

Blackrock College Newsletter



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Summer 2012

Dear Parents

"The real voyage of discovery is not in seeing new lands but in seeing with new eyes"

Proust

Another year passes at Blackrock, a voyage of discovery for our boys. What have they learned: about themselves? About each other? Have they a deeper understanding of the Christian message? Are the values we espouse more central to their way of life, their relationships with others? Are they visible in all that they do?

The final term has so much activity – the swimming Gala, Sports and Family Day, Graduation Mass and Prize Day; soccer leagues, athletics, tennis and table tennis; Karl Ashe and Paul Stanley tournaments, water polo, cricket and the biathlon, the Camino and visit to Kolkata, the master chef, summer concert, gold-medal debates, junior musical and M.A.D. Week. Opportunity abounds. Sometimes we hear of boys being 'bored'. Open your eyes is the response; realise that what you get out of life is proportionate to what you put in. In the words of **Gandhi**, ***"happiness is when what you think, what you say and what you do are in harmony."*** Ultimately, this voyage of discovery is not about having what you want but wanting what you have.

Blackrock is an extraordinary community. Of course, we have day-to-day challenges and setbacks. But the bigger picture excites us. The challenge is to adapt to changing times while holding to unchanging principles.

We relish the challenge. That is why I think that you send your boys to Blackrock. It is a place where they feel at home, where opportunities abound, where they can grow in responsibility, contribute to others and are part of something bigger than themselves.

Blackrock is a community of learning, a caring community built on courtesy and respect for each other, centred on Gospel values where each member can give of his best, seek excellence, be the best he can be.

So many contribute to Blackrock, each in his/her own way to make it viable.

Brian and I are deeply indebted to the College Community, to our colleagues in Teaching, Administration, Household, Grounds, Maintenance and Catering, to the Parents' and Students' Councils and Year Committees, the College Union, Archives and Development Office and, of course, the Class of 2012, who have led the College so well.

Finally, I hope that the spirit of Blackrock remains with your sons during the summer and that their voyage of discovery may continue to be guided by 'Be Caring', 'Be There', 'Be Truthful'.

ALAN MacGINTY
PRINCIPAL



Second Year



The boys' final term in Second Year saw a change in the weather and a plethora of opportunities to learn outside of the classroom regime. Many of them were involved in the production of **Waterloo High**, on stage, in the orchestra, in front-of-house or the crew. It was a wonderful presentation that the boys can be proud of. The **House Competitions** reached their climax, with the final contributing events being the Soccer League, Debating, the Draughts Competition, the Swimming Gala and Sports Day. Second Year boys were also involved this term in the Public Speaking examinations, the Orchestra, Tennis, 'Sci-Fest', Table Tennis, Athletics, Chess, and with the Willow Wheelers.

The boys also had the opportunity to enjoy a festival of foreign languages, when the corridors and classrooms were bedecked with posters and bunting, celebrating Modern & Classical Languages Week, and a variety of activities were offered. A more solemn and reflective tone was apparent when the boys, in their Houses, each attending a Morning of Reflection, giving them the opportunity to look back on their year's work and look forward, to their career in this school, and beyond.

At **Prize Giving** at the end of the academic year, the *Bro Thaddeus Judge Medal* for

Religious Education was awarded this year to Ethan Forde-Connolly, and the Gold Medal for Debating was won by Stephen Rooney. The Academic Excellence Awards this year in Second Year went to Declan Norton, Brian McGlone and Rory O'Brien, for the best aggregate of the Christmas and Easter examinations. Also, six students who, academically and in the life of the College, demonstrated an excellent contribution received Honours List Awards: in Second Year they were Andrew Bergin, Chris Coogan, James Cronin, Jack Gardiner, Andrew Keenan and Steven Kilgallen.



Book Prizes in individual subjects were awarded to Patrick O'Callaghan, David Fenn, Rory O'Brien, Conor Mockler, Marcus O'Faolain, Hugh Egleston, Rory Fitzpatrick, Sean Hassett, Brian McGlone, Alex Hennessy, James Huggard, Conor Walpole, Tommy O'Brien, Alan Horgan, Declan Norton and Luke McCann.

The term concluded with a very enjoyable Summer Concert in the College, with the **Summer Tests**, and with the boys looking forward to their summer holidays and the forthcoming opportunities of Third Year.

Third Year



There was a tremendous turnout of parents for the Conference on Subjects for Transition Year. This augurs well for the year ahead, a year where parental involvement and support for the various curricular and co-curricular activities make a tangible impact on the very positive experience that a boy's journey through Transition Year should be. In addition to an interview with the Dean during the week starting **August 20th** a most important night for Parents takes place on **Monday September 3rd at 7.30 sharp**.

A word of thanks to the contributors on the night Mr. MacGinty, Mr. Cathal Copeland, Head of the Business Studies, Mr. Martin Dunne, Head of Technical Subjects and especially Mrs. Lucy Gallagher, Head of Career Guidance and Counselling who retires at the end of July and whose contribution to the College has been immense.

We include a **Parents' Contact List** with this Newsletter which we feel will assist Parents as they help their son's navigate their way up to and through the Senior Cycle.

Third year linked up with Second year for the Gold Medal Debate. The motion "That this house would ban the sale of alcohol" was indeed thought provoking in the context of the great concern nationally at the wide spread abuse of alcohol. A very vigorous exchange ensued, so much so that the adjudicators spent a protracted period before coming up with the decision to award the Gold Medal to Joshua Kieran- Glennon who pipped James Quinn on this occasion. The other participants Rory McCluskey, Joshua Gorman-Climax and Louis Hoffman were highly commended by the adjudicators, as were all the Second Year boys. Sincere thanks to Mr. Sheil for his commitment to Debating in Third Year.

Congratulations to the following boys who were the recipients of awards on Prize Day and to the many others who put in great effort in the course of the year.

Book Prizes for Subjects:

Fiachra Bourke, Mark McCallion, Crohan O'Shea, Richard Grainger, Ross Finnegan, Páidí McMahon, Joshua Kieran- Glennon, Ruairc O'Leary, Joshua Gorman-Climax, Rory McCluskey, James Quinn, Pierce MacKinlay-West, Jeff Kirwan, William O'Flaherty and Andrew R. Ryan.

Academic Excellence:

Richard Grainger, Jeff Kirwan and Rory McCluskey

Honours List:

Joshua Gorman-Climax, Conor McCormack, Roghan McMahon, Paul

McSweeney, Aengus Meldon and Niall Wilson.

Hall of Residence:

Jay Dolan.

Student Leadership Award:

Kevin McDonnell.

Debating Gold Medal:

Joshua Kieran- Glennon.

Religious Education:

Christian Delaney.

In late August we urge Parents to ensure that all of their son's property, most of which will be brand new, is all clearly labelled and that they encourage them to have a lock for their locker and use it.

Bicycles should never be left unlocked in the school, a good quality lock is essential as is a helmet.

Transition Year



TRIP TO CHINA

The annual trip to China (11th -19th April) was a great success. 33 students, accompanied by Mr Owen Brennan, Mr Brian Savage and Mr Garry Sullivan, travelled to Beijing. The group stayed in Huiwen international boarding school and they attended classes such as maths, music and English with Chinese students. They also visited many cultural and historical sites including Tiananmen Square, the Forbidden City, the Great Wall and Olympic village. They also went to a Chinese acrobatic show and practised their bartering skills in the great silk market. Needless to say, they also went shopping!

PILGRIMAGE - CAMINO DE SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

Twenty students participated in the Camino de Santiago de Compostela pilgrimage this year. The weather during the first few days was inclement and made walking conditions quite challenging at times. However, in the true spirit of pilgrimage, the boys soldiered on and the sun eventually appeared. Everybody found the experience very worthwhile and were very proud of their well-stamped Camino passports. A special thank you to Mr Owen Brennan, Ms Sinead Nolan, Ms Sonia Ni Chathain and Father Mark Whelan for accompanying the boys on their pilgrimage.

WATERLOO HIGH - THE MUSICAL

Our second collaboration with the second and fourth year students in Loreto Dalkey resulted in a most entertaining drama production based on the music of rock legends *The Kinks*. This imaginative, hilarious, energetic and highly enjoyable show was staged in the Jubilee Hall.

Credit must be given to the marvellous cast and crew whose hard work resulted in a show which lifted everybody's spirits. Particular mention should be made of the performances given by Mr Niall Toolan, Ms Claire Campion and Mr Niall Byrne which added to the light-hearted mood of the show. Well done to all involved. Many thanks also to Mr Savage and Ms Una O'Kane for their dedication, hard work and encouragement of all the students involved in the show.

SUCH SHOW - COLLABORATION WITH MOUNT ANVILLE

For the third consecutive year, our Transition Year students were invited to participate in the Mount Anville **Such** show. This year's show **Such Legends** featured music and dances linked to legendary performers in the world of film, dance and music. Over fifty boys were involved in the show, either as performers or as crew and front of House staff. The show was performed over two nights (9th and 10th May) and was most entertaining and enjoyable. The money raised will be donated to the charity **DEBRA Ireland**. Many thanks to Ms Barbara Mulhall for inviting us to participate.

M.A.D. WEEK

A very enjoyable and productive Music, Art and Drama week (May 8th - 11th) saw very high rates of participation from the students who availed of the opportunity to learn new skills. Several very diverse workshops were offered. These included workshops in DJ skills, samba drumming, song writing, magic and sound engineering. The feedback from the students was excellent. This year, we had the added bonus of a live concert given by a talented new band *The Empire Lights*. One of the highlights of the week was the Summer Concert which showcased, once again,



Transition Year Cont'd

the unbelievable musical talent of so many of our students. Many thanks to the inimitable Ms O'Kane for organising such a truly memorable week! Thanks also to Ms Campion, Mr Woods and Mr Mc Mahon for their help throughout the week

ENGINEERING WEEK

A week-long programme for Transition year students, run by the Engineering Department in U.C.D. from 14th – 18th May, was attended by five of our students. All of them found it most worthwhile and enjoyable.

MASTER CHEF COMPETITION

This competition is one of the highlights of the final term and excited a lot of interest amongst the student body with fifty students competing in the semi-finals. The nine finalists were Will Doherty, James Grogan, Jack Hanrahan, Joseph Horan, Darragh Larkin, Conn McCarrick, John O'Connor, Matthew O'Driscoll and Adam Waldron. Once again, the culinary skills of this year's Transition Year students were put to the most exacting of tests on May 28th and the boys did themselves proud. The standard of the final was exceptionally high and the boys' presentation of their dishes was also lauded by the three judges. Conn McCarrick was a worthy winner with John O'Connor coming second and Darragh Larkin and Matthew O'Driscoll tying for third place. Many thanks to Ms Marren for the wonderful work she does in encouraging the boys and organising and running the competition.

LECTURE SERIES

On 26th April, Ms Nusha Yonkova from the Irish Immigrant Council gave a most interesting and revealing talk to the boys about issues such as human trafficking and exploitation. Mr Andrew Doyle spoke to the boys on May 15th about the importance of producing a good cv and how to present oneself at interview. He gave the boys a lot of valuable tips and distributed an excellent handout to illustrate the points he made.

THE PRESIDENT'S AWARD/GAISCE

To date, seventy two students have gained their bronze *President's Award* this term. Similar to the *Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme*, The President's Award requires the students to undertake a number of tasks in order to qualify. These include doing community work, learning a skill and undertaking an adventure activity.

The community work organised by our students ranged from helping the elderly to working with children with learning difficulties and special needs. Many of the students did a twenty eight kilometre hike in Wexford, in conjunction with their retreat, as their *adventure* component. Congratulations to all involved. I hope some of the boys will go on to gain their silver awards next year! Many thanks to Ms Anne Payne who has given me so much help in running the *Gaisce* programme this year.

OTHER EVENTS

The boys have been involved in several fund-raising projects this term. The Irish Heart Foundation's annual *Happy Heart* fund-raiser benefited from the boys' generosity on May 10th and 11th when they sold badges to support the charity.

FAITH FRIENDS

On Thursday 17th May, thirty Transition Year students received Certificates of Achievement for their participation in the Spiritan *Faith Friends* Programme. This programme required the boys to undergo training so that, over a number of weeks, they could help prepare the 6th class Willow Park pupils for Confirmation. Three students – Joseph Horan, Mike Kirby and Niall Sweeny - were presented with Gold medals in recognition of their particular engagement with the programme. Sincere thanks to Ms Orla Walsh, Mr Terry O'Reilly and Mr Myles Ryan for their facilitation and implementation of this programme.

PAINTBALLING TRIP

This year, a special House Points system, linked to the Transition Year students' participation in extra-curricular activities, was initiated. The prize for the winning House, **Ebenrecht**, was a paintballing trip in county Wicklow. A most enjoyable time was had by all.

TRIP TO INDIA

A very special trip to India (May 20th – 26th) organised by GOAL gave six students, accompanied by Ms Nulty, an opportunity to view many of GOAL'S projects in Kolkata. As Transition year students have raised a considerable amount of money for GOAL and Aidlink over the past twenty two years, it was important for the boys to gain an insight into exactly how that money is spent. In an



GOAL funded school in Dhapa Dump, Kolkata

intense five day period, we visited many of GOAL's projects and saw the difference that that charity's efforts are making to the poorest of the poor. We also saw how their WASH programme (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) is making a difference in many of the schools where it has been implemented.

In energy-sapping temperatures of 45 degrees, we visited the Brick Kilns programme where GOAL has installed water and sanitation facilities, as well as providing education for many of the children.



Sebastian McKimm distributes paper in Brick Kilns, Kolkata

Watching a woman make a brick in 25 seconds in such searing heat and knowing she will get 200 rupees (approximately £3.00) for every thousand bricks is a sobering experience. Similarly, visiting the municipal Dhapa dump where we could see clouds of methane gas rise into the air as children scavenged for sellable waste products, gave us pause for thought. In both the Dhapa dump and Brick Kilns' projects, we visited classrooms where the children were eager to show off their mastery of the alphabet and entertained us royally with song and dance. Their enthusiasm and eagerness to receive an education were really heartening.

A visit to the RCFC Centre for children suffering from polio, clubfoot and other orthopaedic conditions was very moving but possibly, the most moving experience of all was visiting a shelter for homeless and abandoned children. The warmth and welcome shown to us by these children, many of whom had endured unspeakable hardships in their short lives, was unforgettable. We would all like to think that our little gifts of balloons, lollipops, coloured pencils and bubbles brightened up their day a little.

No visit to Kolkata would be complete without a visit to the Mother House, home of Mother Teresa of Kolkata. This was a very special experience for all of us. We were particularly interested to see Mother Teresa's room which served both as her place of rest and her place of work. Sparsely and simply furnished, we were all struck by the fact that it was the hottest room in the house, positioned directly above the kitchens, and yet Mother Teresa always refused to use a fan!

I would like to think that the insights the six boys were given in the course of their trip to lifestyles, unimaginably different to their own, will have a profound impact upon them. It will take all of us some time to process all that we saw and felt and experienced but I doubt if any of us will ever be the same again.

Many thanks to Lisa O'Shea and Maeve Seery from GOAL for organising and making possible this very special trip. Thanks also to the staff in the GOAL India office for their kindness and for taking the time to show us many of their projects.

DAY OF REFLECTION

The Dominican Retreat Centre in Tallaght was the venue for the final Transition Year outing of the year. On the 22nd May a group of sixty students spent a very worthwhile day under the direction of the Retreat House team. The opportunity to reflect on life and to meditate was warmly welcomed by the boys who reported back very positively on the experience.

PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENTS

A busy final term has seen the students of Transition Year maintain the high standards set in the first two terms for enthusiastic participation in a whole range of activities. Congratulations to all those who successfully completed their **Portfolio Assessment Interviews**. I am always impressed by the initiative and creativity that go into the students' preparation for these interviews; the culmination of a very diverse and worthwhile year. The students' end of year certificates will be posted early in the summer.

EVALUATION SHEETS

I would like to thank all those parents who have already returned their evaluation sheets. If you have not done so already, it is not too late!

CONCLUSION

I would like to thank the Transition Year Parents' Committee, chaired by Helen O'Dea, for its work throughout the year. I would also like to thank Owen Brennan, Garry Sullivan and Myles Ryan for helping me to run a very busy Transition Year programme. Their support has been invaluable.

Enjoy the summer holidays!

Fifth Year



On Thursday 3rd May, Ms. Lucy Gallagher administered the Centigrade Guidance Tests to all Fifth Year students. The results of this test and their accompanying insights into future career options will be given to the students on their return in September.

Eoin Conlon, Tim Crowley, Eoin Marmion, Cian Godfrey, Robert Murphy and Stephen Brophy have been selected to travel with the Dublin Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes next September. We wish them well.

On Tuesday 22nd May, over ninety students paid a visit to Intel's "Sponsors of Tomorrow Exhibition", in Trinity College.

On the 16th of May a number of boys from 5th year took part in a Gaelic football blitz held in Clongowes Wood College. Led by teachers Mr. McMahon and Mr. O'Brien, the boys faced 3 tough encounters against Clongowes, Newbridge and Castleknock. After narrowly losing to Clongowes and Newbridge in the opening games, a late point scored by David Murphy snatched the victory against Castleknock with seconds remaining. It was a very enjoyable day for all.

The final term saw the beginning of the cricket season in the College. With the team looking the best it has ever been, they have faced many tough encounters in the last few weeks against Marian College, St Joseph's Rush, Skerries College, Sanford park and a hard fought semi final against Colaiste Phadraig in Lucan. Congratulations to **Captain David Murphy** and the **Senior Squad** who beat Terenure in the **Final of the Alf O'Connell Cup**, held in the High School on Friday evening May 25, 2012.

There was a strong 5th year presence at this year's Junior Musical, Waterloo High, with four out of the six band members currently in 5th year. Niall Gallagher, Patrick Keegan and Paul Kieran shared guitar parts, and Mark Twomey played percussion. Together, the band was able to stay true to the sound of the Kinks and provide a polished and professional musical backing to the performing 4th and 2nd years. Well done to all involved! Many other 5th years from the College Choir and Orchestra also performed in the Summer Concert which took place in the College Lecture Hall on Wednesday, May 9th. The choir was successfully led by Ms. O'Connor and the "Kazoos" were certainly the highlight of the night.

This year has been a particularly difficult year for 5th years competing in the athletics championships, with record amounts of rainfall and very cool temperatures, which made training condition very difficult. However, that did not prevent many 5th years bringing home medals from both the East Leinsters and the Leinsters. A few athletes who stood out were Oliver Jager who won gold in both the East Leinsters and Leinsters in the intermediate shot putt, and Andrew Cullen who came first in the East Leinsters 2000m Senior Steeplechase and finished second in the Leinsters, and also placed second in the 1500m in both championships. Congratulations to Philip Laurence who ran the second leg of the senior 4x100m relay who not only won but broke the Leinster record with a time of 43.37 seconds. We wish all these students good luck in the All Irelands to be held on the 2nd June in Tullamore.

In table tennis, Jack Donnelly, Daniel Webb and Mark Doyle enjoyed great success, including the Leinster Cup, League and All Ireland, in the Schools Senior A team. They retained the treble for the second time in Blackrock College. Throughout the season they have beaten many opponents including St. Fintan's in the Leinster League and cup final, and a very strong 5 Mile Bridge team (Ulster) in the all Ireland final. We wish them every success in next year's campaign.

In soccer, the Millenium cup which began before Easter was continued this term. The team led by Mr. O' Nuallain made their way to the final for the second year in a row, losing out to a very strong Belvedere side. Despite the loss there is a huge amount of optimism looking towards next year's season.

On May 22nd the final of the annual Stanley Cup was played between two talented teams, the 5th year boarders and the 5th year day boys. It was a very exciting match for both sides and just before half time, Alex Campbell clinched a great volley from just inside the box. This disheartened the boarders and in the end, it resulted in a 3-0 win for the day boys. Paul Stanley's brother David came to the match and all were extremely grateful for his attendance. Many thanks to referee Mr. Savage and coordinator Mr. Murray for their organisation of the event, the 31st renewal of the competition in memory of Paul Stanley (*class of 1971*).

Sports day saw a very good representation from the 5th years. There was some outstanding performances most notably between Andrew Cullen and Phillip Laurence in the 800m side by side from start to finish, showcasing the very high caliber of talent in the year.

In recent weeks the biology classes visited Knockree in Eniskerry, Wicklow to participate in ecological studies which is a key part of the leaving cert syllabus. Woodland habitats were surveyed and results recorded.

David Kelly was the Chemistry member of the Irish team which won a Silver medal at the European Science Olympiad in Vilnius, Lithuania. He was one of the two members who were selected for Team A in the event in the Republic of Ireland. David



5th Yr House Dayboys' Team, winners of The Stanley Cup

was selected, at a competition organised by Dublin City University, and the challenges facing the teams in Vilnius were of a practical investigative nature in their chosen subject.

Patrick Lavelle won the overall best individual speaker at NUI Maynooth's Aoife Begley Memorial Debating Competition held on 17th April. Patrick also attended the 69th International Session of the European Youth Parliament in Istanbul from the 25th March-1st April. Patrick was part of the Irish delegation of eight.

Well done also to Max Gueret for his swimming achievements this term. Max was Leinster Long Course Champion in 50m Breast at the Leinster LC Championships at the end of March. This event also saw him receive the silver medal in the 50m back and the bronze in 100m back, with finals in 50m fly and free and 200m backstroke. He won silver in the free relay and bronze in the medley relay. After Easter he competed in the Dave McCullough / Celtic Trinations event in the NAC. He made finals in 4 events, breast and back in this gala which included national teams from Ireland, Scotland and Wales (including Olympic qualifiers such as Hannah Miley, representing Scotland) as well as Irish clubs, such as his own, Trojan.

In rugby, Oliver Jager has been selected for the Holland U17 and U18 international rugby sides. Oliver played for the U17 side in the Wellington Rugby Festival in England, and also played for the U18 side in the FIRA European championship in France.

The Waterpolo team had a very successful year, winning four cups including the Connaught Cup League. The league cup final was played in the NAC which two 5th year students, Vinog Leavy and Cathal Dunne scoring many goals to lead the team to a triumphant victory, leaving the centre with a final score of 17 - 7.

On the Sunday of the May bank holiday, eleven 5th years braved the windy conditions to undertake the Willow Wheelers 100 mile cycle. Congratulations to Niall Gallagher, Harvey Clinch, Nick O'Grady, Max Gueret, Ian Kennedy, Andrew Whelan, Richard Owens, Tom Condon, Seán Byrne, Karl Whyte and Hugh Doyle on their commitment to Africa Calling! charity and on their impressive feat of athletic endurance.

On 23rd May the annual Biathlon of a 650m swim, and 3k run took place in the College. Vinog Leavy secured first place in the senior event, with an impressive time of 24m. 49s.

Special thanks to the Parents Committee for their hard work this year, from organising fundraising to catering for the 6th year graduation Mass, and so much more in between!

A huge thank you to the 5th year house representatives: Mark Murray, Rory K Doyle, Charlie Rock, Andrew Cullen, Ray Crotty, Dylan O'Reilly, Chris Roe, Philip Laurence, Rory O'Connell, Gavin Ho, Garry Ringrose and Ross Ryan for their ongoing contribution to the year. The hard work of the House Captains led to the huge support amongst the year group for the many activities of the final term. Their leadership and motivation throughout the academic year helped greatly with the smooth running of 5th year. Finally I would like to congratulate Rory K Doyle and Mark Murray, the two House Captains of Leman House who won the inter house league.

Finally to all the 5th years, I commend their efforts, inside and outside the classroom. The wealth of talent and enthusiasm shown in so many areas is astounding. I wish each one, all the very best for the summer and I thank them for the talents they have brought to Blackrock College.

Sixth Year



The final term has been a busy and exciting one for the students of the Class of 2012. The journey through the halls of Blackrock College is coming to a conclusion and what a journey it has been!

The term began with the Leaving Certificate oral examinations in Irish and Modern Languages. These were followed by the submission of Project Work in a wide range of subjects. Practical examinations have also been completed in Art, Construction Studies and Music and on May 2nd, 30 students sat this year's LCVP exam.

On Tuesday 8th May, there was a very good attendance at the Parent's Conference. The evening commenced with a Ceremony of Light with gave thanks for the many blessings that parents, teachers and students have received through their connection with the Class of 2012.

The following evening, the musical talent of the Class of 2012 was to the fore in the Summer Concert. Individual performers included Peter Ryan (Horn), Cillian Copeland (Piano) and Sean Roper-Nolan (Voice). Many thanks also to Ciaran Fenner who acted as MC for the night. The gap left by the Class of 2012 in the College choirs and orchestra will be a large one to fill.

The Gold Medal Debate on Friday May 11th was a lively affair and the motion 'That Social Networking is detrimental to our Society' was hotly contested by all eight speakers. Such was the quality and diversity of presentation that choosing a winner proved to be a difficult decision for the judges. After a tense wait, Edward Kevin was declared the winner and thus became the Valedictorian for the Class of 2012.



Edward Kevin delivering the Valedictory Speech on Prize Day

On Sunday May 13th, there was a huge turnout of 6th Year students and parents for the annual Sports and Family Day. Thankfully the day was dry and the grounds were in excellent condition considering the weather throughout the previous weeks. Gavin Thornbury received the Sports Personality of the Year Award and victory in the House event went to Ebenrecht captained by Jack O'Carroll and Robert Walsh.

In the other House events the term, the Swimming Gala was won by McQuaid house, captained by Daniel Carr and Tom Kinsley. Dean Smal retained the President's trophy at the Swimming Gala and he also broke the College record for the 6th Year 25m freestyle event. McQuaid also won the Soccer League, defeating Shanahan 4-1 in the final.

Other achievements of note by Sixth Year students in this final term included, victory by Will Gallagher and Matthew Finlay in the All-Ireland Table Tennis Final in Lisburn, victory for Peter Walsh, Dean Smal and James O'Donnell in the Conaty Cup Water Polo Final in the NAC, victory for Daniel Bickers, David Lunn, Peter Robb and Ciaran Crowe as members of the Senior Cricket in their final against Terenure and a new Leinster Schools 4X100m relay record for our Senior team that included Tim Nugent, Robert Keenan and Tom Kinsley. Congratulations to all and best of luck to the relay team in Tullamore in June.

On Wednesday 2nd May, Karl Ashe's mother and grandmother joined the Castle



Malachy O'Doherty, Chocolatier for a day on LCVP Visit-Out to investigate a Local Enterprise

Dayboys and Boarders for the senior school Gaelic final. In a great game, the Dayboys prevailed by a single point 4:5 to 4:4. Mrs. Ashe presented the medals to both teams at Karl's bench in front of the Castle and many thanks to Jeff Landers and John Kelly for organising their squads and to Mr. Fitzsimons and Mr. Murray for organising the event.

The Graduation Mass for the Class of 2012 was celebrated on Sunday May 20th. Our Spiritual Director, Fr. Cormac O'Brolchain was the main celebrant and in his homily he outlined his understanding of 'W.V.W.' and he assured all the boys present that they would always be

welcome in Blackrock. It was a moving occasion for all and the quality of participation and music will remain long in the memory. Bright weather enhanced the celebrations in the Quadrangle afterwards and many thanks to the 5th Year Parents' Committee for the reception that they hosted in the Dining Hall. It was much appreciated by all. Later, a Graduation Lunch was organised by the 6th Year Parent's Committee in the Pavilion in Leopardstown. It was a most enjoyable evening and a fitting way to end a memorable day. Congratulations to all.

Prize Day took place on Saturday May 26th. Congratulations to all sixth year prize-winners and their families but we mention in particular, Joe O'Sullivan, winner of the General Excellence Award and Malachy O'Doherty, winner of both the Student Leadership and Des Places Outstanding Contribution Awards for this academic year.

Finally, a particular thank you to Vincent Dodd (Chair), Anne Keogh (Secretary) and all the 6th Year Parent's Committee who have worked so tirelessly on behalf of the Class of 2012, to bring events such as the Graduation lunch, the DVD, the Immersion Project in Kenya and the Judge Catherine Murphy lecture to fruition this year. In particular, this committee will be recalled as the first to gift an inscribed plaque with the names of all the final year students to the College. The start of a tradition to be valued.



David Harvey, President PPU, presenting the General Excellence Award to Joe O'Sullivan

The Class of 2012 are now on the final lap on their journey towards the Leaving Certificate. As a group they have made a most significant contribution to the college and have always displayed enthusiasm, good humour, commitment and a caring disposition. They have upheld the traditions of the College in style and have left their own imprint on the history of Blackrock. In their final messages to the students, both Fr. O'Brolchain and Ms. Gallagher have encouraged them to remain in touch with each other, the email address classof2012@rock.ie set up by Dermot Horan and the PPU will help achieve this. We wish them happiness and fulfilment in their future lives as we say 'Farewell and Bon Voyage'.

Commerce & Economics Society

On Thursday the 3rd of May the Blackrock Commerce and Economics Society welcomed Mr. Kingsley Aitkins to the College, for an inspirational talk on networking. Kingsley has built up a formidable international speaking reputation over the last 25 years and has spoken to over half a million people in 39 cities around the world during that time. The 5th and 6th year students took a lot from the talk, which broached topics such as social networks, the future economy and transnational companies. On 24th May, Jim Power, Chief Economist Friends First gave a presentation to the senior business students on the current state of the Irish economy. Key facts, figures and trends were discussed and as with every presentation, there was a lively question and answer session afterwards. This enjoyable presentation rounded up a great year of informative talks for the Commerce and Economics society of 2012 and we would like to thank all our speakers for sharing their experiences with us. The Commerce & Economics Society is always delighted to welcome speakers to the College, and if you would be interested in making a presentation please contact Mr. Morris at 5dean@blackrockcollege.com



Kingsley Aitkins receiving a copy of "Fearless and Bold" from Daniel Curran, Vice Auditor of the C & E Society.





Pastoral Care Programme



The comments from TY students in reaction to their Pastoral Placements often highlight what a significant project this is. The last group of the current school year proved no exception:

"I was very moved by what I saw. I didn't realise what problems some people have to deal with. I think it was a spiritual experience because it made me realise how amazing people can be."

"It really changed my attitude when I saw these students smiling even though so disabled yet they could still be so happy. I was really shocked by the parents of the children because they have to look after their child with a disability on top of their job; it really is incredible because some of these children need their parents by them all the time. They really are overworked and deserve a break."

"This has created a huge impact on the way I view life and also the way I view friends and family. The amount of amazing stories I've heard and some of the achievements people have made throughout their lives are unbelievable. It's really made me think about my future and that whatever I do in life it's something I want to look back on and be proud of what I've accomplished."

"The caring for others in their time of need and also the community created in their homes I would relate to something of a church like the way that everybody looks out for one another."

It was a busy final term.

Preparations continued for 2 pilgrimages: the TY Camino as well as the Lourdes Pilgrimage due to head out in September. Thank God the Camino was greatly appreciated by the 24 pilgrims. Their chaplain Fr. Marc Whelan remarked, *"As a Spiritan I was especially proud of them and the way they entered into the spirit of pilgrimage and the reflective moments that were offered to them..... Every day people stopped me to ask if I was walking with the boys. They were praising their maturity, good behaviour and pilgrim spirit."*

Well done lads.

Full credit also to the 50 boys from Fifth Year and TY who gave a couple of hours from their bank holiday weekend to fundraise for the Morning Star Hostel run entirely on donations by the Legion of Mary. John Carlin emailed the school afterwards:

"Just an 'informal' note by way of thanks to you and the lads for all the help over the weekend. It was great for us to see so many young people being willing to give their time in this way. I suspect Frank Duff would be very happy!"

As you know, it's not the amount of money you collect that sustains you, but the effort you put into it! That said, thank God, I think that we hit our target! The Hostel, as it stands, is safe for another year!!! We now need to address our capital position but that's another day's work.

The lads should take great heart in their role in all of this.

I know the lads in the hostel, staff and residents, got a great lift, that a "formal" thank you is on its way and that the lads and the school are in their prayers!

God bless!"

Thanks are due also to the TY musicians who gave timhnye to entertain the residents of Dalkey Nursing Care Unit with an afternoon concert on their last Thursday in school. Not only the residents but also the staff greatly enjoyed the quality and variety of music. Thanks particularly to Mr. Garry Sullivan for his technical input, organization and encouragement.

The final term is a good time for the Second Years to have their Mornings of Reflection. They have settled into their new Blackrock regime and feel sufficiently at home in school to be able to draw maximum benefit from the programme. The days were facilitated by Mr. Patrick Reynolds of the Elijah School Retreat Team. The day combines games, testimony, input on chastity and opportunity to participate in the sacrament of reconciliation. Evaluations indicated that the boys found the day to be very worthwhile.

TY boys who had not availed of the 'Gaisce Retreat' had their Day of Reflection in the Dominican Retreat House in Tallaght on Tuesday 22nd of May. The experienced team there spoke very highly of the fifty retreatants. "They were a quality group of boys, very open and very respectful of each other". It is very encouraging for their teachers and such a credit to their families when positive unsolicited comment comes back to the school so often.

The Graduation Mass was a wonderful celebration of the contribution and participation of our Leaving Cert. boys. 142 boys of the year had a specific responsibility on the day but every boy made his own contribution by his participation, and worship. God is the focal point of every liturgy. There is a danger that processions, music, flowers and readings can become a distraction from the true purpose which is our meeting with the mystery of God. My own sense during the Eucharistic Celebration was that all these elements were directed to the raising up of our minds and hearts to God in gratitude for so many blessings showered on our Class of 2012. The organization of this day involves every agency of the Blackrock College community, the Fathers and Brothers, parents association, boys, staff of every department, linen room, catering, grounds, housekeeping, secretarial, academic and administration. On such occasions the spirit of the College is evident on an impressive scale. With such goodwill and efficiency even the weather, after weeks of seeming interminable rain, had to turn benign ensuring a wonderful day for the boys. Thanks to all; and every blessing on the graduating students for their exams and the years ahead.





Science News



'Eureka' Junior Science Quiz 2012

Two teams of 3rd year students were entered in the ISTA Dublin Junior Science Quiz, which was held in Belvedere on May 2nd.

The teams were: Robert Doyle, Paidi McMahon and Rory McCluskey and Tomas Beecham, Joshua Gorman-Climax and Joshua Kieran-Glennon.

Thirty five teams participated and at the end of 8 rounds of wide-ranging questions, Tomas, Joshua and Joshua were the winners. This is the first time that Blackrock has won this event, now in its 6th year.



Blackrock Student wins Silver Medal at the 2012 European Union Science Olympiad (EUSO)

The European Union Science Olympiad (EUSO) is a team competition for EU second level science students. This year's event took place in Vilnius, Lithuania from April 22nd to April 29th.

David Kelly, Fifth Year, was selected, at a competition organized by Dublin City University, as one of only two chemistry pupils from Ireland, to compete in Vilnius in April.

The challenges facing the teams in Vilnius were of a practical investigative nature in their chosen subject. The Science Department congratulates David and his Irish Science Olympiad Team for winning a Silver medal in this European competition.

Intel Exhibition

Over ninety of our Fifth Year science students spent a very interesting afternoon at Intel's "Sponsors of Tomorrow Expo" which was held in the Science Gallery on Tuesday May 22nd.

Intel employees were on hand at each stand to interact directly with our students, demonstrating and explaining the science behind the gadgets of tomorrow.

Our students experienced and learnt about Intel technology through interactive demos and hands-on "play" with products.

The rapid progress in both innovation and technology were a joy to behold and certainly held our students' attention.



David Kelly, Silver Medal winner, with Mr Daly

Careers and Counselling



As the academic year draws to a close, decisions about choice of career which many sixth years found impossible to make in September are now being made, or have been made with ease, and seem appropriate. It is important to remember that there has never been a greater number of third level courses available to Leaving Certificate students and there will be a course to suit every student. Even outside the CAO and UCAS systems, there are numerous opportunities for the Leaving Certificate cohort to progress to Higher Level Education via P.L.C./F.E. courses accredited by F.E.T.A.C. For example, by obtaining a pass in five subjects in the Leaving Certificate, a student may progress through a P.L.C./F.E. course via the **Higher Education Links scheme** to a third level course in a variety of Higher Education Institutions including Universities, Institutes of Technology and Private Colleges. For full details of this scheme see www.fetac.ie.

While the sixth years are busy preparing for the Leaving Certificate, many are also thinking about the order of their CAO choices and it is vitally important to realise that the order is crucial. However, the change of mind facility can be used until 1st July 2012. With the passing of that deadline, no further changes can be made and the class of 2012 will receive their Leaving Certificate results on 15th August. First round CAO offers will be issued on 20th August. Viewing of LC scripts will be available on 31st of August and 1st September. Places will also be available in September on Vacant Places at CAO at www.cao.ie. UCAS conditional offers have been made to a number of sixth years and a few students are still applying through UCAS EXTRA. Two students have accepted conditional offers to study medicine in England, one at Cambridge University, one to study business and IT at Edinburgh University, one to study sports science at St. Mary's Strawberry Hill and one to study music at The London Guildhall of Music.

In preparation for entry to medicine, eighteen 6th year students took the HPAT-Ireland test in February 2012. Many were delighted with their scores while others were very disappointed. There is much controversy surrounding the HPAT Ireland exam because many argue that it is not doing what it has set out to do, namely allow students who achieve 480 plus points to enter medicine. The reality is that it is still only the really high achievers who secure a place in medicine and the HPAT exam merely puts more pressure on all students. The score received on this test will be added to the Leaving Cert points in August. Any Leaving Cert. applicant who meets the minimum subject entry requirement and the 480 points criteria in the same sitting of the Leaving Cert exam is considered eligible. The sole competitive selection criterion for entry to medicine will be on the basis of the weighted combination of the LCE and HPAT-Ireland scores. The weighting is a 2:1 ratio where the LCE=2 and HPAT=1 up to 550 points and moderated afterwards as follows: For every 5 points which a candidate scores between 550 and 600 (or 625 extra 25 for higher mathematics) points > one point will be awarded up to a maximum of 560/565.

Fifth years have completed Centigrade and their profiles will be ready for them in September to add to their individual career plan. All fourth year students have received results of Cambridge Profiles and Eirquest. Third year students have already chosen their subjects for their Senior Cycle and second year students seem to be achieving well at their academic subjects as well as being committed to the extra curricular programme in the College.

To the Leaving Certificate class of 2012 and to the Junior Certificate students I wish you the best in every way in the examinations and in the future.



Sport



The weather has knocked School Cricket for six this term with many fixtures being stumped by the wet conditions. The Junior Cricket Team captained by Pierce McKinley-West (3rd year) only managed two fixtures this term due to the varying weather conditions. A narrow loss to High School was followed by an impressive victory against Skerries inspired by an impressive unbeaten 71 from Harry Lloyd (3rd year). The **Senior Cricket Team** led by David Murphy (5th year) enjoyed an unbeaten run in the Alf O'Connell Cup with victories against Marian College, St Joseph's Rush, Skerries and Sandford Park in the group stage of the tournament. Consistent batting performances throughout the season from Callum Donnelly (5th year) and Daniel Bickers (6th year) put Blackrock in the driving seat, while impressive bowling figures from Brian Mollen (4th year), Callum Donnelly (5th year) and David Lunn (6th year) kept opponents on the back foot. The team had an emphatic 7 wicket victory away over a strong Colaiste Phadraig in the cup semi-final and beat Terenure College in the **Final of the Alf O'Connell Cup**, held in the High School on Friday May 25, 2012. Congratulations to **Captain David Murphy** (5th Year) and his **Senior Squad**

The school athletics team continues to build on its previous year's success dominating the East Leinsters and taking the title at Junior, Intermediate and Senior Level. The Leinster Championships saw much of the same, Matthew O'Callaghan (2nd year) and Tommy O'Brien (2nd year) taking first and second in the Junior 80m Hurdles and qualifying for the All Irelands. The Blackrock College Intermediate team went from strength to strength in the throwing events. Nicholas Timoney (4th year) taking 3rd in the hammer, Roghan McMahon (3rd year) 2nd in the discus and Oliver Jager (5th year) winning the shot put and again qualifying for the All Irelands. Senior Athletics continued their success with Andrew Cullen (5th year) coming 2nd in the 1500m and 2nd in the 2000m steeple chase and James Tate 3rd in the hammer. All three qualified for the All Irelands in Tullamore. The pinnacle of the weekend was the success of the Senior 100m Relay team who not only came first by some distance but broke the championship record held since 1991. Well done to Rob Keenan, Tim Nugent, Tom Kinsley (6th year) and Philip Laurence (4th year) who now look forward to defending their All Ireland title in Tullamore.

The sun made a guest appearance at this year's Biathlon. A fantastic afternoon on a perfect summers evening saw the junior and senior competition under way. The senior competition resulted in an impressive win for Vincent Leavy (5th year), with Gavin Murray (6th year) in second place followed closely by Andrew Cullen (5th year). A closely fought junior competition saw Christian McKenna (3rd year) in first place, Sean Hassett (2nd year) runner up and David Hardiman (2nd year) in third.

The Senior Water Polo team lead by Peter Walsh (6th year) completed an impressive Cup double (along with the Bert O'Brien cup earlier in the year) by defeating Marian College 15 -10 in the National Aquatic Centre. Many congratulations to Dean Smal (6th year) who retained the President's Trophy at this year's Swimming Gala. An enthralling President's Trophy event was the culmination of what was a hugely successful swimming gala. Dean Smal pipped Max Geuret in the final stages of the race to retain the trophy for the second year running.

Alex Campbell (5th Year) scored a hat-trick for the House Dayboys in the Final of this year's Paul Stanley Trophy. David Stanley, Paul's brother, presented the trophy and medals to both sides. The House

Boarders did very well to reach the Final and competed to the end. The Senior Soccer Millennium Cup team of 4th and 5th years was beaten by a strong Belvedere side in the final of this year's Millennium Cup held in Cabra. Captain Sam Walsh (5th year) and his squad started well with an early goal from Shea McDermott. 3 goals in 5 minutes before half-time changed the game and Belvedere ran out comfortable winners.



Dean Smal (6th Yr.) winner of The President's Trophy with Mr MacGinty

Congratulations to our Senior and Junior Table Tennis Teams who won their respective All-Ireland Competitions, held in Lisburn. The Senior Team of co-Captains Matt Finlay and Will Gallagher (both 6th Year), Jack Donnelly, Mark Doyle, Stefan Doyle and Daniel Webb (all 5th year) defeated Fivemiletown College, Co Fermanagh, 5 - 2 in the Final. The Junior Squad of Captain Andrew Campbell, Brian McMahon, Geoffrey O'Connor, Edward Kennedy, Nacio Montero, (all 3rd year) Laurence Shields, Tim Maguire, Sam Totterdell, Sam Hardiman and Conal Molumby (all 2nd year) defeated St Gerard's, Castlebar in the Semi-Final and Monaghan Collegiate in the Final.

Once again, there was a tremendous turnout of students, past students, parents and family members at our Sports & Family Day all of whom enjoyed a varied sports programme, the Open Day in the Lecture Room, the Big Build in the new Sports Hall and the music provided by the Stedfast Brass Band. Guest of honour Philip Lawton (Class of 1996) presented Gavin Thornbury (6th Year) with the Sports Personality of the Year award. Philip is an International Sailor and Olympian having represented Ireland at the Beijing Olympics in 2008.

The Karl Ashe Memorial was as usual a school sports calendar highlight and as usual failed to disappoint. Fergal Bolger (6th year) powered his way through the Dayboy defence in the final minute of the game. Over the bar – to extra time; under the bar – victory for the Boarders; Fergal's shot crashed against the bar – a Dayboy victory by one point. Mrs Ashe, Karl's mother, accompanied by Karl's grandmother, presented the trophy to winning Captain Jeff Landers (6th Year) at a ceremony held beside the Memorial Bench presented by the Ashe family in Karl's memory.

A great game – Karl would have relished it!

Photos courtesy of www.rockphotography.ie