parents

In his book, '**Overcoming Life's Disappointments**' Rabbi *Harold S. Kushner* wrote about a man whose wife suffered from Alzheimer's disease. Every day, her dementia worsened, but he would visit and spend time with her. He was asked by his friends – "how and why do you keep going when she does not even know who you are"? His reply: "Because I know who I am".

Lent provides us with an opportunity to consider who we are. It is an invitation to disturb our routines, to challenge ourselves to live differently, to appreciate what is of value in our lives and prioritise that. Lent is, of course, a time for courage when we strive to do what is right for the right reason. It provides an opportunity to connect with our spirit, to develop a deeper awareness of self and at the same time to reach out to others. His sacrifice on the Cross should inspire in us acts of compassion, generosity, forgiveness and justice.

Opportunities to live our faith abound at Blackrock. I think of our Transition Year boys who work with the homeless; Ms Nulty and the group of 9 boys who recently visited Kolkata in India, our Post-Leaving Certificate immersion trip to Sultan Hamud, the 5th Year Fast for Spirasi, the 3rd Year Days of Reflection, our Bullying Awareness Day and the Leman Concert with its 'Reach Out to Africa' theme.

But Lent is more than this; it is a call to recognise God's presence in our everyday moments, at Parent-Teacher meetings, in the classroom, within our sports and arts activities, at the Past vs Present debate, Mock Interviews or Career Talks, at our Whole School Assembly. It is also a time for contemplation – we need a balance of being and doing.

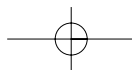
In his inaugural address last month, **President Obama** said that "*While the Truths of society are self-evident, they have never been self executing. They must be secured by His people here on earth*". We encourage your sons, our boys to secure a place for God's love in their lives, to discover what God has called them to do so they may discover who they are.

Blackrock is an extraordinary place – we are most fortunate to have a passionate team of Teachers, Administrators, Parents, Students and Spiritans who put before the boys experiences and opportunities that act as an antidote to the weary cynicism evident around us. May I thank you all for the here and now practices at Blackrock which show the way with humanity and faith.

Enjoy the mid-term break.

Yours sincerely

ALAN MacGINTY
Principal



Second Year



Application Cards

The Second Year boys of 2013 are continuing their good work from the First Term. The Application Cards, which they bring home to you on a weekly basis, testify to this, with usually half of the cards on the Principal's List each week. The Principal's List rewards the student whose card achieves seven or more grade 1's for the week. This encourages good practice in the year group and is a great opportunity for parents to acknowledge this with their son each Monday. Repeated good cards also bring the opportunity to be nominated for an Honours Award at our Annual Prize Giving Ceremony in May.

House Competitions

The House Competitions continued with both the Chess and the Table Tennis gradually progressing. The House Captains will be arranging the House Art Competition just after mid-term followed by the House Cross Country competition.

Leman Concert

The Leman Concert was without doubt one of the most impressive and successful productions put on by the students and staff to date. Congratulations to the Second Year boys in the Leman Choir and the College Orchestra who contributed to such a memorable event.

Activities

This half term we commemorated the Feast of the Venerable Francis Libermann, Co-founder of the Holy Ghost Congregation. The day contributed to our reflections for Catholic Schools Week, which itself included a Treasure Hunt, a Video Reflection from the Papal Nuncio, and ended on Friday with Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament attended by each year group. As part of our Bullying Awareness Day, the boys heard an excellent talk from representatives of 'Facebook', who guided them on ways to protect their profile from unwanted attention. Second Year was particularly complimented by the speakers for the quality of their questions. The College also had its second Whole School Assembly for the start of the Cup Campaign, with invited guest Jordi Murphy inspiring the boys to support this year's teams.

Parents' Seminars

Just a reminder that there are two dates in the College Calendar for seminars for Second Year parents. On Wednesday 27th February, Owen Connolly will give a talk for FATHERS ONLY, entitled *On the Shoulders of Giants*. Then on 6th March the Second Year Parents' Committee will arrange a talk for all parents on *Cyber Bullying*. Each will take place in the College Lecture Hall, beginning at 7.30 pm on their respective dates.

Third Year



Day of Reflection

Awareness of the present moment, the uniqueness of everyone and how asking for something can be one of the most powerful actions that we can perform were key components of the Day of Reflection at the Disciples of the Divine Master, Newtownpark Avenue. Other feedback from the boys included "it was a great enlightening experience", "I personally enjoyed the way in which Gerry used music to express his feelings", "he talked about his life as a teenager, his mistakes and he proceeded to talk about his encounters with religion and spirituality" and "I thought it was a well run day with the perfect mix of religion and a bit of fun" The clear consensus was that it was an enjoyable, informative and very worthwhile day. To the facilitator Mr. Gerry Keegan, Director of the Pastoral programme Mr Myles Ryan and Third Year Counsellor Mr Gary Sullivan we offer a sincere word of thanks.

Extra Curricular Activities

In the Leinster Schools Swimming Championship Third Year boys had a great day where Matthew Long, Sean Hassett and Christian McKenna all came home with medals. Having won the East Leinsters Cross Country Mark Gordon, Luke McCann, Brian McGlone, Christian McKenna, Conon Murnane, Declan Norton and Cian Ryan are due to compete in the Leinsters as we go to print. In Rugby the leagues for the J3, J4, & J5 are up and running with 8 matches having already been played. The opening rounds of the Table Tennis have been negotiated successfully and the Basketball team have commenced competition. Tennis players should liaise with Ms Dillon on their return from mid-term to ensure that they are in the mix for selection on teams. It was wonderful to see seven of the year group form part of the Orchestra in the most enjoyable Leman Concert at the National Concert Hall, namely Denis Bolger-Aboud, Patrick Kavanagh, Ross O'Toole, Elan Richardson-Omamo, Ross O'Reilly, Cal Roughan and Pengbo Wu. A piece on Debating is included later in the Newsletter.

Bullying Awareness Day

We had very positive feedback following the talk on Facebook which was at the centre of the Bullying Awareness Day. Great caution was urged when it comes to who one shares with. There was an appeal to the boys to avail of the report links if something that does not make them feel good about themselves appears on another person's page and to be specific when reporting. They should also let people know how they feel about same and ask them to remove it. Passwords should never be shown to others and different passwords should be used for e-mail etc.

Junior Certificate

We strongly recommend at least three hours revision in addition to homework should be standard practice at weekends. Each boy will be given a form to be completed by his subject teachers with their recommendations on the level he should sit the subject at. On completion the boys should take the form home, have it signed by a parent and returned to the Dean by the end of February. In addition a pre printed Giro Form for payment of the examination fee is expected shortly from the State Examination Commission. The boys will be asked to take this home, following payment please ask your son to return to the Dean.

Parents' Annual Dinner

Date: Friday 1st March

Venue: Killiney Golf Club, Avondale Road, Killiney

Cost: €35 per head

Forms are available from the Dean or at Reception

Transition Year



TRIP TO INDIA WITH GOAL

On 12th January, nine Transition Year students travelled to Kolkata (with Maeve Seery from GOAL and Ms Nulty) where they visited numerous and varied GOAL projects. These ranged from brick kilns, to schools for street children, two gigantic dumps, sanitation projects and an orthopaedic hospital for children suffering from club foot and other disorders. To say the trip was an emotional roller-coaster is an understatement. We saw poverty in its rawest and most moving form in the many people and children we met. The children's delight in our simple gifts of lollipops, balloons and crayons was heart-rending; their wonderful smiles and openness to us truly humbling.

Our trip to the brick kilns transported us back in time to a pre-industrialised world where hard, back-breaking labour is the norm; where life expectancy is short and

people age prematurely due to deprivation and hardship. Most moving of all, were our visits to Howrah and Kolkata dumps where we witnessed virtual mountain ranges of refuse, emitting clouds of methane gas, where people (including very young children) perilously scavenged for recyclable waste. These were not places for the faint-hearted. And, while we tried to block out the stench, the flies, the filth, we delighted in the welcome we were given by the children. The visit to Howrah Dump culminated in one of the most surreal rugby matches we had ever witnessed. On a virtual dirt track, two teams were assembled and, for about thirty minutes, the children, encouraged by our wonderful Transition Year boys, were able to forget momentarily the hardship of their lives. The week ended with a visit to Mother Teresa's convent for 6.00 a.m. mass after which we saw volunteers, fuelled by a simple breakfast of two slices of dry bread and a cup of tea, head off with the Sisters to care for the poor of Kolkata.



Transition Year Contd.



The brick kilns, Kolkata

We are all deeply moved by what we saw and experienced. Upon returning to Dublin, the students compiled a wonderful slideshow and video of their trip which we plan to show to the whole school. Our hope is that all of the students in Blackrock College will get behind us in our forthcoming St. Patrick's Day badge campaign. We know that the need in Kolkata is great; we saw the work of GOAL India at first hand and we want to help!

GOAL/AIDLINK ST.PATRICK'S DAY BADGE PROJECT

The largest school fundraiser in the country has just got underway. Last year, the project raised a considerable amount of money for the Developing World. This year, approximately 170 students are involved. They will visit national schools and secondary schools, approach businesses for support and distribute over 200,000 badges nationwide. We hope to link the launch of the badge campaign in late February/early March to a world record attempt to create a gigantic human shamrock. By doing so, we hope to raise the profile of the campaign and get lots of publicity.

FAMILY MASS

The Transition Year Family Mass on 3rd February was very well attended. The chief celebrant, Father Damian McNeice, spoke about Love as a "doing" word and the essence of the Gospel message. He spoke of Transition Year as one of "heart-stretching experiences" and was struck by the passion of the students who had returned recently from India. He reminded us of the power of Love to create a caring system around us and urged us "to always choose to love." The beautiful readings, wonderful music, singing and superb Communion Reflection all contributed to making this a most special Mass. I would especially like to thank Mr Myles Ryan for the great care, time, thoughtfulness and commitment he put into preparing the boys who participated extensively in the liturgy.

Y.S.I.

2013 has got off to a flying start for the Transition Year Young Social Innovators' project *Ending Homelessness on Our Streets*. Having researched homelessness last term and interviewed volunteers from *Threshold* and *Focus Ireland* for their BCR programme, the boys have turned their attention to relief work on the streets. They have set up a soup run every Friday night in conjunction with the Divine Mercy volunteers in Teach Mhuire (Gardiner Street). Four boys from the YSI team head for the city centre with their teacher each Friday to distribute, hot soup, sandwiches, tea, coffee and other provisions to homeless men and women. The January weather has not always been kind, but the boys have more than made up for this with their enthusiasm, energy and generosity of spirit. The experience has been both eye-opening and hugely rewarding as it has focused us on the harsh reality of life on the streets but also the inspirational fortitude of so many who find themselves in these circumstances. We look forward to the next chapter in this project.

TRANSITION YEAR PARENTS' SOCIAL

The Transition Year Parents' Social on 1st February was a most enjoyable occasion. It is the only Parents' Dinner which is held in the College and thus holds a very special place in people's hearts. The dining area was beautifully decorated and there was a fantastic atmosphere throughout the evening. Many thanks to the parents whose generous donations to a raffle resulted in over €1,710 being raised for two very worthwhile projects: the 6th Year *Machakos* project and the YSI project on homelessness. Special congratulations are due to The Transition Year Parents' Committee who put so much work into organising a truly great night out. Many thanks also to the catering staff who produced a magnificent meal.

WILLOW PARK SHOW

In the past month a dedicated group of Transition Year students have put their hearts and souls into set and costume design for the Willow Park show *Honk! Jr* (the Ugly Duckling story put to some really great music). Fifteen students have devoted countless hours to designing, building and painting a most artistic set. Tom McNamara, Andrew Gardiner, Tom May, Hugh Mohan, Jack Nagle, Gavin Coll, Ronan Doherty have done trojan work on both the set design and sound engineering. The choral assistant is Richard Grainger whilst Ben Duffy and Michael Golden are stage managers. Many thanks to Mary Rose Stauder from Willow Park for giving the boys such a marvellous opportunity to develop their creative talents. They have done a wonderful job! Well done to all involved.

DRAGONS' DEN COMPETITION

This exciting initiative is now in its 5th year and students are busy developing their business ideas. To help with idea generation and development, they have attended two workshops. The first workshop was held at the end of first term where they were addressed by Mr Joseph Keating of DLRD County Enterprise Board and three previous winners of the competition, Eoin Healy (2009), Karl Whyte (2011) and Ross O'Leary (2012). More recently a second workshop was held with four of the Dragons. Many thanks to Mr Paul McGowan, Mr Louis Hoffman, Mr Greg Moore and Mr Jonathan Stanley for providing this valuable mentoring opportunity. We wish the boys the very best of luck as they prepare their business plans and presentations for the preliminary round and Final which will be held in early March.

TRANSITION YEAR LECTURE SERIES

On 6 February Anne Cleary from *Aidlink* spoke to the boys about the very important work done by *Aidlink* in The Developing World. It is hoped that this lecture will motivate the students to work really hard on the forthcoming St Patrick's Day badge project. The lecture series will continue after mid-term with a talk from Father Peter McVerry.

COMPUTER PROGRAMMING COURSE

The School of Computer Science and Statistics (SCSS) in Trinity College is running a computer programming course this term for a group of twenty Transition Year students. Dr Mike Brady from SCSS is teaching the course and the boys are really enjoying this new Transition Year venture. I am indebted to Dr Brady and Ms Catherine O'Connor from Trinity College for offering our students this unique opportunity to learn about computer programming.

FAITH FRIENDS

About twenty four students are involved in the *Faith Friends* programme and have been working hard with the students from Willow Park who are preparing for their Confirmation this month. We are very impressed by the students' commitment to the programme and their enthusiastic engagement with the Confirmation students.



*Roghan McMahon with parents Garry and Janet and brother Liam at the 4th Yr family Mass
www.rockphotography.ie*

TRIP TO YOUNG SCIENTIST EXHIBITION

On Friday 11th January Transition Year students visited the Young Scientist Exhibition in the R.D.S. As in the past, the boys thoroughly enjoyed the experience of visiting this extraordinary showcase of scientific and creative achievement. Congratulations to Christopher Collins and William Britton whose project "A study into how Echinoderms (Sea Urchins) help the survival of marine life" was **Highly Commended**. We are delighted with the students' achievement.

EVENING COURSES

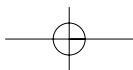
There has been a very disappointing response from students to the evening courses on offer this term. It is strongly advised that all students should do at least one evening course per term. Many students are not availing of this opportunity.

WORK EXPERIENCE 15th – 19th April 2013

Just a reminder that, as the Easter examinations will commence on **14th March 2013**, the latest date for students to submit their Work Experience placement details to Mr Sullivan is **Thursday 28th February 2013**. This is to facilitate the large administrative workload that this project requires. Mr Sullivan would be grateful therefore if you could complete the form posted to you at Christmas and return it to him as soon as possible.

OTHER NEWS

Congratulations are due to The Colts rugby team, captained by Aaron Cassidy, on their resounding victory in the League Final on 16th January. This is the first time that Blackrock College has won this League, inaugurated in 2006. In an excellent Final, played in heavy conditions, the tenacity and skill of the Colts resulted in a victory over a very good Belvedere side. Willow Wheelers will be heading off to Ethiopia during the mid-term break under the indefatigable leadership of Christy McDaid. Quite a large number of Transition Year students are involved in this very special trip. We wish them all the very best of luck.



Fifth Year



Careers

Ms McGee and Ms Gallagher of the Career Department along with Eunan O'Carroll of the Past Pupils Union, organised career seminars over two Saturdays in January. Over 160 students availed of this fantastic opportunity to hear speakers share their experiences and insights into the worlds of Agriculture, Law, Engineering, Medicine, Accounting, Marketing, Media, and Entrepreneurship. Fifth Year students have been asked to submit a career portfolio to Mr. O'Nuallain before mid-term. This is seen as a most valuable exercise in planning and goal setting as the Easter exams draw nearer.

Bullying Awareness Day

Bullying Awareness Day took place on the 28th January. Fifth Years attended a lecture given by Patricia Cartes of Facebook about cyber bullying and safety online. Electric October played in a lunchtime concert to raise awareness about the new "Rock Tackling Bullying" campaign. Wristbands were given out with the email address "tacklingbullying@blackrockcollege.com" written on them. This support email system is active and ready to help students. Our Webwise Youth Panelists Matthew O'Driscoll and Simon Curran will be participating in an event to launch Safer Internet Day 2013. The "Up2Us" campaign aims to stamp out cyber bullying. For more information and advice look at watchyourspace.ie

Extra Curricular

On Sunday 20th January, the talents of over fifty students from the year group were displayed at the Leman Concert in the National Concert Hall. There was a particularly strong presence in Fifth Year this year, with large numbers in both the Leman and Libermann choirs, and of course the orchestra. Splendid performances by Fifth Year piano soloists Kieran Brennan and Andrew McCarthy, and bands Electric October and Watermelons in the Rain. Congratulations to all for their involvement! I thank all the choir members, musicians and stage hands for their contribution.

The involvement of Fifth Year students extends to the sports field where Zach O'Hagan, Jack Power, Tristan Brady, Dillon Coghlan, Sean Kearns, Nick Timoney, David O'Connor, Jack Dwan, Jeremy Loughman, Dane Fitzpatrick, Cian O'Dwyer and Evan Holland were part of the SCT squad who defeated Gonzaga on Sunday February 3rd. The House 2nds had a disappointing loss to Wallace but showed potential for the league campaign and we wish them well in that. While the House 3rds started their league with a very tight loss away to Clongowes they still have hope of progressing. We wish all the 5th year teams the best of luck in their respective campaigns during Cup Season.

The soccer team are training hard in preparation for the Millennium Cup that will be up and running after the midterm break. The introduction of 4th years to the panel has been a great asset to the team and they hope to do well under the watchful eye of Mr. Woods. There is also a trip to Manchester before Easter where the team will be playing against St. Bede's before visiting the Etihad stadium to see Manchester City play Wigan.

Since the East-Leinster Final loss before Christmas our senior basketball team have put in a massive effort in training. All was not lost after this defeat: - by reaching this stage they qualified for the All-Ireland Playoffs. The increase in the intensity of the training has been matched only by the effort of the boys. They have shown great maturity in the aftermath of defeat and this shows the character of the team. They

have had two warm-up games. Against St. Columbas, in Des Places Sports Hall the team put in their performance of the season with a 57-21 victory. Séafra O'Faoláin, Cormac Fenton, Mark Twomey and Tom Ennis all put in excellent performances. They also travelled to Wexford to play St. Peter's College who had won their regional final. It was a narrow 38-30 loss, however the boys can be very happy with this performance and look to the All-Irelands with a genuine sense of confidence and belief that they can compete against the best and win.

On Thursday 24th January, the cross country teams participated in the East Leinster Championships in Avondale, Co. Wicklow. The senior team includes Fifth Years James Grogan, Jonathan Hunter and Sean McCann. We wish them well in the upcoming Leinster Championship.

The College rowing team has had an incredibly productive year with great success so far this season. The team headed out to Blessington earlier in the year and are preparing for competitions to come, such as the inter-schools competition over Easter.

Fifth Year students Darragh Larkin and Liam Quigley represented Blackrock in the Irish History Teachers Association inter-schools quiz. With the help of 6th years Fred Garvey and Patrick Lavelle, the team were very successful, coming 2nd of 17 schools.

In debating, congratulations to Kevin Heavey, Niall O'Sullivan and Conn McCarrick for their participation in the Leinster Schools Debating Competition. Kevin Heavey and Niall O'Sullivan as a team have made the quarter finals and Conn McCarrick has his next round coming up. We wish them all the best of luck.

Irish Debating continues on Friday Lunch time at 12.40. Topics/motions currently being discussed are "Ta todhchaí geal ag an teanga Ghaeilge!" An interschool competition with other local schools in the area is being organised. All debaters are welcome - please contact Mr O' Donovan for further details.

Spirasi Fast

A number of fifth year students signed up to participate in a day long fast, held on 7th and 8th Feb. This event is organised by the House Representatives and is in aid of SPIRASI, The Spiritan Asylum Services Initiative. SPIRASI is a humanitarian, intercultural, non-governmental organisation that works with asylum seekers, refugees and other disadvantaged migrant groups, with special concern for survivors of torture. In partnership with others, SPIRASI enables access to specialist services to promote the well-being of the human person, and encourages self-reliance and integration into Ireland.

On Sunday 10 March the 5th Year Family Mass will be celebrated in the College Chapel at 11.00 am. It is hoped that as many parents and sons as possible will be in attendance where the proceeds of fast will be presented to the representatives from SPIRASI.



Sixth Year



Parent-Teacher Meeting

There was a very large attendance at the 6th Year Parent-Teacher Meeting on Thursday January 10th. The feedback from this evening was extremely positive and all present felt it was most beneficial to have this meeting immediately on our return to school when feedback from Christmas examinations could be shared and plans of work for terms 2 and 3 outlined.

Career Interviews

58 sixth year students availed of the Career Mock interviews opportunity organised by the Careers Department in association with the Past Pupils Union on Wednesday 30th January. Formal interviews by experienced professionals took place across 18 different careers including Law, Marketing, Politics, Game Development, Nursing, Medicine, Engineering and Physiotherapy. Many thanks in particular to Mrs. Lucy Gallagher, Ms. Carleen McGee and Justin Lennon (Class of 1987) for their organisation of the evening.

Leman Concert

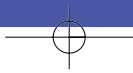
The 26th Leman festival Concert was held on Sunday January 22nd in the National Concert Hall. 44 of the Class of 2013 were involved in this wonderful

celebration of musical talent in the College. The standard of performance on the night was outstanding and congratulations to all involved. In particular, it is worth noting the contribution of MCs Michael McDermott and Matthew Sharpe; Stage Manager Cormac Dunne; Soloists Cian Godfrey, Ryan Conlan and Simon Leonard; Leader of the Orchestra, Tin Crowley; Rockapella and the 6th Year Bands.

Lectures

On January 22nd, the 6th Year students attended a lecture by Peter and Barbara, guest speakers from Alcoholics Anonymous. This talk based on the context that one in eleven school pupils are living with an active alcoholic today provided plenty of food for thought. Many thanks to Mr. Barrett for his organisation of this event.

On January 28th, as part of Bullying Awareness Day, Ms. Patricia Cartes, Facebook European Safety Director, spoke to the students about using Facebook accounts safely and responsibly. The day was also marked by the distribution of anti-bullying wristbands and by a Suit & Blazer day hosted by the Class of 2013. Many thanks to Ms. McGee, Adam and Zain Bari and the House Representatives



Sixth Year Contd.



for making this a most innovative day in the 6th Year calendar.

Extra Curricular Programme

A very high level of participation by sixth year students has been seen in a wide variety of College activities this half-term...

Firstly we congratulate Charlie Rock and the rest of the SCT squad who defeated Gonzaga College in Donnybrook on Sunday 3rd February. We look forward to a quarter final meeting after mid-term. We congratulate also the Cheerleading Team under the leadership of Ryan Conlan, Ray Crotty, Shane Kelly, Dylan O'Reilly and Michael McDermott for the excellent Whole School Assembly on January 29th and their wonderful support of the SCT in Donnybrook. We wish the cheerleaders well for the rest of the SCT and the JCT campaign.

As the rugby season continues after mid-term we also wish success to the four Castle Rugby teams competing in Leinster Branch Rugby Leagues. It is great to see so many 6th Year students enjoying their final weeks of involvement in competitive rugby at schools level.

On the same day as our SCT game, our Senior Basketball Team was involved in the All-Ireland Schools Play Offs in Avondale in Wicklow. While ultimately St. Munchin's of Limerick emerged as winners of their group, we congratulate all sixth years students involved with the squad on a wonderful season.

Andrew Cullen, Vinfig Leavy and Philip Laurence were members of the Senior Cross-Country team that were crowned East-Leinster Champions at Avondale in Wicklow on January 24th. We wish them well in the Leinster Championships.

Vinfig Leavy was also a member of the College Senior Relay Team that won bronze medals in both the freestyle and medley relays at the Leinster Swimming Championships.

David Kelly, Hugh McGuinness and Patrick Lavelle were members of the College Team in the annual Past versus Present Debate on Tuesday 22nd January. Unfortunately despite their best efforts in defending the motion that 'This

House believes that the older generation were recklessly greedy and impoverished the youth of Ireland', they had to concede defeat on the night.

Our Maths team of David Kelly, Conor McCabe, Andrew Whelan and Shane Kelly recovered from an unfortunate start to finish 3rd after a sudden death final round in the Annual School's Senior Maths Quiz. Many thanks to Mr. McKimm for facilitating this opportunity.

Patrick Lavelle and Fred Garvey were members of the College's Senior History team that came 2nd in the History Teacher's Association of Ireland quiz in Sandford Park on Monday 21st January. Many thanks to Ms. Harlowe for arranging our participation in this event.

Finally

The 6th Year Parents' Committee and House Representatives' work on behalf of the Class of 2013 is ongoing with sub-committees planning all aspects of both the Graduation in May and the Summer Project in Kenya next July. We wish them continued success with their planning.

REMINDER: The 6th year parents committee will be hosting a Graduation Lunch for the parents and boys on May 19th 2013 at 3.00pm in the Pavilion, Leopardstown. Tickets: €55 each. Details to follow in the Easter newsletter.



Sixth Years in Suits (or blazers) for Anti Bullying Day

Debating



The **Junior Debaters** have been very active in and out of the College again this term. Weekly meetings are often lively, heated and very entertaining. On the competition front, Stephen Rooney (3rd year) and Mark Heavey (2nd year) recently represented the College in Castleknock Community College's Junior Mace supported by Joshua Kieran-Glennon, Transition year student adjudicator. Mark then paired up with Tadhg Fergus (3rd Year) to take part in a gruelling day of Mace debating in St. Conleth's College. David Fenn and Conor Cowhey (both 3rd year) were excited to meet, once more, their growing adversaries in the latest round of UCD's Junior Schools' Debating Competition, opposing with vigour the controversial motion that "this house would require parents to obtain a parenting licence prior to having children." We wish all students well in the upcoming competitions and look forward to preparing

for what promises to be an exhilarating Gold Medal debate in the third term.

The motion for the **Past vs Present Debate** held on 22nd January was *This House considers that the reckless greed of the older generation has impoverished the youth of this country.* Joshua Kieran-Glennon was the only Transition Year student on the school team and, after a rigorously contested debate, Joshua was voted Best Speaker. This was quite an achievement, especially since he was debating against seasoned public speakers such as Barry Andrews and Rossa Fanning.

Science Department



William Britton & Christopher Collins' project entitled 'A study into how echinoderms (sea urchins) help the survival of marine life', was highly commended at this year's Young Scientist Competition.

On Friday 11th January all the students in Second Year and Transition Year visited the Young Scientist Exhibition accompanied by their Deans and teachers. It was an excellent opportunity for them to view all the projects.

On Monday 4th February, 5th & 6th Year Agricultural Science students visited the UCD Lyons Estate where they gained more practical experience of their subject in action.

We were all delighted in the Science Department to hear the great news that Joseph

O'Sullivan came first in Ireland in last year's Leaving Certificate Chemistry exam. That makes an amazing two firsts in a row, as our past student Conor Waldron came first in Chemistry in the 2011 Leaving Certificate exam. Brilliant achievements all round!

Congratulations to Joseph & Conor and of course to their illustrious teachers, Ms Sinead Nolan and Mr John Daly.



Pastoral Care Programme



The month of January brought many blessings.

3rd Year Retreats ran over three days of the first week of our return after the Christmas Holidays. Two Houses attended on each of the days. The House Reps. always play a crucial role in the running of these days. The spirit they bring is an encouragement to the rest of the Year to take advantage of the opportunity offered in whole-hearted participation. Mr. Gerry Keegan facilitated the Retreats. He looks forward each year to running these days and his experience in working with teens is of great benefit to our boys. One of the features with which he was most happy was the reverence the boys showed in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. Many thanks to the indefatigable Mr. Sean Dunne, Third Year Dean, and ever willing Mr. Garry Sullivan, 3rd Year Counsellor, for their input. We are indebted to the Sisters, Disciples of the Divine Master, who once again made available their facilities at the top of Newtownpark Avenue. For the information of those who haven't visited there, they have Daily Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and a well stocked shop with ideal gifts for First Holy Communion and Confirmation.

In the same week the 5th Transition Year group prepared for their Pastoral Placement which was scheduled for the 2 weeks beginning on Monday 14th Jan. This year's boys have received much favourable comment from the Centres where they serve the needs of people with a wide range of disabilities. The week of preparation offered to each class before their starting day is really very important. They get a clear understanding of the purpose behind their participation and the attitudes they need to bring in order to contribute and receive a positive experience. Once again this term's participants have done themselves and their College proud.

A major pastoral initiative of recent years is the Faith Friends programme run in 4th Year by Ms. Orla Walsh, Faith Development Officer with D.E.A. and Mr. Terry O'Reilly. Up to 30 of our boys visit the Confirmation lads in Willow Park, sharing exercises on such themes as Belonging, Believing and Becoming a Witness. It is very heartening to see the numbers who volunteer to participate each year. Unfortunately not all can be involved as the commitment spans a fair number of weeks and not all can ensure their availability over the period.

5th Year have focussed in Religion Classes on the work of Spirasi, the Spiritan Initiative for Asylum Seekers and Refugees. The 'Trading Game' brought an experiential dimension to the context of injustice in so many of the world's economic structures. The boys could not but be moved at the testimony of Ahmed Osman, himself a victim of torture, when he courageously spoke of his experience of oppression and torture. Sometimes it takes such a speaker to make real for us the widespread inhumanity in our world. On the last day of this half-term the boys have volunteered in impressive numbers to participate in a Sponsored Fast on behalf of Spirasi. We ask families and friends to support the boys who generously take on this challenge in support of an organisation which undertakes such direct assistance in rebuilding traumatised lives.

Catholic Schools Week provided an opportunity for some fun with a Treasure Hunt style Quiz that had hopeful students scurrying along corridors attempting to identify features so familiar that many of us fail to notice them or recognise their significance. "Who are the saints on the Tower sir?"

"Where is the Archangel Michael?" "Do you know when Fr. Cormac was ordained?" "Who are those guys on the wall in Our Lady's Corridor?"

And then on Friday we had opportunity to visit Fr. Ebenrecht's beautiful Chapel for some quiet moments during Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament.

Well done to the YSI group who have taken their project on Homelessness a step further by undertaking a soup run in collaboration with some Legionaries of Mary and Sr. Consilio. This experience offers an education far beyond whatever we might pick up from book research. Thank you Mr. Conry.

The Fourth Year Family Mass was celebrated on Sunday the 3rd February Sunday with Fr. Damian McNeice, M.C. to our Archbishop Martin, presiding. It was a most joyous occasion. Coming just a couple of days after St. Bridget's Day we pray that her Christian spirit of 'Féile agus Fáilte' may inform the young in our care.

Business News



Commerce and Economics Society

The Society plays a key role in promoting an interest in and an understanding of the world of business and economics. This year's committee under the enthusiastic guidance of Gavan Ho are planning a number of events and we wish Gavan and his committee the best of luck for the year ahead.

Committee

Auditor: Gavan Ho

Vice Auditor: David Harte

Secretary: Shane Kelly

Treasurer: Fred Garvey

Committee: Conor McCabe Conor Murray

The society held a successful lecture on Tuesday 29th Jan on business failures, reasons why failures occur and the options available to a struggling business. Mr Jim Stafford of Friel Stafford addressed the society about these issues and the talk was well received by an enthusiastic audience.



Commerce and Economics Society
2012-13

TY Mini Company Project

This project continues to catch the imagination of TY students by providing an opportunity to run their own business. Each group of students runs the shop for eight weeks thus gaining a valuable insight into the 'workings of a business' as well as hopefully making a profit and raising money for charity. The first group are already running a successful business with 'Cookie Friday', a particularly successful promotion.

Board of Directors

- **Managing Director** Craig Duffy Brandon Sharkey
- **Company Secretary** Colin Smyth Stefan Kelly
- **Marketing** Fiachra Bourke Robert Dempsey
- **Personnel** Gerard Dillon Aaron Cassidy Christian Delaney
- **Purchasing** Richard Heapes Hugo Kean Gavin Hartnett
- **Financial Controller** Ben Reynolds Shane Donnelly

Congratulations to this group on running a successful enterprise generating a substantial return for the shareholders as well as donating €375 to charity.

We wish the next group of business students, from Mr Fitzsimon's class, the best of luck with their business venture.



It was particularly encouraging to see the enterprise spirit continuing beyond TY with three fifth year students, Rian Doris, Cormac Stafford and Simon Curran qualifying for the regional finals of this new Dragons' Den competition. Rian's idea was *Community Forex Trading*, based on a website that provides a link between traders who have successful strategies and traders who are looking to purchase and/or learn these strategies. Simon's idea was a website, *MYStage*, which gives non-professional performers the opportunity to promote their talent to the world. Cormac's *First Choice Grinds* is a new, dynamic grinds service based around an online website offering a wide range of subjects/grinds to students. Simon and Cormac who had both competed in the Blackrock College TY Dragons' Den went on to reach the National Finals. Congratulations to all three for their enterprising achievements.



Cormac Stafford,
Dragons' Den finalist



The Boarding School



The Boarding School has had a very busy term in all aspects of school life as a boarder. It has been a very positive and enjoyable experience for all concerned and we are all looking forward to returning to our families for the midterm break.

The following activities are taking place throughout each week: TEFL class for foreign students, public speaking and debating, Wednesday evening Mass in the Oratory, Boarders' Choir, Boarders' Book Club, Boarders' Ensemble, and Boarders' Cookery Class for 5th and 6th years. Thanks to all the adults who help organise and oversee the continued success of these activities.

In addition to these weekly activities the boarders hosted Dr. Pat Duggan of Dublin GAA fame for an excellent talk on personal wellbeing. Also, we welcomed Mr Denis Hevey, who provided the boys with techniques of positivity and motivation towards succeeding.

The Boarders Liturgical Choir have put in a tremendous effort since the beginning of the year under the expert tutelage of Fr. O'Brolchain. Their performances at our weekly Sunday 10am Mass (to which everyone in the College are invited) and especially their performance at the Remembrance Mass in the College are to be highly commended.

2nd to 5th Year Boarders have attended study skills workshops with Mr Paul Dalton. The feedback from the boys was that they have had a very positive effect on their study methods.

As part of their weekend activities the boys have visited numerous museums throughout Dublin, attended the cinema and the bowling alley, walked Bray Head, taken shopping trips and an exhilarating trip to Funderland.

Since Christmas, in such a quick half term, the Boarders involvement in the Colleges activities was immense and quite prominent.

Jay Dolan represented us in this year's BT Young Scientist Exhibition in the RDS, his project entitled, "BOTTLING BULL BELCHES AND COLLECTING COW PATS". This project was well received by the judges and we look forward to seen the project developed further.

We congratulate Rolf Jager (2nd Year) on his fantastic victory in the recent West European Swimming Championships 200m Individual Medley alongside his excellent 3rd place finish in the 100m Freestyle. Well done Rolf and we look forward to watching your progress through the European Swimming ranks!!

Congratulations to Ian Leavy and Rolf Jager (Both 2nd Year), who won the Leinster Medley and Front Crawl Relays in January. Congratulations also to Matthew Long (3rd Year) who won the Intermediate Medley Relay in the same competition. Alongside this victory he also won the 200m Individual Medley. Vinóg Leavy (6th Year) came 3rd in the Senior Medley Relay and the Senior Freestyle Relay. Well done to Vinóg and the Senior Team.

The highlight of this half term has to be the Leman Concert, Tim Crowley led the orchestra, followed by playing a piece with Robert Murphy. Well done to both on an excellent performance. Michael McDermott was MC, his humorous and professional approach to the job was noted by many.



Members of the Boarders' Choir at the Leman Concert
www.rockphotography.ie

The Boarders' Choir once again performed for the audience and provided two very good pieces for all to enjoy. Thanks to Mr. Michael Swan for his work with the Boarders' Choir and we look forward to the Summer Concert at the end of the year.

Thank you once again to all the Castle staff for their sterling work throughout the year thus far. We must take this opportunity to congratulate Katherine Cummins, her team and the boys in winning the Gold Award and Supreme Awards in the recent Irish Accommodation Services Institute (IASI) Awards.

Careers & Counselling



6th year students have now made their CAO applications which were submitted by February 1st. The message to all CAO applicants, even in these challenging economic times is still to apply for third level courses which are of interest to them. Consequently they will be more motivated to engage with these courses and find satisfaction and success.

A number of students also submitted UCAS applications by January 15th. Some of students have already received offers from the University of Oxford and Oxford Brookes University while other applicants are awaiting their final offers.

Furthermore, some 6th years are preparing to take the HPAT-Ireland test on March 2nd in various venues. These students have had the opportunity to participate in a HPAT preparation course that has been available in the school on Saturday mornings. They have also taken a number of practice tests and good progress has been made.

Fifteen 6th years have also signed up for An Introduction to Scratch Programming workshop which is taking place in Trinity College on Wednesday 6th of February. The workshop gives 6th year students who are interested in doing Computer Science at third level but who have little or no actual programming experience an opportunity to see what a course of this nature may involve.

Open days have commenced for Post Leaving Certificate courses and a number of students have begun submitting applications for these courses. There are an ever increasing number of PLC courses, Level 5 and Level 6 FETAC on offer at present. Exciting opportunities are available to students when they complete these courses. They have the opportunity to progress to Level 7 and Level 8 on the National Qualifications Framework after the completion of a PLC course. This progression can take place from one college to another or to a university. If a student receives a Level 5/6 FETAC award he can use the result in place of his Leaving Cert results the following year when making his CAO application. It is very important for all students to understand this progression and its implications. Further information is available from the career counsellors in the college and on the careers noticeboard.

Saturday morning Career Talks took place throughout January for 5th and 6th years.

Eight different career disciplines and their numerous career paths were presented by past students and associated professionals. The career disciplines included Engineering, Accounting/Marketing, Law, Computing, Agricultural Science, Medicine, Communications/Media and Entrepreneurship. The talks were well attended and they found them very informative and inspiring.

Career coaching interviews for 6th years took place on Wednesday 30th January. Those who participated in the programme submitted a CV and covering letter prior to the interview. Again this year a particular emphasis was placed on coaching the students. Consequently on the career evening, immediately following the formal interview each candidate was given useful feedback and coaching about his preparation for and performance at the interview. This proved to be a very valuable learning experience. Interviewers were very impressed by the students who participated.

Academic attainment and extracurricular involvement of all students is constantly monitored by the counsellors in each year and appropriate advice given. It is the hope at this stage in the year that all students are happy with their involvement in school life.

Bullying Awareness Day took place on Monday 28th January. Numerous events were arranged for this day including a talk delivered to all students by Ms Patricia Cartes, the European Safety Director for Facebook. Ms Cartes' talk was very informative and the students engaged well with it. It was also very apt as the issue of Cyber-Bullying has been very prevalent recently. Each individual student also received a Bullying Awareness wristband which features the school's new anti-bullying slogan 'Rock Tackling Bullying' as well as the new support email address that has been established in the school, tacklingbullying@blackrockcollege.com. Students may email this address confidentially if they are being bullied themselves or are aware of other bullying behaviour. Also, the updated Anti-Bullying Policy may be viewed online on www.blackrockcollege.ie. It is our hope in the college that everyone will help to tackle the issue of bullying.

Student Council



The Student Council has had a very productive half-term. The Council played a major role in the Bullying Awareness Day, promoting Student Leadership and strengthening the links between Students, Management, Parents and Staff in the College.

The Bullying Awareness Day, co-ordinated by Ms Carleen McGee ably assisted by the Student Council, proved to be a great success. A new Anti-Bullying Policy support email address: tacklingbullying@blackrockcollege.com and the Rock Tackling Bullying wristbands were all launched on the day, and have been fully endorsed by the Council. The Student Council has focused on the issues of Cyber-Bullying and Internet Safety this term and is grateful for the kind assistance and insight offered by Matthew O'Driscoll (5th Year).

The Council is currently examining proposals for the creation of a Student Identity Card in the College. Meetings have been held with the Board of Management and

local schools with a view to introducing a Student Card Scheme in the future. Ryan Conlan (Head Cheerleader) has been co-opted onto the Student Council for the duration of the Cup Campaign. We wish all those involved; players and supporters the best of luck with this year's Campaign!

Please contact your representative if you would an issue raised at the next meeting. All information about this term's activities can be seen on the newly installed Student Council Noticeboard opposite the Secretariat. Meetings take place every two weeks and the Council is very much open to suggestions from the entire Student Body throughout the year.

Rock Tackling Bullying:
tacklingbullying@blackrockcollege.com

Sport



Blackrock College Senior Basketball missed out after a fantastic U19 Leinster Cup run losing to Scoil Chaitríona just before Christmas. An outstanding performance from Captain David Lynch (6th Year) and his Senior Basketball Squad. Some consolation was taken from the fact that both finalists qualify for the All Ireland play-offs at Avondale School, Rathdrum. Heartbreak followed for the Junior Squad who lost to St Laurence's in the dying seconds of the South Dublin U16 League Semi-Final. Alejandro Lafuente and Stephen Kilcullen (2nd Year students) were both outstanding. Both teams have worked extremely hard and we are very proud of their achievements.



Jeremy Loughman touches down for 'Rock
www.rockphotography.ie



Nicholas Timoney fends off Gonzaga defence for SCT
www.rockphotography.ie

We commiserate with Senior Soccer Captain Sam Walsh (6th Year) and his squad who lost 2-1 to Athlone Community School in the Leinster Senior Cup Quarter Final. The season is far from over as we look forward to the Millennium Cup and the visit of S.Bede's Manchester, in March.

As usual, the Blackrock College Swim Team performed superbly at this year's Leinster Schools Championship. At Junior Level, Sean Desmond (2nd Year) won GOLD in 100m Freestyle and 100m Backstroke. The Relay Team of Sean Desmond, Rolf Jager, Ronan Mullen and Ian Leavy (all 2nd Year) won GOLD in both Freestyle and Medley Relays. In the Intermediate Category, Matthew Long (3rd Year) won BRONZE in 100m Freestyle and 200m Medley. The Relay Team of Matthew Long, Sean Hassett, Christian McKenna (all 3rd Year) and Sean Desmond (2nd Year) won GOLD in both Freestyle and Medley Relay. The Senior Relay Team of Vinóg Leavy (6th Year), Frank Vaughan, Paul O'Dea and Harry Lawlor (all 5th Year) won BRONZE in both relays.

The Blackrock College SCT kicked off their 2013 Cup campaign with a comprehensive 44-18 victory over Gonzaga in Donnybrook. An impressive display of skill and power was demonstrated by Charlie Rock's (6th Year) SCT, running in a total of 5 tries with a notably impressive kicking performance from Garry Ringrose (6th Year) with 8 successful kicks from 8. Try scorers included Zach O'Hagan, Jeremy Loughman (2) (both 5th Year) Charlie Rock and Tom Cooke (both 6th year). The SCT will now face Kilkenny College in the Quarter-Final at Donnybrook.

The College JCT got their cup campaign off to a good start on Tuesday 5th February with a convincing win over a gallant St. Patrick's of Navan. The next round takes place on the week commencing 25th February.



The Colts rugby team after their League Final win
Photo courtesy of Orna Cassidy

Blackrock College Colts won the Transition Year League Final for the first time since 2006 with a hard fought victory over Belvedere College. Captained by Aaron Cassidy (Transition Year), the talented Colts squad demonstrated commitment, tenacity and skill to run out 10-0 winners.