

# Blackrock College Newsletter



## Special points of interest:

- Boarding School
- Junior Debating
- Pastoral Care Programme
- Commerce & Economics
- Guidance and Counselling
- Science Department

## Inside this issue:

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

## February 2014

Dear Parents

We live in an age of distractions, short attention spans; immediate gratification. The latest trend, Nekominations, has provided us with another tragic example of how youngsters can disconnect from the real world. So much of their time becomes immersed in a virtual reality. Real-time relationships, face-to-face conversations are suspended as online life seems to be more appealing.

Increasingly, youngsters are more comfortable looking at a screen, tapping on the keyboard in a parallel world. The attraction is a suspension of reality which puts them on par with vacuous celebrities, heroes and villains and an opportunity to imitate their feckless acts. Whereas the real world demands depth, character and commitment over time, the online culture welcomes the superficial, self-indulgence, easy likes and dislikes – just tick the box and jump aboard – illusions and delusions; all relatively painless, but with serious consequences.

The focus of our Bullying Awareness Day, January 27th, was cyberspace and how we should respect others and by doing so respect ourselves. Our online lives should show the same sensitivity that is demanded by Gospel values in our daily routine. This requires tough mindedness, an ability to step back, grace to resist the easy option and choosing to stand up for what is right.

This was also the message of Catholic Schools Week, as we reminded the boys of the presence of Christ in the bits and pieces of our everyday lives.

At the Transition Year Family Mass, Fr. Marc Whelan (Class of 1981), Spiritan Provincial, challenged the boys as they set out on their personal voyages of discovery, to learn to distinguish between what is essential for fulfilment and happiness and what can only give a short lived buzz. A Catholic Education is built around community, which means treating one another with care and respect so that those whom we encounter recognise the good in themselves. We commit to this community every time we celebrate the Eucharist. We try to live it out in solidarity, be it at the Leman Concert, the Whole School Assembly or the ROAR appeal for Machakos; in pastoral placements, on the soup run and Spirasi Fast, at parent-teacher meetings, career talks and mock interviews or in the myriad of extra-curricular activities.

This solidarity was particularly evident with the visit of Fr. John Wambu CSSp., the first Principal of the Holy Ghost school in Machakos which opened on Libermann (co-founder of the Spiritan Order) Day, February 2, 2014.

Fr. John spent a week with us and thanked our Spiritan Community and the extended Blackrock family of parents, past and present students, and staff for their support and encouragement. His visit confirmed the very real difference that we can make in the lives of the less fortunate and built upon our long tradition of concern for others.

The Class of 2014, parents and students, will become the fourth group to work on the project this summer as Phase II gets underway.

Blackrock is a busy place, driven by purposeful energy, enthusiasm and optimism; always on the march, striving to be better. The recent launch of our new Website will improve communications. The opening of our Creative Arts and Digital Learning Centre will further self directed and collaborative learning amongst the boys. And, of course, the innovation, ingenuity, encouragement and partnership so evident in the classroom challenges the boys to be the best they can be.

Blackrock is a place where people fulfil potential. So much happens, but it is the intangible, our community spirit which impels us to keep going, strengthens our faith, assuages doubt and is the bedrock of our collaborative culture.

For this and much more, I thank our Spiritan Community, my colleagues, the parent body and College Union who set an agenda that inspires our boys to grow in competence, conscience and compassion, to be committed to God and to the service of others.

Enjoy the break.

**ALAN MacGINTY**  
Principal



## Second Year



2014 has seen this group of Second Year boys continuing their enjoyable start in the main College campus. Their on-going achievements are reflected in the weekly **Application Cards**, which each boy brings home on a Monday. This provides a great opportunity to parents to congratulate their son on another good week's work. More than half the year group is on the Principal's List in any one week. The Principal's List compliments those boys who have achieved at least seven ones on their card for that week, reinforcing good practice and organisation. A student who continually achieves the Principal's List gives himself the opportunity to be nominated for an Honours Award at the School Prize Giving in May.

The **House Competitions** in Second Year continued on with the Art competition being held and the Table Tennis and Chess competitions slowly coming to a climax. The House Cross Country will be held after the mid-term break. A **Whole School Assembly** was held to honour the start of the College's defence of both the Junior and Senior Trophies in rugby.

The **Leman Concert** was held with Second Year boys appearing at the beginning and end of the event. Harry Kearns and Conor Williams each played a solo piece, much to the admiration of the audience. Congratulations to all Second Years boys

who participated in the choir and orchestra as well. The **BT Young Scientist Exhibition** saw Oisín Ryan display his project on *An Investigation into Sub-conscious Bias in Boys*. We compliment him on his achievement.



Harry Kearns, Oisín Ryan & Conor Williams

**Catholic Schools Week** started with *Bullying Awareness Day* and Second Year had an interactive talk from John Wills of Barnardos on the topic of cyber-bullying. A Treasure Hunt was also held highlighting the explicit references to our Catholic ethos in the school buildings and grounds. The boys also attended Holy Mass for the Feast of the Epiphany at the start of term.

We remind you that parents of Second Year are invited to attend two **seminars** to be held in March. The first on the 5th March will be given by Dr Marriane Walsh on the topic of Nutrition and on 12th March Mary Briody will give a talk on Teenage Self-esteem. Each seminar begins at 7.30 pm in the Lecture Hall and we thank the members of the Second Year Parents' Committee for their organisation of these timely talks.

## Third Year



Six busy but more importantly productive weeks have passed since our return after Christmas on the feast of the Epiphany, when the boys began the term with the celebration of the Eucharist with Fr. Hyacinth. On at least three occasions we've had over 100 boys on the Principal's List, for which great credit is due. However, the number for Progress Week was just over fifty which could be a result of insufficient time being devoted to ongoing revision. With the next Progress Card due on **Friday 28th February**, and Exams starting on the **15th March**, this issue needs to be addressed upon our return from mid-term break.



JCT players Alan Francis, Peter O'Reilly & John Gallagher in action against CBC

Participation across a wide range of activities has been very satisfactory. We commend all boys who have represented the College in recent weeks on their efforts and we look forward to sustained commitment for the remainder of the term. For boys hoping to represent the College in Tennis this year, Ms. Dillon should be contacted on return.

### Bullying Awareness Day

The long term ramifications of unscrupulous posts on Facebook were highlighted. Mention was also made of a US student who had four letters of acceptance to top universities, including Harvard, withdrawn within days following the posting on his page of the "celebrations" after graduation. The practice of interviewees being asked to show their Facebook page to potential employers was an eye opener for many and

the fact that nothing can be deleted with one hundred percent confidence was also emphasised. All interaction on Facebook and other social networking sites ought to be governed by **Respect** for one's self and others.

### Day of Reflection

Mr. Gerry Keegan was facilitator of this year's annual Day of Reflection, attended by two Houses a day at the Disciples of the Divine Master. Very positive feedback was received from Gerry and Mr. Myles Ryan who organised the opportunity. This was echoed by the boys on whose behalf the House captains were asked to provide their own feedback, including the following – "I thought that the use of music was inspiring and kept the boys engaged throughout the day", "A very powerful experience that was enjoyed by all the boys. Great fun throughout too", "Very powerful, encouraged me to take time out and think about faith and life", "We were all left astonished and in awe at the message Gerry gave to us".

### Junior Certificate

Each boy will be given a form to be completed by their teachers, recommending what level to take for that particular subject. On completion by all the teachers the boys should get the form signed by a parent or guardian and returned to the Dean by the end of February. In addition, a pre-printed Giro Form for payment of the examination fee of €109 is expected shortly from the State Examination Commission. The boys will be asked to take it home and following payment to return it to the Dean.

### Parents' Annual Dinner

Date: Friday 28th March  
Venue: Elm Park Golf and Sports Club  
Cost: €35 per head  
Forms available at Reception

## Transition Year



### TRIP TO INDIA WITH GOAL

On 11th January, nine Transition Year students travelled to Kolkata (with Ms Anne Payne and Alan Vard from GOAL) where they visited numerous and varied GOAL projects. These ranged from brick kilns, to schools for street children, a gigantic dump, sanitation projects and an orthopaedic hospital for children suffering from club foot and other disorders. To say the trip was an emotional roller-coaster is an understatement. The students saw poverty in its rawest and most moving form in the many people and children they met. The children's delight in simple gifts of lollipops, balloons and crayons was heart-rending; their wonderful smiles and openness, truly humbling.

The students were all deeply moved by what they saw and experienced. Upon

returning to Dublin, they compiled a wonderful slideshow and video of their trip. They have already made a presentation to Transition Year students and plan to do the same for other year groups. By doing so, they hope to raise awareness of the work done by GOAL in Kolkata.

### GOAL/AIDLINK ST.PATRICK'S DAY BADGE PROJECT

The largest school fundraiser in the country has just got underway. Last year, the project raised a considerable amount of money for the Developing World. This year, approximately 170 students are involved. They will visit national schools and secondary schools, approach businesses for support and distribute over 100,000 badges nationwide. We hope to launch the badge campaign in late February/early March.





# Transition Year

## FAMILY MASS

The Transition Year Family Mass on 26th January was very well attended. The chief celebrant, Father Marc Whelan CSSp, urged the boys "to make the most of the Transition Year experience, to change their perspective on life, on the world – to think anew, to change their way of thinking." The beautiful readings, wonderful music, singing and superb Communion Reflection, delivered by Conor Cowhey and Jordan McDonald, all contributed to making this a most special Mass. I would especially like to thank Mr Myles Ryan for the great care, time, thoughtfulness and commitment he put into preparing the boys who participated extensively in the liturgy.

## SOUP-RUN

Under the supervision and guidance of Ms Mary McMahon (6th year Chaplain), a number of Transition Year boys have set up a soup run every Thursday night in conjunction with Sr Consilio's Cuan Mhuire Rehabilitation Centre (Gardiner Street) and the Legion of Mary. Four boys head for the city centre with Ms McMahon each Thursday evening to distribute hot soup, sandwiches, tea, coffee and other provisions to homeless men and women. The January weather has not always been kind, but the boys have more than made up for this with their enthusiasm, energy and generosity of spirit. The experience has been both eye-opening and hugely rewarding as it has focused the students on the harsh reality of life on the streets but also the inspirational fortitude of so many who find themselves in these circumstances. I am indebted to Ms McMahon for facilitating such a worthwhile and important project.

## WORK EXPERIENCE

As you are aware the first Transition Year Work Experience Placement took place from 10th-14th February 2014. Quite a high number of students failed to meet several deadlines for the submission of their placement details. The deadline is essential in order to facilitate the extensive administrative workload that this project requires.

The second Work Experience Placement takes place from **7th-11th April 2014**. Mr Garry Sullivan, Work Experience Coordinator, has requested that you should submit the details for this placement by Friday **7th March 2014**.

Work Experience Details Forms are available on the TY web site: [www.Rockty.com](http://www.Rockty.com)

**User name:** ty

**Password:** rock.

## WILLOW PARK SHOW

In the past month a dedicated group of Transition Year students have put their hearts and souls into set and costume design for the Willow Park show *My Son Pinocchio Jr.* James O'Donnell, James Huggard, Alex Ryan, Patrick O'Callaghan, Daniel Evans and Andrew Robinson have devoted countless hours to designing, building and painting a most artistic set whilst Stephen Rooney has turned his artistic skills to designing and creating costumes. Many thanks to the inimitable Mary Rose Stauder from Willow Park for giving the boys such a marvellous opportunity to develop their creative talents. Well done to all involved.

## EVENING COURSES

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

## TOURS

On 21st January, Transition Year students went to see *Long Walk to Freedom*, the wonderful film about Nelson Mandela. For many of the boys, this was the first time they really gained an understanding of the history of apartheid and an insight into Mandela's struggle.

## DRAGONS' DEN COMPETITION

This exciting initiative is now in its 6th year and students are busy developing their business ideas. To help with idea generation and development, they attended two workshops in January. We wish the boys the very best of luck as

they prepare their business plans and presentations for the preliminary round which will be held in late February and the Final in early March.

## TRANSITION YEAR LECTURE SERIES

On 14th January, Anne Cleary from *Aidlink* spoke to the boys about the very important work done by *Aidlink* in The Developing World. It is hoped that this lecture will motivate the students to work really hard on the forthcoming St Patrick's Day badge project. On 3rd February Celine Daly, from the Dermatology Department in Sligo Regional Hospital, spoke to the boys about a Sun Awareness programme which has been running in both Australia and the UK. Her talk is part of an initiative by the Irish Cancer Society's *Sun Smart Campaign* to raise awareness in young people about the dangers of skin cancer. Hopefully, the boys now have an increased awareness of the importance of protecting their skin.

## COMPUTER PROGRAMMING COURSE

The School of Computer Science and Statistics (SCSS) in Trinity College is running a computer programming course this term for a group of twenty five Transition Year students. Dr Mike Brady from SCSS is teaching the course and the boys are really enjoying the insights he is giving them into the exciting world of computer programming. This is the second year we have been involved in this innovative venture. I am indebted to Dr Brady and Ms Catherine O'Connor from Trinity College for offering our students this unique opportunity to learn about computer programming.

## FAITH FRIENDS

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

## TRIP TO THE YOUNG SCIENTIST EXHIBITION

On Thursday 9th January, Transition Year students visited the Young Scientist Exhibition in the R.D.S. As in the past, the boys thoroughly enjoyed the experience of visiting this extraordinary showcase of scientific and creative achievement. Congratulations to Declan Norton and Rory Patterson whose projects attracted a huge amount of interest and attention.

## TRANSITION YEAR PARENTS' SOCIAL

The Transition Year Parents' Social on 31st January was a most enjoyable occasion. It is the only Parents' Dinner which is held in the College and thus holds a very special place in people's hearts. Many thanks to the parents whose generous donations to a raffle resulted in €2,250 being raised for the Soup-Run project. Special congratulations are due to The Transition Year Parents' Committee who put so much work into organising a truly great night out. Many thanks also to the catering staff who produced a magnificent meal.

## A NOTE FROM THE TRANSITION YEAR PARENTS' COMMITTEE

*The 4th Year Parents' Dinner, was held on Friday 31st January in the College. The evening attracted a record number of 193 Parents for a Drinks reception, followed by a delicious Dinner.*

*The College entrance, Lecture Hall and Refectory were beautifully decorated and hardly recognisable as the places you normally attend for Evening Talks and Parent Teacher meetings!!*

*A very generous €2,250 Euro was raised on the night for the Soup Run Charity that our TY boys are involved in. Many thanks to Parents and local businesses who donated the wonderful gifts and contributed to the Raffle.*

*The evening was a wonderful opportunity for Parents to meet and catch up with each other and to see the College looking so well. The 4th Parents' Committee would like to thank everybody who made this evening such a wonderful success.*

# Fifth Year



## Careers

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

## Bullying Awareness Day

Bullying Awareness Day took place on the 27th January. Fifth Years attended a lecture given by John Wills of Barnardos about cyberbullying and safety online. A lunchtime debate on social media was also held, and was well attended by fifth year students. A confidential email address "[tacklingbullying@blackrockcollege.com](mailto:tacklingbullying@blackrockcollege.com)" is in place and ready to help students who are being bullied, or who wish to report bullying.

## Extra Curricular

On Sunday 19th January, the talents of many Fifth Year students were displayed at the Leman Concert in the National Concert Hall, including a strong presence in both the Leman and Libermann choirs, and of course the orchestra. "Loose Threads" (Ronan Holohan, Ross Finnegan, Ben Duffy, Richard Grainger and Kevin McDonnell) performed an exciting rendition of Caravan by Van Morrison, accompanied by Patrick McEnroe on the saxophone, while Richard Grainger also performed an excellent solo on the cello. Many also worked backstage on the night. We congratulate all involved on a memorable night.

The involvement of Fifth Year extends to the sports field where Michael Reidy, Hugo Kean, Ross Casey and Daniel Mullane were part of the SCT squad who beat CBC Monkstown 31-3 on Tuesday the 4th of February. House rugby has got off to a slow start with numerous cancellations due to poor weather conditions. We also wish them the best of luck in their upcoming cup campaigns.

The soccer team's spirited campaign has come to an end. They were knocked out in the semi-final by Patrician College Newbridge. It was a tightly fought encounter between the two sides that ended in a 3-1 victory for Newbridge. Fifth Year had a large contingent on the team where Alan Murphy, Sean O'Dowd, Gavin Hartnett, Andrew Hickey, Daniel Doyle, Andrew Kilmartin, Sam Browne and Conor McCormack trained hard all season.

In Basketball, the U-19s season ended with an unlucky loss to St. Columba's in the South Dublin League Quarter Final on a score line of 45-29. St. Columba's had an outstanding point guard who was the clear difference between the two sides. The U-19s can be very proud of their achievements this year, an All-Ireland Quarter Final appearance in the Schools Cup along with the Quarter Final of the South Dublin League. Well done to Alvaro Lopez, Alex Jurado and Antoine Vidalinc on their excellent efforts over the course of the season and they will be the core of the team next year.

The College rowing team has been preparing for the up and coming season, but

unfortunately due to the bad weather, all the different crews have been kept off the water. The weather has affected most, if not all sports in the College, and rowing in particular. The first event of the year was meant to be St. Michael's Head of The River at O'Brien's Bridge in Co. Clare on the 1st Feb. but was cancelled and has been rescheduled to the 22nd Feb. In spite of the inclement weather, the team has been training indoors on the new rowing machines. They are currently preparing for the next event in Belfast on the Lagan (15th Feb) and Erne Head of the River in Enniskillen (1st March).

Since Christmas the cross country teams attended the DCU invitational in January. All the boys ran well with the intermediate team taking home trophies for second place. Blackrock were very successful in the East Leinsters in Avondale House, Rathdrum. The senior team came in first, with the intermediate team also taking home a plaque for first place.

On the 20th January, Jeff Kirwan and David O'Reilly of 5th Year represented Blackrock College in the Irish History Teachers Association inter-schools quiz in Tallaght Community School. With the help of 6th Year students Darragh Larkin and Liam Quigley, the team did very well, finishing 4th out of 17 schools.

It's been a competitive term for the Senior Debating Society. In the prestigious Leinster Senior Schools, James Quinn, Joshua Kieran-Glennon and Joshua Gorman-Climax represented Fifth Year, with Joshua Kieran-Glennon progressing to the quarter finals as an individual. Joshua Kieran-Glennon and James Quinn also participated in the trials for the Oxford Union Competition, but unfortunately failed to progress. In a friendlier forum, Joshua Kieran-Glennon, Joshua Gorman-Climax and James Quinn journeyed to Mount Anville on Thursday January 30th to oppose the motion "Religion has no place in today's technological world". They were victorious, and James Quinn was named best speaker.

From a Model United Nations perspective, the large group of students involved are preparing diligently for their next conference, which will take place at the end of February in Wesley College. Under the guidance and tutelage of Mr. Mark Smyth, they meet every Friday and debate issues ranging from Gun Control to Global Warming.

## Spirasi Fast

A number of fifth year students signed up to participate in a day long fast, held on 13th and 14th Feb. This event is organised by the House Representatives and is in aid of SPIRASI, The Spiritan Asylum Services Initiative. SPIRASI is a humanitarian, intercultural, non-governmental organisation that works with asylum seekers, refugees and other disadvantaged migrant groups, with special concern for survivors of torture. In partnership with others, SPIRASI enables access to specialist services to promote the well-being of the human person, and encourages self-reliance and integration into Ireland. On Sunday 9th March the 5th Year Family Mass will be celebrated in the College Chapel at 11.00 am. It is hoped that as many parents and sons as possible will be in attendance where the proceeds of fast will be presented to the representatives from SPIRASI.



# Sixth Year



## Parent-Teacher Meeting (Jan 9th)

There was a very large attendance at the 6th Year Parent-Teacher Meeting on Thursday January 9th. The feedback from this evening was extremely positive and all present felt it was most beneficial to have this meeting immediately on our return to school when feedback from Christmas examinations could be shared and plans of work for terms 2 and 3 outlined.

## Leman Concert (Jan 19th)

The 28th Leman Festival Concert was held on Sunday 19th January in the National Concert Hall. 49 of the Class of 2014 were involved in this wonderful celebration of musical talent in the College. The standard of performance on the night was outstanding and congratulations to all involved. In particular, it is worth noting the contribution of MCs Jack Brophy and Conn McCarrick; Stage Manager James Grogan; Soloists Ross O'Leary, Jonathan Hunter, Dane Fitzpatrick and Evan Holland; Leader of the Orchestra, Jonathon Ng; Rockapella and the 6th Year Bands.



Ross O'Leary (6th Year) at the Leman Concert

## Bullying Awareness Day (Jan 27th)

On January 27th, as part of Bullying Awareness Day, Ms. Catherine of Flynn of William Fry solicitors and Mr. Shane Murphy SC spoke to the students about the career and legal risks taken by people who post unsuitable content on their web pages. The growing practice of Prospective employers requesting access to personal social media sites was noted in particular. The day was also marked by a Suit & Blazer day hosted by the Class of 2014. Many thanks to Ms. McGee, Matthew O'Driscoll, and the 6th Year members of the Student Council for making this a most innovative day in the school calendar.

## Career Interviews (Jan 29th)

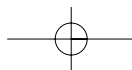
63 sixth year students availed of the Career Mock Interviews organised by the Careers Department in association with the Past Pupils Union on Wednesday 29th January. 19 past students provided formal interviews across a broad spectrum of careers including Finance, Nutrition, Business, Engineering, Architecture, Media and Journalism, Marketing, Medicine, Law, Physiotherapy and Politics. Many thanks in particular to Ms. Carleen McGee, Robert McCarthy and David Kilty for their co-ordination of the evening.

## Extra Curricular Programme

Sixth year students have continued to participate in a wide variety of College activities this half-term...

Firstly we congratulate Nick Timoney and the rest of the SCT squad who have enjoyed success over CBC Monkstown and St. Michael's College in this year's Senior Cup so far. We wish the team continued success as they prepare for their semi-final after mid-term. We congratulate also the Cheerleading Team under the leadership of Alfie O'Sullivan, Andrew Hally-Doody, David Carr, Jeff Burke and James Fox for the





## Sixth Year Cont'd



excellent Whole School Assembly in the Sports Hall on January 23rd and their wonderful support of the Cup Teams in Donnybrook. We wish the cheerleaders well for the rest of the SCT and the JCT campaign.

As the rugby season enters its competitive stage, we offer our best wishes to the Castle Rugby teams competing in Leinster Branch Rugby Leagues. It is hoped that many 6th Year students will enjoy these final weeks of involvement in competitive rugby at schools level.



Luke Fitzpatrick (6th Year), at the Leman Concert

Commiserations to Fred Kenny and the Senior Soccer squad who suffered double semi-final heartache this half term. On January 8th an excellent Templeogue College side ended our interest in the Dublin Metropolitan League and on January 28th, two very late goals sealed a 3-1 victory for Patrician Newbridge in the Leinster Senior Schools Semi-Final on the astro turf in Peamount. The squad should be very proud of their excellent campaign and will complete their season with the annual visit of St. Bede's from Manchester in March. We wish them well in these fixtures.

Paul & Ryan O'Dea and Frank Vaughan were members of the College Senior Relay Team that won silver medals in both the freestyle and medley relays at the Leinster

Swimming Championships in the NAC on January 12th.

James Grogan (4th), Eoin Gleeson (11th) and Simon Curran (17th) were members of the Senior Cross-Country team that won the rearranged East-Leinster Champions at Avondale in Wicklow on February 6th. We wish them well in the Leinster Championships.

Our Maths teams of James Cullen, Daire Brady, Jonathan McDowell and Andrew McCarthy & Kevin Heavey, Jeff Burke, Michael Feely and Jack Hanrahan performed admirably to finish joint 4th, just two points behind the winning team in the Annual School's Senior Maths Quiz on January 31st. Many thanks to Mr. Costello for facilitating this opportunity.

Congratulations to Adam Donnelly, Conn McCarrick and Kevin Heavey, the 6th Year members of the College Team who successfully proposed the motion that *'This House believes that Ireland is best ruled by foreigners'* in the annual Past versus Present Debate on Tuesday 11th February. This was the first victory for the College team since 2011 and Conn McCarrick was also named best speaker on the night. Well done to all!

### Finally

The 6th Year Parents' Committee and House Representatives' work on behalf of the Class of 2014 is ongoing with sub-committees planning all aspects of both the Graduation in May and the Summer Project in Kenya next July. We wish them continued success with this work.

## Boarding School



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

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



Boarders' Choir at the Leman Concert

We would like to welcome to the Boarding School two new transition year students, Dmitry Khoruzin and Llewellyn de Souza. They have both settled in very well and we wish them all the best with their future in Blackrock College.

Weekend activities have seen the boys attend the cinema and the bowling alley, the Temple Bar Traditional Music Festival, the Young Scientist Exhibition, Ireland International Rugby match against Scotland.

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

The Boarders' Parents Committee organised a night at the Leman Concert. They had a great evening in the Conrad prior to the show and enjoyed the fabulous music and song performed by all the boys. The Boarders' Choir performed very well indeed and thanks to Mr. Mick Swan for preparing the boys.

Rory Patterson represented us in this year's BT Young Scientist Exhibition in the RDS with his project entitled "Why do we laugh at people in pain?" This project was well received by the judges and won a Best Display prize. Rory also features in an interview in The Journal, well done Rory.

The 1st and 4th years spent an evening preparing the ROAR Cans for Machakos, and these were distributed before midterm. Thanks to the boys for helping with this new initiative.

Congratulations to Ian Leavy and Matthew Long, who won the Leinster Swimming medals in January, we wish them all the best in future swimming competitions. We wish all on the sports teams the best with their leagues and cups this term and we look forward to them all performing to the best of their ability in each game. The 4th year boarders enjoyed their work experience prior to midterm, they certainly felt tired and now know what it feels like to work a full day.

Thanks once again to all the Castle staff for their sterling work throughout the year thus far, enjoy midterm and we will see you when the Castle opens on Sunday February 23rd.



## for Debating

Following on from their active and lively first term, the Junior Debating Society members continue to grown in confidence and ability. Further to weekly meetings, early January saw a number of students compete in the latest round of the Matheson National Junior Mace competition, hosted by Conleth's College. Ben Heapes, Scott Donohoe, Rhys Hennessey and John and Mark Heavey spent a rainy Saturday debating in several rounds. We were subsequently delighted to receive the news, that based on cumulative points, Scott Donohoe (3rd year) has been shortlisted as a Leinster finalist out of three hundred speakers. A fabulous achievement and we wish Scott well on Leinster Finals Day coming up in late March.

Meanwhile our two teams, Oisín Ryan and Stephen Ryan (both 2nd year) and Kevin O'Donnell and Scott Donohoe (both 3rd year) competing the UCD Junior Schools' Debating Competition have both been victorious in their latest rounds, debating *"that this house would never imprison non-violent offenders"* and *"that parenting classes should be compulsory."* All four are anxiously awaiting news of further rounds. Well done and best wishes to them and to all our enthusiastic junior debaters.

# Pastoral Care Programme



We are keenly aware of the absence of Fr. Seán Farragher on our return after the Christmas Holidays this year. His death after a brief illness was a significant moment in the story of Blackrock College. We prayed at his funeral on Dec. 16th 2013 knowing that here was a servant of the College whose whole life since his Ordination had been put at the service of the boys. His writings and the many photographs that record the life of the school during his long years here stand as an invaluable legacy and record his interest and concern. No one understood more than he the spirit that underpinned the founding of Blackrock and nobody cared more that Fr. Leman's vision would continue to guide the College into the future. Even as we mourn his leaving we are somehow aware that his kindly spirit lingers still on the corridors and in the grounds. We pray with him that Blackrock may always be true to its high ideals, "Fides et Robur".

In this New Year the boys returned to school on the 6th of January, the Feast of the Epiphany. Fr. Hyacinth Nwakuna, College Chaplain, organised Masses for all boys during their Religion Class periods. Many thanks to him and to the Fathers who celebrated. Thanks to Fr. Hyacinth also for marking Church Unity Octave which runs each year from the 18th – 25th January, drawing to a close on the feast-day of the Conversion of St. Paul.

In the first week back the 5th Transition Year group prepared for their Pastoral Placement which was scheduled for the 2 weeks beginning on Monday 13th Jan. This year's boys have received much favourable comment from the Centres where they serve the needs of people with a wide range of disabilities. The week of preparation offered to each class before their starting day is really very important. They get a clear understanding of the purpose behind their participation and the attitudes they need to bring in order to contribute and receive a positive experience. The 5th & 6th groups have now completed their placements and once again have been commended enthusiastically by their mentors in the various centres. The Placement for our next group begins immediately after the Easter holidays.

Third Year Days of Reflection were facilitated by Mr. Gerry Keegan during the second week back after Christmas. House Representatives did a fine job in helping out with arrangements. As in previous years the Retreats took place in facilities at the top of Newtownpark Ave. provided by the Sisters, Disciples of the Divine Master. The boys were enthusiastic in their appreciation of Mr. Keegan's words of hope and encouragement. Mr. Keegan had only words of praise for the maturity and respect shown by the lads, especially for the reverence shown in their meditation before the Blessed Sacrament. The real value of these days lies in the opportunity to grow in appreciation of our inner lives and to grow in gratitude for the constant care of the Holy Spirit in all our days. Many thanks to Mr. Sean Dunne, Third Year Dean, and the ever willing Mr. Garry Sullivan, 3rd Year Counsellor, for their input.

Ms. Orla Walsh, Faith Development Officer with the D.E.A, continued her excellent work with the Transition Year boys in running the Faith Friends

Programme aided by Mr. Terry O'Reilly. Ms. Walsh prepared our 4th Years to facilitate small groups of the Willow Park Confirmation classes in reflection, prayer and discussion. After the Confirmation Ceremony they will meet again to look at how they might make the most of the gifts received from the Holy Spirit. We thank God for the success of these meetings both currently and in previous years. Thanks to all Willow staff for the work they do with their youngsters and the organisation of meetings. This is an excellent example of co-operation between Willow and 'Rock.

Catholic Schools Week was celebrated throughout the school with an opportunity for Adoration on a morning of Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. The boys were invited to participate in a treasure hunt, locating and identifying many of the wonderful works of religious art throughout the campus. The week began with the 4th Year Family Mass celebrated by Fr. Marc Whelan, past student of the College and currently Provincial of the Irish Province. It was clear from his homily that he is abreast of current developments in T.Y. and the boys and parents spoke appreciatively of the obvious care with which he had prepared his words. Many commented very favourably too on the demeanour and participation of the students. Jordan McCormack and Conor Cowhey, recently returned from a Goal trip to India, offered a moving and challenging Communion Reflection.

It has been heartening to see the initiative of last year's YSI group in T.Y. continue. Ms. Mary McMahon, our 6th Year Chaplain, has supervised both 5th and 4th Year students on a city centre soup-run to the homeless on Thursday and Friday evenings. This work has been undertaken in association with the Legion of Mary. There are so many reasons to commend this work, not least being the historical links between the College and Frank Duff. I'm sure Fr. Seán Farragher will bless this outreach with continuing success. The impact on the boys of this opportunity to bring real comfort to the needy must plant seeds of hope for the future.

The blessing of throats on the Feast of St. Blaise, the DEA in-service in Kimmage, the Leman Festival Concert XXVIII, the continuing Camino preparations, the Bullying Awareness Day are all part of the pastoral life in the College. We are delighted that Father Paddy Dundon has taken on the mantle of Fr. Sean in continuing the tradition of early morning Mass. At 8.20am each school morning the opportunity continues for all the College community to celebrate together in the Chapel.

As mid-term approaches, our Fifth Year students call on family and friends of the Blackrock College Community to sponsor them in their generous fundraising fast over Thursday 13th and Friday 14th Feb. This fast is in aid of Spirasi, the Spiritan agency which offers support to asylum seekers and victims of torture who have escaped many perils in diverse countries. We are grateful to Fanong Fevant Fon from Cameroon for telling us something of his harrowing story on his visit to Blackrock on Thursday 6th Feb. We hope to present the proceeds of this initiative to Spirasi at the Fifth Year Family Mass after mid-term.

# Commerce & Economics Society



On Tues 28 Jan, The Blackrock College Commerce & Economics Society was delighted to welcome Gavin Duffy to the College to share some of his experiences with 5th and 6th year students. Gavin is one of the business mentors and investors on RTE's Dragons' Den, and as a professional Communications Trainer, has been training senior executives and company CEO's who have to face the media for over 25 years. A regular radio commentator on business and the economy, Gavin is an acknowledged expert in media coaching and business development.

Gavin recalled key events in his personal life and career to date and outlined the importance of goal setting, positivity and a "can do" attitude in the world of business and beyond.



Darragh Larkin of the C&E Society making a presentation to Mr Gavin Duffy.

There was a question and answer session afterwards and the C&E Society is most grateful to Gavin for giving up his time to be with us.





# Guidance and Counselling

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

A number of students also submitted UCAS applications for the January 15th deadline. Some students have already received offers from the Imperial College London and the University of Cardiff while other applicants are getting ready to attend interviews and awaiting their final offers.

Some 6th year students are preparing to take the HPAT-Ireland test on March 1st in various venues. These students have had the opportunity to participate in a HPAT preparation course that has been available in the school on Saturday mornings. They have also taken a number of practice tests and good progress has been made.

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

Saturday morning Career Talks took place throughout January and February for 5th and 6th year students. Eight different career disciplines and their numerous career paths were presented by past students and associated professionals. The career disciplines included Engineering, Accounting/Marketing, Law, Computing, Agricultural Science, Medicine, Communications/Media and Entrepreneurship. The talks were well attended with students finding them very informative and inspiring. The college is very grateful to the Past Pupils Union who assisted with the arrangement of these talks.

Career coaching interviews for 6th years took place on Wednesday 29th January. This event was organised with the assistance of the Past Pupils Union. The interviewers on the night, all past pupils approached the evening in a very professional manner while sharing their own wealth of experiences with the sixth year students. Students who participated in the programme submitted a Letter of Application and Curriculum Vitae prior to their interview. Again this year a particular emphasis was placed on coaching the students. Consequently on the evening, immediately following the formal interview each candidate was given useful feedback and coaching about his preparation for and performance at the interview. This proved to be a very valuable learning experience. Interviewers were very impressed by the students who participated.

A number of sixth year students took part in the first round of the All Ireland Linguistics Olympiad on Thursday, February 6th. The All Ireland Linguistics Olympiad (AILO) is run by the Centre for Global Intelligent Content and is a contest in which secondary school students develop their own strategies for

solving problems in fascinating real languages from around the globe. Students must use their ingenuity to solve puzzles such as deciphering Egyptian hieroglyphics; interpreting Tenji, the Japanese equivalent of Braille; and writing the names of football teams in Chinese. No prior knowledge of linguistics or a second language is required: even the hardest problems require only logical ability, patient work, and a willingness to think around corners. The aim of the competition is to develop students' problem solving skills and to inspire them to consider the fascinating range of third level courses and careers at the intersection of language, linguistics and computing. The top 100 students qualify to compete in individual and team categories at the national finals of AILO, which will be hosted in March 2014 at Trinity College Dublin. The top four students in the individual round at the national finals will qualify to represent Ireland at the International Linguistics Olympiad (IOL) in Beijing, China in July 2014.

14 students from the college attended the Cycle Against Suicide Student Leaders' Congress on Wednesday, January 15th. The conference was attended by 130 schools and 4000 students. The aim of the conference was to promote positive mental health, help-seeking behaviour in young people and to get across the message that **'it's ok not to feel ok and it's absolutely ok to ask for help'**. Throughout the day various activities took place; a number of schools showcased mental health projects and initiatives they had set up in their own schools, there were panel discussions on positive mental health delivered by Finbar Walsh (the late Donal Walsh's father), Reachout.com, Brent Pope and Niall Breslin (Bressie) and performances led by the Dublin Gospel Choir and the Heathers. The students have brought back lots of ideas from the Congress that will continue to help promote positive mental health and help-seeking behaviour in the college and they look forward to being involved in setting up some further initiatives in the college in the coming year.

Bullying Awareness Day took place on Monday 27th January. Numerous events were arranged for this day. Each year group attended a talk on Cyberbullying and Internet Safety. 2nd and 5th years were spoken to by Mr John Wills, Education Development Executive with Barnardos on the issues of Cyberbullying and Internet Safety. 3rd and 4th years were spoken to by Mr Darren Dunwoody (Microsoft) and Garda Niamh Colfer on the issues of Cyberbullying and Internet Safety. Sixth Years were spoken to by Senior Council Mr Shane Murphy and Ms Catherine O'Flynn, Partner in William Fry's Employment and Pensions Department on the issue of using social media safely and responsibly. Second year students received a Bullying Awareness wristband which features the school's anti-bullying slogan 'Rock Tackling Bullying' as well as the support email address that has been established in the school, [tacklingbullying@blackrockcollege.com](mailto:tacklingbullying@blackrockcollege.com). Students may email this address if they are being bullied themselves or are aware of other bullying behaviour. Also, the updated Anti-Bullying Policy may be viewed online on [www.blackrockcollege.com](http://www.blackrockcollege.com). It is our hope in the college that everyone will help to tackle the issue of bullying by standing up and speaking out against it.

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



## Science Department

### European Union Science Olympiad

Joshua Gordon Climax will be in Athens from 30th March to 6th April representing Ireland at this year's European Union Science Olympiad competition. There are only two teams of three going from Ireland with specialists in Biology, Chemistry & Physics. So it has been quite an achievement for Joshua to get one of only two places as a specialist in Chemistry. We wish Joshua and his team members the best of luck in the competition.

### BT Young Scientist 2014

The BT Young Scientist & Technology Exhibition celebrated its 50th year this year, which took place from the 7th January to Saturday 11th January 2014. A

record breaking 2000 projects were submitted, with 550 projects were selected for display and judging at the RDS. We had three successful entrants this year. Transition Year was represented by Rory Patterson – 'Why do we laugh at others in pain?' and Declan Norton – 'A Comparison of a single lift hovercraft versus quad-lift hovercraft'. Representing second year was Oisín Ryan – 'To investigate subconscious bias in children'. While we had no winners, Rory did receive a rosette for his outstanding display. The students all had a brilliant and enjoyable week. Well done to all who participated.

# Sport



## Badminton

The Under 14 Badminton Competition got underway in January. Blackrock's group consisted of St. Benildus College, Holy Child Sallynoggin and Terenure College. The campaign commenced with an away match against Terenure College. Blackrock were the stronger team on the day and came away with a victory of 6 matches to 0. Spurred on by this great start Blackrock went on to face St. Benildus College in another away match. The Blackrock players were tested during this match with it coming down to the wire. Blackrock eventually won out with an overall score of 4 matches to 2. The last group match was played against Holy Child Sallynoggin at home. Blackrock were anxious to get a third victory in a row under their belt. This was to be the case with Blackrock winning out with a score of 4 matches to 2 after another closely contested match. The team now goes forward to compete in the Under 14 Division 4 final which will be held after the midterm break. The players are very much looking forward to this and we wish them every success.

## Basketball

**U-19:** The U-19's season ended with an unlucky loss to St.Columba's in the South Dublin League Quarter Final on a score line of 45-29. The U-19s can be very proud of their achievements this year, an All-Ireland Quarter Final appearance in the Schools Cup along with the Quarter Final of the South Dublin League. Well done to Séafra O



Hugo Keenan scores first try against St. Michael's

Faoláin (Captain) and the rest of the squad on all of their hard work over the season.

**U-16:** The end of the season for the U-16 squad will be tinged with a feeling of regret as they were so close to securing the All-Ireland Schools Cup but just fell at the semi-final stage to the eventual winners St Munchin's on a score line of 38-33, having led going into the final quarter. The squad also reached the Semi-Final of the South Dublin League, losing out to an excellent St Andrew's side.

**2nd Year:** The Second Year season has just started. There have been very strong numbers at training and huge improvements have already been made. This was reflected in our first game in the East-Leinster League where an excellent performance secured a 31-17 victory.

## Senior Soccer

A competitive season that started in the first week of October came to an end recently with two defeats in the semi-finals of both competitions. A 4-0 defeat away to Templeogue College in the Metropolitan League may seem like a heavy defeat however the balance of the play would tell you something different. The game was nicely balanced up until the final 20 minutes when 'Rock pushed for an equaliser that did not come and were hit on the counter attack by a very well organised Templeogue side. We congratulate Templeogue for their victory in the competition as they beat Marian College in the final 4-0.

In the Leinster Cup a 3-1 defeat to Patrician College Newbridge again does not reflect the balance of play. Two goals in the dying minutes sealed victory for Newbridge. However, 'Rock had matched them all the way until these two late goals. The team fought hard, played excellent football and were



David O'Connor goes over for a try against CBC

unfortunate not to go into the break in the lead as they dominated the first half. The second half was much closer with an unfortunate finish to the game. We wish Patrician College the best of luck in their Leinster Final against Confey College. This is the end of their competitive season, however there is still one more big weekend of football ahead of the team as we welcome St Bede's from Manchester over in March. Hopefully the squad can finish the year on a high after all the hard work they have put in throughout the year.

## Rugby

It is that time of the year when both Cup season and League season are upon us. The Senior and Junior cup campaigns are underway as are the leagues for Castle, House, Colts and juniors. While the under 14s look to keep their unbeaten streak intact. We wish all the teams all the very best of luck in the final weeks of this year's season.

## Senior

Since the Christmas period the Senior Team has played four fixtures. Victories over Munchin's, Methody and CBC Cork completed the preparation phase prior to the first cup match against CBC Monkstown. The team played CBC on the 4th of February following two postponements due to the inclement weather. A hard physical encounter saw the team emerge victorious on a score line of 31 points to 3, with plenty of scope for improvement.



SCT Squad 2014

Following the game the next round of the cup draw was held in the Old Wesley clubhouse, where past pupil Leo Cullen drew us to play our sister school, St Michael's College, on the 11th February. The boys put in a big performance and came out victorious, 16-6, against a talented and hardworking St. Michael's.

## Junior

The junior squad continued to work hard over the Christmas period, with plenty of training and challenging matches keeping them grounded. Tough wins over St Munchin's, Ballymena, CBC Cork, Gonzaga and Presentation Cork had put them in a good position for the physical encounter that awaited them in the first round of the Junior Cup in the form of CBC Monkstown. In good conditions the JCT overcame a spirited and innovative CBC Monkstown team, with Blackrock running out eventual winners by five tries.



Patrick Patterson on his way to score a try, JCT v. CBC Monkstown

## Chess

On Tuesday 4th February, the Senior Chess team played their fourth league match against Gonzaga. As two of the senior members were absent, two Junior members, Pengbo Wu and Stephen Ryan, stepped in. Unfortunately all players lost their match against the opposing team but Pengbo Wu and Stephen Ryan played extremely well and were unfortunate not to win. The team have their final league match against the Institute of Education. We wish them the best of luck.

## Cross Country

Since Christmas the cross country teams attended the DCU invitational in January. All the boys ran well with the intermediate team taking home trophies for second place. Blackrock were very successful in the East Leinsters in Avondale House, Rathdrum. The senior team came in first, with the intermediate team also taking home a plaque for first place. The junior team continued the success, coming in second place.

Individually Christian McKenna and Luke McCann (both 4th years) ran a fantastic race, neck 'n neck with each other the whole way but well ahead of everyone else. In the end Christian took the lead in first place with Luke a couple of strides behind in second place. Conor Halpin also got a medal for coming second individually in the junior race. Well done to all involved and we wish them the best of luck with the Leinster Finals coming up soon.

Photos courtesy Rock Photography  
www.rockphotography.ie