

Blackrock College Newsletter



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October 2011

Dear Parents

We were delighted to welcome to Blackrock the Papal Nuncio, his Excellency Archbishop Charles Brown earlier this month, to bless and dedicate, to Claude Poullart des Places (co-founder of the Spiritan Order), our new Sports Hall. He made a very positive impression upon the boys. Archbishop Brown's refreshingly vibrant presence and charisma certainly struck a chord with our boys both at the ceremony itself and also at the 6th Year coffee break afterwards.

October has also seen the launch by Pope Benedict VI of the '**Year of Faith**'. It is timely. We live in an era of scepticism and unbelief. Confidence has been eroded in what used to be described as the pillars of society – Government, Public Sector, Banking, Business and the Church. It is incumbent upon us as educators, as parents, as Christians, to encourage our youngsters to look beyond human frailties, beyond those whom we may feel have let us down and experience life inspired by the message of Jesus Christ. Faith in God is the source of personal well-being and from this springs an acceptance of self and confidence to contribute to society.

The frontline of contribution is, of course, in the home but it is backed up by the school. We urge the boys to invest time in the service of others. There are many opportunities for the boys to give service through the everyday happenings of school life be it playing on sports teams, membership of the choir, at debates or the MUN (Model United Nations), in the orchestra, at the swimming Gala, during Environment Awareness Week, on retreats, Gaisce hikes, at the Spiritan Youth Day, as part of the Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes; these are occasions to connect, to build community, build character. Encourage your son(s) to engage in the classroom and beyond, to be an influence for good. Advise him(them) to invest time in others, to actively encourage others to feel good about themselves. This disposition is what St Benedict described as "**listening with the ear of your heart**".

Blackrock is an exceptionally busy place. Amongst the many highlights of our opening half-term was the excellent performance of our Libermann Choir at the Leinster Final of the All Island Schools' Choral competition under the direction of Ms O'Connor ably assisted by Ms Fox of Duquesne University. You will have an opportunity to see their performance on **RTE1 on Sunday, October 28th at 5.00 pm**.

I congratulate **Charlie Rock** (6th Year) and **Jonathan Mion** (3rd Year) on their election as **Captain of the S.C.T. and J.C.T.** respectively. We wish them well.

State examinations results at both Leaving and Junior Certificate level were outstanding and I acknowledge the dedicated work of my colleagues in Teaching, the Heads of Department, S.E.N. Department, Deans, Academic Administrator and Deputy Principal in the delivery of such high standards at all levels of the academic spectrum.

The Parents' Committees and Council continue to add value to the **Fides et Robur** of the College. We look forward to the production of the Parents' Handbook in December which should bring further insight to, and understanding of, our procedures.

Technological advancement through the introduction of SIMS (management system) and the leadership programme for our House Captains were amongst the goals of our Strategising Document which has, and will continue to shape our educational milieu.

Our building programme continues apace. The projects for this academic year include the refurbishment of the changing, shower and toilet facilities for staff and students in St. Joseph's corridor (swimming pool area) and Phase I of the redevelopment of the Student Library which will have a new nomenclature: '**Creative Arts and Digital Learning Centre**'.

Finally, November is always a busy month, with the Musical, B.C.R. and the Past v. Present Debate amongst the many highlights. This year's Musical 'Hercules' will be an excellent production. I request your attendance, your support, whether your son is involved or not.

Blackrock is an inspiring place. This is a consequence of the dedicated, energetic and focused commitment of all who give service here – the Spiritans, lay personnel, parents, students and past-students. Thank you one and all – enjoy the break.

Yours sincerely

ALAN MacGINTY
Principal



Second Year



This Second Year group has begun its time in the College with a lot of enthusiasm. The weekly **Application Cards** reveal a great level of co-operation from the boys with their new timetable and regime. The cards are not only good barometers of work being done but more importantly are opportunities for parents to congratulate sons on steady adaptation to a new learning environment. Currently there are about 60% of cards achieving the Principal's List but we would hope that this would increase in the next half term.

The new **House Captains** received their badges from the College Spiritual Director Fr Cormac O'Brolchain CSSp and the Principal Mr MacGinty at an Investiture Ceremony in the Chapel. The Captains are: *Duff House*, Mark Nealon & Eoin Bleakely; *DeValera*, James Kelly & Joseph O'Donnell; *Ebenrecht*, Ian Leavy & Peter Stephenson; *Leman*, Peter O'Reilly & Cillian Boland; *McQuaid*, Bill Madigan & Shane Keane; *Shanahan*, Chris Wong & James Cronin. The boys will remain in their allocated House for the duration of their time in Blackrock College and will elect new House Captains at the end of each academic year.

The first of the **House competitions** has started with 64 students in 2nd Year signing up for the Table Tennis competition. The second competition, the College Swimming Gala, was held on 23rd October, with solid representation from 2nd Year boys. The third House competition, the House 7's Rugby Blitz, took place on the last Wednesday of the half-term and was entered into with great enthusiasm. A 2nd Year House Scoreboard is now on the Dean's Noticeboard, at the entrance to the 2nd Year Recreation Area, giving an ongoing account of participation and achievement in these events. The start of the next half term in November will see the next contest, the House Cross Country competition.

The boys have taken to the **extra-curricular activities** with gusto, with rugby having the highest participation level, but with good numbers turning out for table tennis and rowing, Willow Wheelers and basketball, cross country and badminton, orchestra and swimming, Science club and Art club. We would encourage more boys to take part in water polo or judo, debating or chess, or the public speaking lessons.

Each of the boys has met with the new **Counsellor** in 2nd Year Mr Donal Brennan, both in groups and individually. The College **Chaplain** Fr Hyacinth CSSp is also arranging to meet with each of the boys in turn. The **Family Mass** took place on Sunday 14th October, with the largest turnout of parents, grandparents and siblings that can be remembered. The Mass was celebrated by Fr. O'Brolchain CSSp, and we thank him and also Mr Myles Ryan, Ms Patrice O'Connor, Ms Una O'Kane, Fr Hyacinth CSSp, members of the Spiritan community, the Religion teachers, and most importantly the boys themselves who made this such a memorable liturgy.

There was a very good turnout for the Orientation Evening for Second Year parents on Wednesday 5th September, and also for the first of three **Seminars for Parents** on Wednesday 3rd October in the College Lecture Hall. Orla Callan and Martin Murphy from *Learning 4 Learning* gave an interactive, enjoyable and challenging presentation to parents on the theme of the learning process. These seminars will continue in February and March with topics to be decided by the Second Year Parents Committee, chaired by Eamonn Kenny.

Third Year



It has been a good term to date. The numbers on the Principal's List has increased in recent weeks. We would like to encourage parents to insist on seeing the weekly cards every Monday, avail of the opportunity to affirm their son's performance and where appropriate demand a positive response. The second Progress card will be given to the boys on Monday November 5th.

The Inter House competitions commenced with the Rugby 10's on Saturday September 10th, in the A competition De Valera beat Ebenrecht in the Final with Duff seeing off McQuaid in the B Final. The Table Tennis competition has started and the Cross Country is due as we go to press. The list of extra-curricular activities available to Third Years is posted on the School website.

The incoming House Captains, who were elected near the end of the final term of Second Year and subsequently benefited from a 24 hour leadership induction course where they stayed overnight in the Castle, were commissioned on September 26th. As the school endeavours to strengthen leadership within the student body they can be assured of our support and encouragement. As ever we urge them to lead by example. The Captains by House are, De Valera: Hugh Egleston & James McGowan; Duff: Jack Ringrose & Andrew Westman; Ebenrecht: Brian Grogan & Hugo Harvey; Leman: Emmet Burns & Chris Coogan; McQuaid: Alan Horgan & Adam Stanley; Shanahan: Stephen Rooney & James Trueick. Alan & Stephen along with Rory Patterson representing the Boarders have been elected to the Student Council which meets every second Wednesday at 7.45 A.M.

Over 130 boys participated in one of the four Study Skills Workshops

the last of which took place on October 20th. The feedback was very positive from both the facilitator Mr. Frank O'Sullivan and the boys. Parents were anxious about follow up when Mr. O'Sullivan outlined his plans to them, with this in mind he will address two Assemblies, one in the lead up to the Christmas Exams and one prior to the Easter Exams.

There was a very good turnout for what has become the annual talk by Noel Canavan on Parent/Teenager Relationships. The very positive comments and words of appreciation from parents were most welcome and indeed passed on to Noel who will be giving a 6 week Parenting Course in the school starting on Monday November 5th. A flyer giving details went out in the post with the Newsletter from the Third Year Parents Committee and is also available on the School website. For further details or to book a place on the course please email noelcanavanone@gmail.com or phone 01 8452441

The Parents Committee requested that the booklet **Sharing Experiences and Suggestions around Alcohol & Substance Abuse** and the **Alcohol Charter** be distributed at the aforementioned talk. Copies of the booklet and the Charter are available at the Reception. The Charter can also be downloaded from the College website.

**Third Year Family Mass is on Sunday
December 4th at 11.00 A.M.**



Transition Year

STUDENT INDUCTION DAYS

Transition Year students took part in an induction afternoon on 31st August where they were given an in-depth introduction to the Transition Year Programme.

Aptitude Tests/Work Experience

The boys completed their Cambridge Profile Aptitude tests and Eirquest 200 Careers Questionnaire during the Transition Year Induction Day on August 31st. An overview of the tests was made available to parents at the Transition Year Induction Night on Monday 3rd September. Many of the students should have received their results booklet by now. Mr Garry Sullivan will be writing to you in this regard. He will also be writing to you in connection with the students' work experience due to take place 15th -19th April 2013.

Junior Certificate Results

Congratulations to all the Transition Year students who did so well in their Junior Certificate. I know that their parents are extremely proud of their achievements.

Parents' Evening - September 3rd

A phenomenally large attendance was present at the *Parents' Introduction to Transition Year* presentation on September 3rd. It is very encouraging to see such support from the parents of the students and our hope is that your sons will enjoy and learn much in the coming year.

Pastoral Placements

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

Transition Year Tours

There has been one tour day thus far. Some students visited The G.A.A. Museum in Croke Park, Dublinia and Wicklow Gaol, while others enjoyed the experience of a sea safari where they got thoroughly wet and had a great time! The next tour date is November 6th.

Evening Courses

In excess of 120 students have taken up courses in Legal Studies, Sound Engineering, Indonesian Silat, First Aid, Yoga and Driver Education. Forty five students are currently doing an ECDL evening course.

House Representatives

Congratulations to the following students who were elected by their peers to represent them during the coming year: Fiachra Bourke, Andrew Carroll, Greg Crowley, Ross Finnegan, Richard Heapes, Louis Hoffman, Hugo Kean, Joshua Kieran-Glennon, Jeff Kirwan, Pierce MacKinlay-West, Conor McCormack, Kevin McDonnell, Roghan McMahon, William Murphy, Greg O'Meara, Brandon Sharkey, William Trueick and Jake Ward. We wish them luck in the year ahead.

House Points System

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

Blackrock College Radio

We are delighted to announce that BCR will be on the air from November 19th – 23rd. Over 180 students have applied to take part in this very exciting project and many programmes are in the planning stages already. Sincere thanks to all of the teachers who have generously agreed to help with the running of the station and production of programmes. We hope that parents will enjoy listening to their sons' initial foray into the exciting world of broadcasting. The station should be available on the Internet.

Camino de Santiago Pilgrimage

At time of writing, it is hoped that, before mid-term, the students will have attended a presentation about the *Camino* Pilgrimage and received application forms. The Camino pilgrimage will take place from 4th–11th May 2013.

Chinese Classes

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

Fund-Raising

Transition Year students are often called upon to invest their considerable energy in fund-raising activities. On 20th September, they raised the highly commendable sum of ?4,981.39 for the *Blackrock Hospice*. This is an increase of ?500 on the sum raised by last year's Transition Year group. Well done to all involved! If the boys put the same energy and commitment into the forthcoming Christmas fund-raising campaigns for the St Vincent De Paul, they should do very well.

Maths Trip to The R.D.S.

As part of the national *Maths Week*, forty Transition Year students attended a Maths lecture in The R.D.S. on October 15th and another forty attended a lecture in U.C.D. on 16th October. I would like to thank Mr Andrew Kimm and Mr Padraig Costello for organising both trips.

Gaisce Hike and Retreat

To date, 140 students have signed up to complete their Gaisce Bronze Award. By mid-term, about 130 students will have completed the adventure component of the programme. This is an extraordinary achievement!

Since 19th September, approximately forty students have headed off to Gorey each weekend to do their 26 kilometre Gaisce hike. This is the second year we have incorporated the boys' annual Retreat with their hike. This has proved to be very successful. Under the excellent care of Mr John Forrest, the group leader for both the hike and the Retreat, the boys have had a really wonderful and spiritually fulfilling time. Needless to say, they have returned home exhausted!

Website

The Website Team is doing trojan work in compiling a record of all the events taking place in the year. I would encourage parents to look at it regularly as it will give you an excellent insight into all that is happening within the year group. Logon to www.RockTY.com

The Solas Tag Rugby Prison Programme

The Solas Tag Rugby Prison programme in St Patrick's Institution began on Wednesday 26th September. Eight students are involved in this very beneficial programme which gives them the opportunity to engage with the marginalised in society whilst offering support and inclusion to young offenders. The feedback from the first two visits was very positive. Two more visits are planned before Christmas.

Model United Nations

Congratulations to Transition Year student Joshua Gorman-Climax who was a member of a team of six students which participated in a model United Nations conference in September. Due to the high standard of its public speaking, the team was awarded the "Outstanding Delegation" prize. Joshua also received a "Distinguished Speaker" award.

Sporting Achievements

Congratulations to Shanahan House, captained by William Trueick, who were winners in the recent Rugby 10s competition. Congratulations also to Harry Lloyd who participated recently in an international squash competition in Sweden.

At time of writing, the Swimming Gala has not yet taken place. We look forward to Transition Year students performing very well in the Gala.

Sailing

Mark Bolger won the Single-Hand Race as well as being a member of the winning team in the *L'Afrique Trophy* in the College's recent Sailing Regatta. To add to this success, Mark is one of two Irish students chosen to compete this month in the India International Regatta in Chennai, India. This is a fantastic achievement!

Fifth Year



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

In September, the Career Guidance Department and Past Pupils Union combined to organise two very thought provoking and extremely well attended Career Seminars for the parents of 5th Year students. Over these two evenings, Dr. Philip Nolan, NUI Maynooth President, Alan MacGinty, Principal, and a number of past pupils addressed many aspects of future educational and career opportunities.

Also in September the Fifth Year students were addressed by Edward Keegan from the Immigrant Council of Ireland, an NGO that advises and helps migrant workers. Edward gave a fascinating presentation on the horrors of human trafficking and the harsh realities of prostitution in Ireland today. Many thanks to Mr. Richard Barrett for arranging this presentation.

On September 25th, Fr. Cormac O'Brolchain, College Spiritual Director, commissioned the Fifth Year House Representatives. The twelve students elected to represent 5th Year within the College community are Dillon Coghlan, Paul Murray, Simon Curran, Jeff Burke, Joseph Horan, Jack Dwan, Gavin Kilgallen, Geoff Moylan, Conn McCarrick, Luke Fagan, Darragh Larkin and Edward Bickers. We wish them well for the year ahead.

Testing conditions were the order of the day the College Sailing Regatta held in Dun Laoghaire on 24th Sept. The sailing this year was particularly unpredictable due to the weather. Well done to Rowan Molony, who captained the winning team. Many thanks to Mr O'Sullivan, Mr Byrne and all the staff at the INSS for their organisation, planning, and safe completion of the regatta.

A number of fifth year students took part in the Model United Nations conference in Terenure College on 29th Sept. The boys made up the Saudi Arabian delegation and were represented on six of the seven session committees. A resolution combating child soldiering, which the group had drawn up and submitted prior to the conference, was ratified at both committee and general assembly levels. In recognition of this, and of the boys' high standard of public speaking, they were awarded the 'Outstanding Delegation' prize. Two of the fifth year boys also received 'Distinguished Speaker' awards for their individual contributions to the day. These were Conn McCarrick and Jonathan Hunter. The event was an excellent learning experience and a fun day out.

On Tuesday October 9th the Fifth Year Day of Reflection was held in four different retreat centres. Days of Reflection are an integral part of the Blackrock Educational Programme. The day finished with a prayer service and a reflection on the day. This was a very informative and challenging day co-ordinated by Mr. Myles Ryan, the House Representatives and the RE Department.

This year the Des Places Education Association organised a Spiritan Youth Day for all the Spiritan secondary schools in Ireland. The theme for this year was 'One heart, One Spirit'. The schools participating were Blackrock College, St Mary's Rathmines, Templeogue College, Rockwell College, Holy Family Community School Rathcoole, and St Michael's College. All Fifth year students from Spiritan schools came together on the 11th Oct 2012 at the Ballsbridge Hotel Dublin 4. The Spiritan Youth Day is about our mission, being a community of people with 'one heart and one spirit' who share a common vision inspired by Gospel values. Many thanks to Orla Walsh, Faith Development Officer, Des Places Educational Association, and all the DEA Team, for organising this special day.

Fifth Years are well represented in the Leman and Libermann Choirs this year. The

Libermann practiced hard for the regional competition of the All Ireland School Choir Competition which was held on October 17th in Drogheda. The choir has also performed at Spiritan Youth Day. This event will be televised on RTE 1 on 28th Oct at 5:10 pm.

Congratulations to Michael Feely, Eoin Galligan and Conn McCarrick who have been selected to represent Blackrock College at Comhairle na nÓg, for the coming year. Comhairle na nÓg is the Youth County Council of Dún Laoghaire Rathdown. It is made up of young people aged between 12 and 18 from all areas across the constituency. Over 100 young people attended the AGM on September 20th in the Royal Marine Hotel in Dun Laoghaire. Comhairle na nÓg was set up by the Department of Children to give young people the opportunity to discuss both local and national issues.

The Blackrock College soccer team got off to a great start by winning their first round of the cup 4-2 against St. Brendan's, Bray. The game saw goals from 5th years Robert Love, Tom Curran and Robert Byrne. A stalwart defence included Fred Kenny, Ross Butler and Alfie O'Sullivan. We wish them continued success under the watchful eye of Mr Woods.

In rugby, the House Squad have started the year well, with many tough encounters against teams such as R.S. Armagh, C.U.S. Andrews and St. Gerard's. Many 5th years participated in the annual inter-House 10 a side competition. We congratulate De aValera on a valiant victory over Leman in the final. Also many 5th Years participated in the House 7s which was a great day out for all involved, it was in aid of World Vision and the prize was the Michael O'Carroll Cup. Congratulations to Nicholas Timoney, David O' Connor and Ruairi O Farrell who represented the Leinster under 18s in the interprovincials. A number of Fifth Years have played on the senior squad and we wish them the very best in the coming season.

In golf, the Leinster Schools Matchplay Qualifier took place in Craddockstown Golf Club (Naas) on Monday the 24th of September 2012. The three man team consisted of Ted Collins (2), Brian Horgan (4), Tristan Brady (7) and sub Oisín Brady (5) all from 5th Year. Unfortunately, with scores of 79 85 86 in torrential rain and blustery winds, the team missed out by one shot with a score of 250 combined. The Senior Golf Team played the Leinster Schools fourball Championship in Woodbrook on the 18th of October. Blackrock got off to a good start in the group stages and won both matches 14 up after 18 holes, combined 28 up. The Senior Golf Team will be playing the next round in the near future against either Clonkeen College or St. Gerard's.

On Wednesday 10th of October, the annual Clonliffe Harriers Schools Invitational cross country race took place in Santry. The senior team was well represented by 5th year students. In traditional cross country weather of rain and wind, the senior team managed a respectable third place. Congratulations to James Grogan, Sean McCann and Luke Fagan.

The Senior Basketball Team has had an excellent start to the year with 3 wins out of 3. The season started off with an away match to St. Columba's, when a victory of 25-19 was achieved. Fifth Years Cormac Fenton, Séafra Ó Faoláin, Jack Hanrahan, Tom Ennis, Darragh Larkin and Charlie Gleeson featured. Next was a match at home against Clonkeen College, the first in the new Sports Hall. The score line showed 15-11 in favour of Blackrock. Rock won their latest match against Newpark away, a thrilling game finishing 35-32.

Finally, a special thanks to all the 5th Years who have embraced the year so enthusiastically. With such a diverse range of sports and activities to choose from, there is something for everyone!

Sixth Year



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

6th Year Retreats

The 6th Year Retreat Programme took place between Sunday 23rd and Tuesday 25th of September. It began on the Sunday morning when a very large attendance joined in the celebration of a most prayerful and joyful Family Mass in the College led by Fr. Damian Farnan. That afternoon, the year group dispersed to fifteen different locations covering ten counties of Ireland. Despite very wet conditions, the positive feedback provided by the students on their return showed clearly the benefit of taking time out, in small groups, for prayer, reflection and discussion at the start of a very busy year.

Many thanks to Mr. Myles Ryan for his meticulous organisation of one of the highlights of the sixth years' final year. Thanks also to the fifteen members of staff who agreed to accompany the students for these days away. Without this unselfish giving of time, this event could not have happened.



Cootehill Retreat Group



Sixth Year Contd.

Lourdes

Six final year students participated in the Dublin Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes between the 7th and 12th September. Eoin Conlon, Tim Crowley, Cian Godfrey, Eoin Marmion and Robert Murphy accompanied by Mr. Sullivan spent a busy but most rewarding few days in the company of pilgrims who needed special assistance. Personal testimonies from Robert and Cian at college gatherings this term show how much the group received from this wonderful opportunity and experience.

Careers

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

On Wednesday 19th September the year group attended the Higher Options Conference at the RDS and there was general agreement that this was a most worthwhile experience.

Twenty students have signed up to attend a HPAT Preparation Course which started on Saturday October 6th in the College. This will continue after mid-term.

There have been two career talks since September. The first looked at studying Computers / IT in DIT and the second was for students interested in studying Commerce in UCD. Many thanks to Ms McGee for organising these most informative meetings.

House Representatives

On October 12th, Fr. O'Brolchain commissioned the Sixth Year House Representatives in a ceremony in the College Chapel. The twelve students elected to represent 6th Year for 2012/2013 are Ryan Conlan & Rory O'Connell (DeValera); Andrew Cullen & Charlie Rock (Duff); Gavin Ho & Chris Roe (Ebenrecht); Mark Murray & Dermot O'Flynn (Leman); Ray Crotty & Dylan O'Reilly (McQuaid); Gary Ringrose & Ross Ryan (Shanahan).

We congratulate the House Representatives on their work for the Rugby 10's (won by a combined McQuaid / Shanahan Team captained by Cathal Greene) and the Swimming Gala so far and wish them well for the rest of the year ahead.

Blessing of Des Places Sports Hall

On Tuesday 2nd October, the 303rd anniversary of our founder Claude Poullart des Places, Archbishop Charles Brown, the Apostolic Nuncio to Ireland, blessed the new Des Places Sports Hall. Congrats to the Class of 2013 on the wonderful leadership they showed on this morning and a special mention also to the individual roles played

by Eoin Conlon, Robert Murphy, Dylan O'Reilly, Mark Murray and Charlie Rock. Many thanks also to the Apostolic Nuncio who joined the 6th Years for their morning coffee break afterwards and who also volunteered an impromptu question and answer session.

Extra Curricular Activities

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

The Senior Soccer Team, captained by Sam Walsh have moved confidently into the third round of the Senior Cup with victories over St. Brendan's of Bray and St. Kieran's of Kilkenny. We wish the squad continued success.

The Senior Rugby Team for 2013 will be captained by Charlie Rock, with Garry Ringrose and Raef Tyrell elected as Vice Captains. The SCT season has made a promising start overall with an excellent victory over Lindsfarne College, New Zealand being the highlight. However, defeat in Terenure shows what needs to be done before the Cup begins at the end of January. We wish Charlie and the squad well.

Other achievements of note during this half-term were...the selection of Sean Coughlan, Dermot O'Flynn (U19) and Oliver Jager (U18) on Leinster Rugby squads... the presence of Ryan Conlan, Andrew Cullen, David Downey, Cathal Dunne, Simon Leonard, Shea McDermott and Ben McKenzie in the Libermann Choir that performed in the Regional Final of the All Island Schools Choir Competition...the success of our Senior Basketball squad which has won its opening three league games and...Andrew Cullen who was a member of the Irish U18 Mountain Running Team that won bronze at a race in the Lake District of England in September.

6th Year Parents' Committee - A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

Ms Carleen McGee will give a talk on the CAO Application process to the 6th Year Parents on **Tuesday November 6th at 7.30pm in the Lecture Hall**. It is hoped that as many parents as possible will be able to attend this most informative and helpful evening.

This event has been organised by the Sixth Year Parents' Committee who have been very active and have also set in motion many other projects that will be undertaken this year. The Committee hope that information on the planned immersion trip to Kenya in July 2013 will also be available on this night.

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



Careers and Counselling

Early in September the sixth year students received an individual student profile report from Centigrade. Results from these profiles, in general, indicate a high correlation between their choice of third level courses and the match chosen by the Centigrade Programme. Students also received a Degree Course Description handbook, a list of career events for this academic year and a list of useful websites and resources. Students were also encouraged to make a student account on the websites www.qualifax.ie and careersportal.ie to help them with course exploration and research.

Monday September 17th saw students from all year groups and school staff engage with the first Bullying Awareness Day of the school year. On this day, we unequivocally re-affirm to each other that bullying is unacceptable at Blackrock. We encourage everyone to commit to the ABC of Bullying prevention: A - Avoid Aggression, B - Be Tolerant and C - Care for others. All students are urged to become more aware of the vulnerable in our community. If they are a victim of bullying or a witness of bullying, we urge them to have the confidence to TELL ...TELL ... TELL be it to a Dean, Teacher, Counsellor, Parent, an Adult or a Friend. Each student is entitled to an education free from fear and intimidation and bullying is not tolerated in Blackrock College. A second Bullying Awareness Day will be held in January.

Career seminars for fifth year parents took place on the 10th and 17th of September. The seminars were organised by Mr. Eunan O'Carroll of the Past Pupils Union. Fifth year parents were presented with a career pack by Mrs. Lucy Gallagher, head of the Careers and Counselling Department which outlined the careers and counselling programme for fifth and sixth years in Blackrock College. The speakers on the first night were Mr. Alan MacGinty, principal, who addressed the educational objectives of Blackrock College and Dr. Philip Nolan, president of NUI Maynooth who spoke about third level education and course options available to students. Speakers for the second night were Ms. Joan Mulvihill, CEO of the Irish Internet Association who spoke about the opportunities available to students in the I.T sector; past pupils of Blackrock College James Morrissey (2005), Lorcan O'Brien (2006) and Scott Moran (2007) who each spoke about their educational experiences since leaving school.

On September 19th all sixth years attended the Higher Options Conference in the RDS. The students found the experience useful and informative with regard to third level colleges and courses in Ireland, Great Britain and other European countries.

Leaving cert students have received a hard copy of the 2013 CAO Handbook. The majority of students will apply on line at www.cao.ie. The application process has been clearly explained to the students and CAO are offering a discounted application fee of €25 to students who apply online by January 20th 2013. Registration for HPAT Ireland will also take place in early November. It will be necessary to have obtained a CAO number in order to register for the HPAT Ireland exam. A HPAT preparation course on Saturday mornings in the college has been arranged for 20 interested students. It is the responsibility of each individual student to opt into the DARE scheme within the CAO system if relevant.

A number of sixth years have already submitted UCAS applications to study medicine and to study chemistry, mathematics and economics at Oxford and Cambridge Universities in Great Britain. Where necessary these students took an admissions test. Their applications are now being processed and these students expect to be called for interview. The deadline for other UCAS applications is January 15th 2013. All fourth year students participated in the Eirquest and Cambridge Profile Programmes on August 31st and the results of these programmes are being communicated to them.

Every student in each year has been met by the counsellor of the year, in small groups in order to ascertain appropriate engagement with their academic and extra-curricular programmes. On a daily basis, the counsellors continue to meet each student individually.



Pastoral Care Programme



6th Year Retreats

"Most enjoyed the meditation the most. It was a time to think and reflect on our own lives."

"I had some quiet time on my own and thought of my future and what I want to do with life. The night view of Dublin helped to persuade me to stay as close as possible to my family in the future and enjoy this great place."

"For me the high point was relaxing with the lads. I wasn't really friends with a few of the guys but afterwards I really am. Great location for bonding"

"Talking to the monks and others in my group, gaining other perspectives and views on faith and life, helped me gain a personal, individual view on what I believe in."

"Talking to a monk, Fr. Cuthbert about monastic life and his faith really helped me understand what can give people a strong faith and gave me a lot to think about."

"I couldn't call it a high-point because listening to someone describe how they ruined their life isn't fun. But the part I benefited most from was the Drug Unit. The people there were friends to us and wanted to help us and prevent us from ending up in there. Everything I hoped to get out of the retreat I got and more."

"I came here not expecting much and I think leaving here I do have a closer relationship with God. Though it may be minimal I think it was a significant step forward; one I had been looking for."

Lourdes Pilgrimage

"I have been on many different types of holidays but nothing has amazed me as much as my trip to Lourdes did."

We were given the opportunity in fifth year to apply for a trip to Lourdes with the Dublin Pilgrimage. Our task would be to look after the sick and disabled. These were the ones the pilgrimage was organised for.

I decided for once I was going to be the person to try and make a difference rather than sit back and let others do it. I applied for an interview and six of us from Blackrock were selected to go on the trip.

There were a few meetings over the summer and the more I heard about the trip the less I felt capable of what was needed over there.

But I put that aside and put my best foot forward.

Having no experience, the first few days were difficult and tiring. Eoin Marmion, Rob Murphy and myself were on Reception duty. We were in charge of helping sick pilgrims on and off these special wheel-chairs called voitures. It was a surprisingly tough job. There were over 200 pilgrims; and there were students from 23 Dublin schools to help them throughout the week.

Despite the fact that there was nothing materialistic involved in it for us we were all surprisingly committed to ensuring that the pilgrims had the best possible stay they could. We all realised that when you are disabled or of old age you are often unnoticed by society. Therefore this week had to be made special for just them.

In Lourdes I felt there was a presence which inspired me. It made me want to do good for others and has changed me as a person in many aspects. I saw that doing good is more than pleasing others. The reward you receive is greater than any object. It's hard to describe what happened in Lourdes. There were a great deal of spectacular processions and masses, unusual trips to the holy baths, and very little time for yourself. I thoroughly enjoyed myself and I have returned with the mentality that helping others not only helps them feel like they are still worth something but makes you feel the same.

I have always been a fairly spiritual person and Lourdes gave me a chance to reaffirm my faith. And I would 100% recommend this trip to any of you."

The **College Pastoral Programme** tries to help the boys recognise the workings of the Holy Spirit in their lives. On their Pastoral Placements the TY boys pray "Lord make me a channel of your peace." So often they return with a new appreciation of their own giftedness and the value of each and every person. Every term is punctuated with opportunities to recognise what is going on at the deeper levels of our living: the Reconciliation Services, Family Masses and Commissioning of House Representatives; the Whole School Assembly which was held this term on the feast day of Claude Des Places, celebrated in the blessing of the Sports Hall named in his honour; the Days of Reflection, Spiritan Youth Day and Mission Awareness talks; all provide opportunities for us to reflect and spur us on to "Reach Out in Caring and Kindness"



The Boarding School

On the 27th August 2012, we all returned to the Castle with renewed enthusiasm and vigour, full of stories from our Summer break. We would like to welcome to the Castle all the new boys who are sprinkled in amongst 1st to 6th years. Nearing the end of the first half term, all students, as well as staff, have settled well into the Castle environment.

The following activities are taking place throughout each week: TEFL class for foreign students, public speaking, Wednesday evening Mass in the Oratory, Boarders' Choir, Boarders' Book Club, and Boarders' Cookery Class for 5th and 6th years. It is wonderful to have so many adults committed to ensuring our boarders have such an extensive array of activities to fulfil each day whilst under our care.

Over the past half-term, the boarders have attended their own retreat in All Hallows College in Drumcondra, have made trips to Trinity College Science Gallery, walked Bray Head, visited the Book of Kells, the Marconi Museum in Howth, The National Art Gallery and Dublin Zoo. Also, they have had a number of excursions to the cinema, bowling alley, and City Centre shopping.



Boarders on Bray Head

We have had our Sunday in-house competitions in pool, table tennis, indoor soccer and rounders; competition amongst the boys really intensifies once the Pizza prize is at stake. Thanks to all the housemasters who help in the organisation and supervision of these activities.

In addition to these competitions, a new sports league has commenced on Thursday nights. The boys are split into teams, with their own team uniforms and the team members are all from different years. The sports in the league are

Taranaki (Dodgeball), soccer, basketball and volleyball. Mr Pickering is organising and ensuring this new initiative is a success. All sports take place in the fabulous new Des Places Gymnasium.

Boarders' Sunday Mass is at 10am in the College Chapel, all are welcome to attend in the service.

The chief celebrant at the Boarders' Family Mass was Fr. Cormac O'Brolachain. This was then followed by a relaxing cup of tea. Thanks to all who attended, it was a very enjoyable and spiritual occasion.

Congratulations are extended to Phillip Laurence (6th Year Boarder) who became a Eucharistic Minister at our Mass on Sunday September 30th. Well done Phillip and good luck in your Ministry.

Thanks to all the community who help make Mass such an important part of the Boarding School week.

The website continues to attract interest from around the globe, as well as from parents and students. To keep up-to-date on the boarding school, or if interested in boarding or in the history of boarding in Blackrock College, then visit www.blackrockcollegeboardingschool.com. Application forms may also be downloaded from the site.



Boarders' Sunday Mass

The Castle continues to look splendid, in part due to the efforts of the boys, but also the staff of the College are so committed to maintaining the Castle to their high standards. We are so grateful to have as part of our team Ms Katherine Cummins and her accommodation team, Mr Fintan O'Connor and his maintenance team and Mrs Andrea Fitzgerald, Mrs Helen Kilty and Mrs Patricia Nolan of the medical team. The Boarding School Parents' Committee are having their first social night on the 23rd

November, were they will attend the College musical "Hercules".

Congratulations to the boarders who were selected by their peers to represent them on the Boarding School Student Committee and Boarding School Food Committee.

We would like to welcome to the Castle staff Mr Patrick O'Neill, Mr Conor McMahon, Mr Steve Lambe and Mr Jack Kelly as housemasters.



Phillip Laurence with Alan Rogan and Fr. Gavin CSSp



Science News

On the 26th September forty four Agricultural Science students accompanied by their teachers, Ms Shevlin and Mr Boal, travelled to the National Ploughing championships in New Ross, Co. Wexford.

Decked out in wellington boots and rain wear they had a very enjoyable day, seeing pure bred animals and the latest farm technology in action. This experience is invaluable for the practical work component of their Leaving Certificate course.

Congratulations to the record thirty four Fifth and Sixth year students who sacrificed part of their lunch break on Tuesday 16th October to take part in the **Annual Senior Science Quiz**. The Quiz is open to all 5th & 6th year students that are studying any or all of the science subjects.

The format is a 15 question short answer quiz, in each subject area.

The winner is the student who scores highest across the three subjects.

The winners were:

1st: Cillian Yeates

2nd: David Kelly

3rd: Tim Sheedy



Annual Senior Science Quiz

Well done also to Karl McCabe who came first in Fifth year.

On the basis of the results two teams will be selected to take part in the ISTA Schools Science Quiz which will be held in TCD on Thursday Nov 15th, during National Science Week.

This year, with the help and encouragement of 2nd & TY science teachers, a large number of students have entered stage one of the 2013 BT Young Scientist competition. These include:

Transition Year

William Britton & Christopher Collins; Patrick Cowhey & Ruairc O'Leary; Austin Dodd; Ben Reynolds & Ruairi Eagan-Barron; Richard Grainger & Andrew Hickey; Tom McNamara & Scott Kinsella; Tom May & Cathal McGee; Joshua Gorman Climax & Jay Dolan; Stephen O'Hurley & Matthew Sheedy; Jack Kiernan & Ruan Linders; Conor Mullen & Evan Kenny; William O'Flaherty & Christopher Hughes; Dougie Clinch; Patrick McEnroe; Daniel Dunleavy & Sam Hardiman; Ronan Hearne & Andrew R. Ryan.

Second Year

Scott Donohoe; Luca Terrinoni, Steven Ryan and Jack Millar

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

Junior Debating Society



Open to all interested 2nd and 3rd years, this year's Junior Debating has had a lively and competitive start. Three students represented the College at the Belvedere Junior Mace Debating Competition. Mark Heavy (2nd year) Tadhg Fergus (3rd year) and Stephen Rooney (3rd year) spent a long Saturday at the beginning of October debating several motions including the controversial topic that "this house believes that prisoners should not have the right to vote." A further four students, David Fenn and Conor Cowhey, Eric Reynolds and Ethan Forde-Connolly (all 3rd year) also represented the College recently in the first round of the UCD Junior Schools' Debating Competition. These have been excellent opportunities for students to develop their public speaking skills and confidence is growing on a weekly basis as more and more competitions are scheduled. Students have been helped in their preparation by Transition Year debater Joshua Kieran-Glenon who also gave of his time to assist in adjudicating at the Belvedere Mace. The Junior Debating Society, under the guidance of Ms C Dobbyn, meets on Tuesdays at 4pm and all enthusiastic 2nd and 3rd year students are welcome to attend.

Environmental Groups



A number of TY teams have been formed to promote environmental awareness and to develop the environmental education potential of the College grounds.

Environmental Projects Team

Richard Grainger (45 Biology)

Michael O'Leary (45 Biology)

Tom McNamara (45 Biology)

Austin Dodd (45 Biology)

Ben Reynolds (45 Biology)

This team will help promote a greater environmental awareness among the wider College community and is responsible for creating various displays around the school. They are also responsible for the bird survey and tree trail. This team will work throughout the year observing and recording the animal and plant life of the College.

Environmental News Team

Conor Flynn (41 Geography)

Dougie Clinch (41 Physics)

Tom McNamara (45 Biology)

Rory Bourke (41 Physics)

Matthew Sheedy (41 Physics)

This team is responsible for keeping the College community informed about environmental events that occur both locally and globally. The team produced a slideshow for the **Environmental Awareness Week** at the end of

September, covering events such as the fire tornado and earthquakes, with the latter being recorded by the Physics Department, as well as the blue whale sighting and the meteor shower



St Patrick's Hall Display with Richard Grainger, Tom McNamara and Austin Dodd

Sport



Senior Soccer has had a fantastic first half term with a win for captain Sam Walsh's (6th Year) Squad against St. Brendan's Bray in the opening round of the Leinster Schools' Senior Cup early in September with goals from Robert Love, Tom Curran, Robert Byrne (All Fifth Year) and Andrew Damery (Sixth Year). This was followed by a 4-2 win against Templeogue, in the Dublin Metropolitan League, with goals from Bobby Byrne and again Andrew Damery (both Sixth Years). The winning roll continued as the Senior Soccer Squad defeated St. Kieran's, Kilkenny 6-1 at home this week.

The Senior Basketball Squad played their first match at their new home, The Des Places Hall. A first win 16-11 against Clonkeen College hopefully shows signs of what will be a successful season. This was their second win of the season after defeating St Columba's 25-19 earlier that week. The Junior Squad, however, came up short in their first match, losing to Clonkeen College.

Blackrock College SCT had the pleasure of hosting Lindisfarne College from Hastings, New Zealand during the first week of October. It was a great pleasure to welcome Rector Ken McLeod, tour manager Grant Gilbert, their colleagues, boys and supporting parents. Two matches were played by the travelling side against both the SCT and Senior Seconds; both matches were played with great intensity and resulted in victories for Blackrock. I congratulate both Captains, Nicholas Timoney (Fifth Year) and David Murphy (Sixth year) and their respective squads - the SCT and Senior Seconds - on representing us so well. This year's House Sevens Tournament in aid of World Vision provided a fantastic day of expansive running rugby. Eventual winners, captained by Dillon Coughlan, beat Sean Kearns's (both Fifth Years) team in a close final with the deciding score coming in extra time. The 3rd and 4th place play-off was the battle of the brothers as Tristan Brady's team edged Oisín Brady's team with a last-minute score. Top try scorer Joe O'Hehir (Fifth Year) was the Player of the Tournament. Congratulations must go to Seán Coughlan and Dermot O'Flynn (both Sixth Years) who were members of the Leinster U19 Rugby Team and Gavin Tynan (Sixth Year) who was selected to represent Leinster U19A. Oliver Jager (Sixth Year), Nicholas Timoney and David O'Donnor (both Fifth Years) were all part of the Leinster U18 squad who were unbeaten in this year's Interprovincials. The SCT travelled over to Exeter to play Ivybridge College (England) at the home of Championship side Plymouth Albion Rugby Club. Captained by Charlie Rock (Sixth year), the SCT put in an impressive performance, winning 24-21, against a very physical English side.



5th Year House Ten a Side

The Paddy O'Beirne Junior Golf Trophy 2012 at Elm Park Golf Club was, as usual, a highly competitive event with the winners Tom Dowdall, James Cronin and Conor Byrne (all from Second Year) and Liam Dunphy (First Year) coming from Woodbrook Golf Club Team.

Congratulations must go to Andrew Cullen (Sixth Year) who was a member of the U18 Irish Team in The British and Irish Mountain Running



5th Year House Ten a Side

Championship Race on 22nd September held in Melmerby in the Lake District of England. Despite losing both shoes in a bog halfway through Andrew finished 14th overall and was the third finisher for the Irish Team that won Bronze overall. Congratulations also to Roy Geary (Second Year) who was declared Willow Wheeler's Cyclist of the Year for last year.

The College Sailing Regatta was held in Dun Laoghaire on Monday 24th September in testing conditions. Fifteen races comprising of five teams competed for the Team Racing L'Afrique Trophy. All competitors completed a full complement of races which was an achievement in itself. Rowan Moloney (Captain Fifth Year), Mark Bolger (Transition Year), Sam Moreland, Patrick Kelleher (both Third Years) and James O'Connor (Second Year) won the team's event. Mark Bolger (Transition Year) also won the Single-Hand Race.

The Cross Country Teams competed in their first event of the new season at The Clonliffe Harriers AC and Brothers Invitational held in Santry. The teams performed extremely well and showed a lot of promise for the up and coming season. Aside from a depleted Junior Cross- Country Team which finished in 6th place, a very strong Intermediate Team finished in a well deserved 1st place, whilst the Senior Team also did very well finishing 3rd in a very tight- scoring race.



The Opening and Blessing of the New Sports Hall by the Papal Nuncio

Photos courtesy Rock Photography
www.rockphotography.ie