

BLACKROCK COLLEGE NEWSLETTER



Christmas 2018

Dear Parents,

G.K. Chesterton writing about Christmas some 100 years ago said something pertinent to our secular age: **“The great majority of people will go on observing forms that cannot be explained: they will keep Christmas Day with Christmas gifts and Christmas benedictions: they will continue to do it; and someday suddenly wake up and discover why”**.

Christmas is special; it proclaims that God is passionate about us all. The birth of the Redeemer focusses the world, brings it to a halt. It shifts priorities.

Christmas is a time of sharing, giving of self to others. We are a Catholic school and our Christmas celebrations underline the why of all this giving and good will. It is a joy to see how willingly our boys give service. Volunteerism abounds! The Christian message that we do not exist for ourselves alone, is lived out throughout the year but it is especially evident at Christmas when our St. Vincent de Paul appeal focusses on Killenarden in Tallaght. As always, the boys come up trumps. In the 6th Year Fast, 5th Year Cyclethon, Transition Year Soccer Marathon, Christmas Trees, Mince Pies Morning and Hamper delivery, 3rd and 2nd Year Duck Races, their generosity of spirit, nurtured in the home, finds full expression.

Christmas is a reminder that enduring happiness and fulfilment comes through generosity and compassion, warmth and fellowship, truth, love and gratitude. It is also a reminder that we can and we do make a difference.

Chesterton again: **“Christmas is built upon a beautiful and intentional paradox, that the birth of the homeless should be celebrated in every home”**. Born in a stable, no room at the Inn; this continues to be a serious issue in Dublin, in Ireland, today. It is something all of us are duty bound to consider, to tackle. Our weekly soup run is of relatively low impact but is, nonetheless, worthwhile. In caring and gratitude no gesture is too small.

The success of Blackrock is measured by how we bring out the best in people. In this there must be a balance between the active and contemplative. It was heartening to see such large attendances at both our 3rd and Transition Year Family Masses. We welcomed grandparents to our TY Mass. Our prayer for them was that they **“may continue to be strong pillars of Gospel faith and guardians of noble domestic ideals”**

At our Carol Service over 1,100 boys, including 1st year, gathered in Des Places Hall to recount the Nativity in song, music and word. Fr. Cormac urged us to **“live all aspects of our lives in a loving way”**. Our Director of Boarding struck the same note at the Castle Carol Service a week later when he focussed on **‘presence’** as being integral to community; presence is being there for others particularly in time of struggle. There are many within our own community who find Christmas a difficult time. Being aware of the needs of those close to us fortifies community, connects our faith with the particularity of our lives.

The great Robert F. Kennedy, said that **“the purpose of life is to contribute in some way to making things better”**. So many have contributed to make things better at Blackrock, in the classroom, on stage, through our Pastoral and Sporting programmes, in Debating and MUN. I thank our Spiritan Community for their prayerful presence, my colleagues, the Union and you, the parents, for making it possible, and your sons, our boys, who make it worthwhile.

Finally, our excellent College Annual and new prospectus give testimony to our values, what we stand for, what we believe in, what drives us on.

What drives us on? – born in a stable, no room at the Inn – but... Joy to the world!

God bless,

ALAN MacGINTY
Principal

Photos from L to R :

- a) Adam Dixon (4th Year) (Rock V Clongowes)
- b) Robert Kinsley (6th Year) and Michael Cagney (5th Year) performing in *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*
- c) Oliver Bosworth (5th Year) plays the Tuba at the Carol Service



Second Year



Our Second Year boys have now finished their first term in the College and with an excellent track record. The **Application Cards** are a real indicator of the level of organisation and commitment each boy has shown and are a weekly opportunity to compliment good behaviour and to challenge and change when required.

The Table Tennis **House Competitions**

began with great enthusiasm after the Halloween break and in a closely fought A-League the winner for Shanahan House was Conall Hodges with Daniel Kelly from McQuaid House the runner up. Well done to all of our participants and to our well-organised House Captains who have shown great leadership and commitment.

The B League is ongoing and a winner will be announced in January.

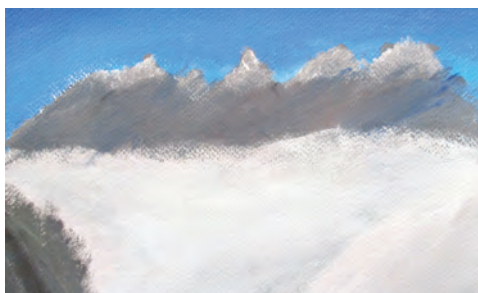


Maitiú Heckmann at the Ulster Open

Every boy is expected to be involved in at least one of the many **extra-curricular activities** here in the College: this we consider to be essential for each student's overall development. We are delighted to congratulate the boys on their high level of participation and engagement. We have had a great term of Under 14s Rugby and we wish to remind everyone that new players are always welcome and training begins again when the College re-opens on 7th January.

The Second Years were very well represented at the **Leinster Schools' Swimming Gala** in the National Aquatic Centre at the end of the Halloween break. Well done to Ronan Fahey, Finn O'Neill, Jed O'Malley and James O'Sullivan on their excellent results.

In **Table Tennis**, well done to Maitiú Heckmann, who came 5th nationally in cadets and 11th in the juniors in the Ulster Open. He also represented Ireland in the Portuguese Open. A terrific achievement. Well done to all of our Second Year Table Tennis players on their terrific wins this season so far. Our debaters contested the 3rd Round of the **Junior Schools' Debating Competition** hosted by the UCD Literary and Historical Society. Well done to all Second Year participants and especially to Ben Kieran-Glennon and Frazer McGinn, who came first in their round. Well done also to our Second Years, Aiden Corrigan and Jamie Starr-Bourke, who participated at the **Rathdown MUN** in November.



Work produced by James Lee at Art Club



Work produced by Richard McSweeney at Art Club

Other extra-curricular activities involving our Second Years include cycling, badminton, horse-riding, squash, public speaking, Art Club, Science Club, orchestra, cricket and rowing. We wish them well in their activities and events and look forward to hearing about their progress.

Congratulations to all of our Second Years on their exceptional **Scifest projects** which were on display in the College during November. Well done to the overall winners, Ethan Leon-Ryan and Max Mullen, for their project 'Becoming Carbon Neutral'. Well done also to Ben Kieran-Glennon

and Daniel Keeley who achieved second place with their project 'Investigating the mbemba effect'.

All Second Years will attend the **Young Scientist Exhibition** in the RDS in January where they will see their classmates exhibiting. Congratulations to Max Mullen & Ethan Leon-Ryan who qualified with their project and to Eric Brandt who qualified for his project 'A Study into the use of reflective materials to increase the efficiency of solar panels'. We wish them well.



Fionn Graham at Art Club

The Second Years attended in large numbers for the opening night of the **College Musical** 'Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat'. It was wonderful to see two Second Years, Jonathan Hoffman and Mathew Gadalloff, on stage for the Senior Musical and making such a terrific contribution. We look forward with great anticipation to the 2nd & 4th Year Production, which will take place later in the year.

Sincere thanks to the Second Years and their families who contributed to the Machakos appeal. This contribution ensures that progress in building the Spiritan School can continue. Equally, congratulations to all the boys in Second Year on their fundraising for our annual **Duck Race** in aid of the **St. Vincent de Paul Society**. **The 2nd Years raised €2964.** This was a great effort by the boys, for a very worthwhile cause and hopefully it challenged them to reflect on the true spirit of Christmas.

During this half-term we also had our **Carol Service** for the season of Advent, with the whole College in attendance in the Sports Hall. It was wonderful to see so many of the Second Years participating in the choir and the orchestra and very well done to all for helping to make this a memorable, festive and prayerful occasion.



Second Years in the choir at the Carol Service

When the new term commences, the boys will embark on Auxilium, which is our programme of service for all Second Year boys. We ask parents to support this excellent programme as it teaches the boys to give of themselves through their time, talents and resources to help others. Through Auxilium we hope to inspire the boys to reflect on the impact that their actions have on others and to encourage them to work at making the world a better place.

Dates for your Diary

Tuesday 15th January: Information evening for Second Year Parents on the Junior Cycle and 'Auxilium'.

Tuesday 22nd January: Parent Talk 'Nutrition for Teenage Boys'.

Sunday 3rd February: Leman Festival Concert

Friday 8th February: Progress Cards

Friday 8th February: Second Year Parents' Social

Thursday 14th February: Second Year Parent-Teacher Meeting

Third Year



The first term seems to have passed in the blink of an eye. It has without doubt been a very busy conclusion to the term as the Third Years finalised CBAs, sat their aural in Irish and Modern Languages for Christmas and completed their Assessment Tasks in both English and Business Studies. The students have responded very well to the challenges of Junior Cycle thus far, but no doubt the Christmas exams have crept up on many. This should serve as a timely reminder of the importance of organisation and time management – certainly June comes around very quickly! It has been great to see the boys have maintained their positive outlook, pleasant demeanour and sense of humour despite the demands the year places on them – long may it continue!

There is a great *esprit de corps* among this year group which was evident with the tremendous turnout at our recent Family Mass on Sunday 11th November. Chief celebrant Fr John Kilcrann reminded us all that small acts of kindness can make such a difference in people's lives. I thank all in attendance for making it such a special occasion.



Jimmy Gilligan with his parents at the Third Year Family Mass



Ross Halpin with his parents at the Third Year Family Mass

On the topic of acts of kindness – well done to Mr O' Farrell's CSPE classes who recently conducted a beach clean in Booterstown as part of their action project. Another of the classes answered the call from Saint Vincent de Paul for their shoe box appeal. 30 shoe boxes containing Christmas presents for children were organised and made up by the class. A big thank you to the students and Mr O' Farrell for their support.



Photos taken by Alexander Caudrey on the Beach Clean. Well done boys!

I congratulate Gus McCarthy who has been elected as captain of the Junior Cup Team and Hugh Cooney and Kevin Jackson on their election as Vice Captains. They prepare for Belvedere in the first round of the Cup. I commend the entire J squad and wish them all the best with training and fixtures over the holidays. Though they may not be training I ask that the J3rds and 4ths maintain a decent level of fitness and go easy on the mince pies over the holidays! League games start in early January.

In golf Matthew O'Brien flies the flag for the many talented golfers in Third Year. He is a member of the senior golf team that has qualified for the All Ireland semi-finals that will take place in the New Year – Well done Matthew!

There was a fantastic performance by our Third Year rowers in what was the first big competitive event of the season at the recent Muckross Head of the

River Time Trial. Toby Loughrey, Eoin McGrath and Harry Ballard were part of the J16 8+ that finished in 2nd place. Our J15 8+ of Toby and Eoin alongside Matthew Kane, Sean O' Connor, Matthew O' Donnell and Oran Smith finished in 4th place. Our J15 4x crews of Alex



Third Years at the Carol Service

Brophy, Ben Casey, Matthew O' Donnell and Matthew Kane (Crew A) and Cormac Holohan, Henry Kelly, Robert McNabb, Sean O Connor and Michael Redmond (Crew B) finished a very respectable 10th and 14th place. I have a huge admiration for their dedication to training and early mornings particularly at this time of year. Fantastic!

Our basketball team continues to go from strength to strength and although they suffered a loss recently to Adamstown Community College it must be noted we were without our two top scorers Ronin O' Halloran and Jimmy Gilligan who are both recovering from injury. The squad now turn their attention to the All-Ireland Cup semi-final in January. I wish Captain Jimmy Gilligan and the squad all the best.

I would again emphasise the importance of our extracurricular programme and encourage all students to have some engagement if for nothing more than from a social perspective. Students will find by being active they will sleep better, and as a result perform better in school. It is never too late to join any of the after school activities, after all January is a time for New Year's resolutions!

When we return in the New Year all Third Year students will attend a day of reflection in Disciples of the Divine Master, Whites Cross, Newtownpark Avenue. Students will go with their houses on different days. It will be an opportunity for the students to pause, take stock and reflect as we begin a new year. I will write to you with more information on our return in January. Until then I would like to wish you all a very peaceful Christmas and a Happy New Year.



Matthew Kane and Colum Corless at the Carol Service

Dates for your Diary

Days of Reflection

Tuesday 15th January
Thursday 17th January
Friday 18th January
Friday 18th January
Thursday 24th January

McQuaid & Shanahan
Ebenrecht & Leman
DeValera & Duff
Third Year Parents' Social
Third Year Parent/ Teacher Meeting

Transition Year



It has been a hugely busy first term in Transition Year. November and December are busy months in TY to say the least, but they are great months with such fantastic opportunities for the students to mature, develop new skills and challenge themselves in ways that just a few short months ago they wouldn't have even considered! TY is a constant challenge to develop an "opt-in" attitude to the many opportunities that are in front of the boys. I would encourage all students to use the holidays as a time to reflect on their TY experience thus far. Have they been making the most of the many opportunities available to them? Are they involved? Are they participating in the extracurricular programme? If the answer to these questions is yes then the challenge is to continue to develop and strengthen that desire to get involved and maximise opportunities. If the answer is no or a 'qualified yes' then I put it to the students that it is entirely within their control to define their TY experience in a hugely positive way with all that is on offer in the New Year. I also encourage the students to think back on the tangible differences they have made to people's lives. Be it through volunteering with Gaisce, the clients they meet on Pastoral Placement, the various charity collections or their part in the Saint Vincent De Paul Christmas appeal; all students have demonstrated that we individually and collectively have the capacity to make a difference to those around us.



TYS at the Carol Service

Blackrock College Radio

We were delighted to have Mary Mitchell O' Connor and Richard Boyd-Barrett in to launch the station on Monday 19th of November. It proved to be a phenomenal week of broadcasting, which only came to fruition after a build-up beginning in mid-September. Our Studio Managers and Technical Team were absolutely outstanding; incredibly driven, organised and committed to the highest of standards. The project would not have been possible otherwise. The TY boys should not make the mistake of 'normalising' what they achieved with BCR. To produce 47.5 hours of content is a massive undertaking. It was excellent content as well and the students should be very proud of how professionally and naturally they engaged with our guests from the world of sports, politics and journalism. The feedback from our guests regarding the standard of questioning from the students was hugely positive. Of course as I said this was a project that began in mid-September. From advertising to the News Team to Showcase, Noon Show and Guests and Requests the students ensured that BCR 2018 can be looked back upon with a real sense of pride for the group. The only negative for the students really was the inability to be competitive in any quizzes that took place versus their Dean!



Richard Boyd-Barrett, Hugo Mangan and Mr P.O' Neill (Dean of 4th Year) BCR



Andrew Ryan, Conor Slattery, Minister Catherine Zappone and James Ryan (BCR)



Mark O' Brien, Brian Dobson and Hugh Cunniam (BCR)

Soccer Marathon

The annual Soccer Marathon in aid of Saint Vincent De Paul took place Friday November 30th/Saturday December 1st with 124 Transition Year students involved. Although the forecast was miserable building up to the day, we were blessed with the weather as the rain held off, and despite the cold, morale was high as we kicked off at 9am. Jim Murphy, President of the Blackrock Conference of SVP addressed the boys prior to kick off and thanked them not just for their efforts in fundraising but the awareness that such a large participation from the boys generates.

The games were played in a very competitive and hugely entertaining manner. The Soccer Marathon Committee used different coloured plain t-shirts to distinguish between the teams, however there was a significant amount of creativity that then



Pizzas devoured in the Home Economics Room after 15 hours of play !!

went into the various 'kits' on display. Headbands were back in a major way! After the student competition, finally 11pm arrived and the teacher's team took to pitch captained by the wily veteran Mr. E O'Brien. The student teams were well up for it, as was the hostile crowd, however the teachers kept their nerves to win, as expected both games, 6-5 and 4-2 respectively. And so we moved into the Home Economics room, to enjoy the much-anticipated wagon wheel pizzas which after 15 hours of play were much needed and well deserved. Through the night energy levels were challenged but the boys stuck to the task and the activities continued with FIFA tournaments, swims and even a movie or two. With activities wrapped up, we began the big clean up as the lads ventured home shortly after 6am.

I would like to commend the boys on their superb fund raising efforts as we collected just under €12,500 for St Vincent DePaul, and on their energy and cooperation throughout the day—well done!

Mince Pie Morning

On Tuesday the 4th December, the Transition Year Home Economics classes hosted a Mince Pie morning in aid of Saint Vincent de Paul. They had been very busy on Monday producing what were some very tasty mince pies. A record €556 was raised. It certainly got us in the festive mood for the Carol Service that afternoon. Many thanks to Ms Karen Marren for making it all possible.

Hampers

As we go to print we are ready to take delivery from the wholesalers for the hampers. Over the Thursday and Friday it will all be counted sorted and packed into 220 hampers ready for delivery on Saturday morning the 15th December. It really is a unique opportunity for the students to experience the culmination of SVP fund raising from the Soccer Marathon and to experience first-hand the difference they will be making to families less fortunate than ourselves. I thank all the parents who helped with the delivery, your support, as always, is hugely appreciated.



Robbie Gallagher (TY) and Harry Keyes (6th Year) performing in Joseph

Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat

It was great to see so many Transition Years involved in the Senior Musical and what an incredible show to be involved in! It is a testimony to the commitment of the boys involved that they were able to juggle the show with the week of broadcast for the radio station. We were delighted to see students involved in all aspects of the production, from front of house, crew, orchestra and stage. If this show is anything to go by the 2nd and 4th Year musical in April will be certainly something to look forward to!

Extra-curricular

We are delighted to have so many Transition Years involved in both the house and senior set up. Transition Year has been very well represented in Badminton so far this year.

Congratulations to Alex Bolger and Thomas Harte who were members of the senior golf team losing narrowly in the semi-final of the Leinster Championship. Congratulation to Nathan Van Steenberge who also performed superbly at the British 29er Inlands Regatta. 42 boats participated of which 2 were from Ireland. Nathan and his partner achieved 1st junior boat, which is a serious accomplishment considering that they just started sailing in this fleet in August.

Pablo Villarroja, Nico Coll and Todd Blacklaw were all part of the U-16 who lost narrowly to Adamstown CC in the East-Leinster semi-final. As a result of reaching the semi-final the squad has qualified for the All-Ireland playoffs after Christmas and there is also an All-Ireland Cup semi-final taking place in UL Arena after the break. Pablo and Todd were also part of the U-19 squad who suffered a narrow 1 point defeat to Pobail Scoil Neasáin in the East-Leinster quarter final.

Volunteering

The generosity of spirit amongst this group is very evident. On the 9th of November 35 students helped out with bag packing in Cornelscourt for the Blackrock Alzheimer Society. The group raised a record ?3,000, the most Blackrock Alzheimer Society had ever raised at such a collection. The feedback to me from Frances Redmond of the Blackrock Alzheimer's Society was "The staff, management and customers kept coming to me to say how polite the boys

Transition Year Cont'd



were and how hard they were working" – the boys certainly did us proud here. 70 students volunteered to take part in the SVP envelope drop on Wednesday the 5th. The group distributed letters in the local area about the Saint Vincent De Paul Christmas appeal. Students have readily made themselves available for helping with the duel in the pool, collections in aid of Down Syndrome Ireland and assisting at the Monkstown Christmas party. Their attitude has been superb so far; we are consistently oversubscribed for the different opportunities for the students to be of service. We look forward to more of the same in the New Year! Our Spiritan Ethos is alive and well with this Transition Year group.

It would be remiss of me not to mention the absolutely incredible turnout at the Transition Year Family Mass on Sunday 9th December. It was wonderful to see so many grandparents there and it was truly a very special and memorable occasion. The enthusiasm of the boys is matched only by the support of the parents and we as a TY Team are very appreciative always of the support provided by the parents.

Holy Ghost Prep, Philadelphia Visit (3rd - 11th January)

This coming January will see the first ever visit to our shores by our sister school from Philadelphia USA, Holy Ghost Prep. 11 Holy Ghost Prep students will be hosted by 11 Blackrock students. There will be mass at 11am on Sunday 7th January, the feast of the epiphany and a welcome tour of the school where

the Blackrock students and host families will meet their peers from Holy Ghost Prep. We hope to do justice to the 'Céad Mile Fáilte' reputation of Ireland and show our guests the best of both Blackrock and Irish culture during their stay. The overarching objective for the trip is to provide an opportunity for both groups of students to explore what it means to be a Spiritan school and to explore the lived ethos of both schools in the daily school life. It promises to be a rich and fruitful exchange of experiences and we look forward to welcoming our guests after the Christmas break.

On behalf of my colleagues in Transition Year: Mr Grant, Mr Savage and Mr Sullivan I wish you a very peaceful and Happy New Year.

Dates for your Diary

Sunday 6th – Friday 11th January – Holy Ghost Prep USA Visit
Tuesday 8th, Wednesday 9th and Friday 11th January – Part two of the Leadership Course.

Thursday 10th January – Young Scientist Exhibition

Friday 25th January – Transition Year Parents' Social

Sunday 3rd February – Leman Concert

Friday 8th February – Corporate Duck Race

Monday 11th – Friday 15th February – Work Experience

Fifth Year



The second half of term one continued to highlight the busy and productive work ethic of Fifth Year students who continue to make significant contributions to school life through their courteous and cooperative manner and their vast involvement in and contribution to extra-curricular activities.

SVP Fundraiser

Congratulations to Fifth Year students for raising almost €4500 for the St. Vincent de Paul's Christmas Appeal. On Thursday 29th November, almost all students were involved in an 8 Hour Inter-House Cyclothon. Good humour, healthy competition and Christmas FM ensured that all enjoyed a wonderful event! The House Captains once again were excellent in their organising of this event. Thank you to our in-house



Michael Gadaloff, Tom O' Connor, Luke Reynolds, Aidan Canavan, Mark Landers and Callum Byrne with Alan Lennox of SVP



Elliot McNamara, Harry Francis and MJ Power



Neil McNally, David Furey and Adam Simpson



David Furey, Michael Cagney, Jack Tiernan, Patrick O' Connor and Joe O' Dwyer



George McCann, Eoin Sreenan and Adam Simpson

support teams and thank you to the parent body for their support and contributions to the raffle. Special thanks to our sponsors MCSPORT.IE, and Investec and the biggest thank you of all and a huge well done to the students for their enthusiasm, participation and determined fundraising to help such a worthwhile cause.

Remembrance Mass

A number of Fifth Year boarders contributed meaningfully as cantors and servers to this year's Remembrance Mass for those in our community who have passed away in the past year. We thank and commend them for their much appreciated involvement.

Carol Service

In full voice the Fifth Year group provided strong leadership at the recent whole school Carol Service. Whilst all participated commendably, the Fifth Year members of the choir and the orchestra are of particular note for their remarkable leadership of the year group and performances.



Luke Reynolds and Luke Curtis at the Carol Service

Golf

The Fifth Year members of the Senior Golf team are enjoying a wonderful season as they progress to the semi-finals of the Irish Senior Gold Championship and enjoy success in the Leinster Inter-schools League.

Basketball

The Senior Basketball team has enjoyed a mixed season that is now coming to an end. Unlucky to be narrowly beaten in the quarter final of the East Leinster League sums up the at times frustrating season for the basketballers. We commend their good spirits and wish them continued success as they continue to grow in numbers and strength.

Congratulations and well done to the Fifth Year rugby players who took part and were victorious in the inaugural Noel Turley Memorial Trophy contest against St. Michael's College.

Fifth Year Cont'd



Swimming

Peter Harrington was successful at the recent Leinster Schools' Swimming Gala in the National Aquatic Centre. Peter was a member of the senior team who finished fourth in the 200m Medley Relay and also of the bronze medal winning senior Free Style Relay team.

Model UN /Debating

Fifth Year members of the MUN society have enjoyed yet another outing in Rathdown with a number receiving Distinguished Delegate Awards. More are developing their public speaking skills through debating challenging topics at weekly debate meetings. Some are looking forward to the next round of the L&H debates as well as having a strong presence at upcoming Mace debates as both debaters and adjudicators.

Hurling

Notable congratulations to Fifth Year Jack Slattery who was part of the Kilmacud Crokes Hurling Team that defeated Ballyboden St. Enda's in the Dublin Minor Championship final recently. Well done Jack!

Musical

Fifth Years' presence in this year's musical, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, was remarkable. Both onstage and off students put heart and soul in to the outstanding production. From weekend long rehearsals to late night performances all are to be commended for their wonderful efforts

providing such high quality entertainment for all who were lucky enough to attend.

As term one draws to a close, we commend Fifth Year students for their participation and contribution to school life. We wish them well for a happy and healthy Christmas break and look forward to the New Year with high hopes of continued excellence.



Joe Young Hughes and Tom Grennell performing in *Joseph*

Dates for your Diary

Saturday 12 January:	5th/6th Year Student Career Talks I
Saturday 19 January:	5th/6th Year Student Career Talks II
Thursday 31 January:	5th Year Parent /Teacher Meeting
Sunday 10 March:	5th Year Family Mass

The Arts



Creative Arts and Digital Learning Centre

We've had a busy second half of term here in the Creative Arts & Digital Learning Centre. Thanks to our Learning Centre Committee for all of their help. There have been new books to catalogue, a fabulous Art Exhibition called *Winter Works*, workshops on reflective writing with our 4th Year Economics classes, and DEAR (Drop Everything And Read) during Library Ireland Week (26th November – 2nd December).

A Century of Change Exhibition

Yet again this year, 4th Year History students have produced some fantastic research for the exhibition *A Century of Change*. This exhibition charts social change globally over the last one hundred years, and our budding historians researched various themes including sport, the changing face of Dublin City, women's rights, and childhood games.

The exhibition gave the students not only the opportunity to hone valuable research skills, but also experience in planning and curating an exhibition.



A Year of Change Exhibition

CBA (Classroom Based Assessment) Research Classes

With the introduction of Classroom Based Assessments at Junior Cycle our 3rd Year students have availed of the Learning Centre for research classes. Our 3rd Year business students have worked on planning their research, information audits, search skills, and reflective writing.

SLARI Conference

On the 16th November Blackrock College hosted the conference of School Library Association in the Republic of Ireland (SLARI). The theme was School Libraries: Reaching Out to Our Communities. The conference was opened by Principal Mr Alan MacGinty who spoke about the importance of a library to a school community. Attendees listened to an array



Mr S O'Rorck &
LC Manager Lorraine Marrey

of talks from The IFI, Children's Books Ireland and Dubray Books, as well as contributions from school librarians themselves, including a paper called *Blood Brothers & Instagram: A Collaboration*, by our staff members Simon O'Rorck and Lorraine Marrey.

Music & Drama

The Music and Drama department is in full voice and spirit as we come to the end of the first action-packed term. Most recently we began the festivities with many Carol Services. The Whole School Carol Service took place on Tuesday 4th December and it was wonderful to hear over 1,150 boys singing out loud getting into the Christmas spirit. We welcomed Willow Park First Year up to the Des Place Hall and look forward to having them back to perform alongside the Blackrock boys in the last term's Summer Concert. The inaugural Past Parents' Carol Service took place on Sunday 2nd December and was very well received. It was great to see lots of familiar faces return to the College and to keep up the strong connection with the Blackrock Community. The Willow Park Senior School Carol Service, which took place in the College Chapel on Thursday 13th December, was a joyous occasion and was followed by many mince pies and cups of tea! Thank you very much to the Adult Choir who joined the energetic Willow Park Senior School Choir to make up over 85 musicians and choristers who performed. The Adult Choir have had a busy few weeks, also performing for the Blackrock Bridge Club and the Tennis Club.



The Choir perform at the Carol Service

Another strong connection we have is with our past pupils and we were delighted to welcome back the Past Pupils' Choir to sing at the Mass of Remembrance in the College Chapel at the end of November. "Music expresses that which cannot be put into words and that which cannot remain silent".



Past Pupils perform with Andrea Bocelli

The Arts Cont'd



This was definitely true when the choir sang "All the Fine Young Men" to remember those gone before us. A selection of the Past Pupils sang with Andrea Bocelli in the 3Arena as part of the Dun Laoghaire Choral Society, an experience that all thoroughly enjoyed.

Liturgical Music continues to play an important role in celebrating the Eucharist and this was heard in the Third and Fourth Year Family Masses. The Chapel was bursting at the seams for the Transition Year Family Mass as grandparents joined us for the celebration. The Staff Choir, led by Mr. Simon Orrock, enjoyed singing at the Staff Eucharist and finished with a spirited rendition of "White Christmas" after the Mass.

Finally, November saw the Jubilee Hall turn fully technicolour as it was packed with a full house every night for "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat". While the post-show blues took a while to shake, these just confirm why all the hard work, endless rehearsals and life-time friendships made are worth it. This was an all-singing, all-dancing, feel-good musical extravaganza and the positive energy surrounding the whole experience was brilliant. Thank you to everyone involved for making it such a special experience.



Elliot McNamara, Jack Keegan, Matt Smith, Callum Byrne, Mark Hughes and Joe O'Dwyer (5th Year) performing in *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat*

As we await the fun that "Lemanuary" brings, all that is left to say is that we wish you all a very happy, restful and musical Christmas.

Junior Debating

Junior Debating has up to 22 members every Monday at lunch time. We have 6 students (3 teams) registered and competing in the MACE Junior Debating Competition: Ben Kieran-Glennon, Michael White, James Carroll, Alec Linklater, Frazer McGinn and Daniel Keeley. They have competed in Belvedere and in Loreto on The Green.

We have 4 students (2 teams) registered and competing in the UCD Junior Debating Competition: Frazer McGinn, Ben Kieran-Glennon, Conor Casey and Conor Hughes. We have recently completed the 3rd round of the competition on November 15th with Frazer and Ben coming first in their competition.

We are waiting to hear if any of the Junior Debaters have qualified for the next round of UCD debates. We will hear early in the New Year.

We are competing in the Castleknock MACE on 26th January and UCD on 24th January.

Senior Debating

The Senior Debating Society has had a successful run in the Leinster Senior Debating Competition run by Trinity and U.C.D. Four teams have successfully advanced to the third round. The competition resumes on the 21st January and we wish our participants, Dylan Hutchinson, Niall Meagher, Michael Ryan, Max McKenna and Drummond McGinn (6th year) and Mark McGrane, John Huggard and Tom Dooley (5th year), well.

Within the next few months we look forward to organising a host of (friendly) debates with other schools. Hopefully 2019 will be a successful year for our college debaters. If there are any TY, 5th and 6th Year students who wish to join our Senior Debating Club, please feel free to come to the DCL, where we meet every Tuesday after school.

Model United Nations (MUN)

2018 has been a very strong year for the Blackrock College Model United Nations Society. The year began with an impressively competitive start at Terenure College in October and culminated in an excellent performance at Rathdown College. There, Blackrock took home several Distinguished Delegate awards and an Outstanding Delegation award for the Delegation of China. Blackrock can be positive about the challenges ahead in this coming year. Blackrock College MUN will be hosting other schools at our own ROCKMUN conference on the 8th and 9th of February 2019. This will be our fourth time hosting and it is sure to be bigger and better than previous conferences.

Rhetoric at 'Rock

In January we will be launching an exciting new opportunity for the boys. Rock Ed is a rhetoric project modelled on Ted Talks and will culminate in a staged evening event in October 2019.

We will be working with the boys to develop their rhetoric and public speaking skills. Talks will be on a topic of the speaker's choice and we look forward to hearing a diverse range of topics.

Rock Ed is open to all and will run on Tuesdays in the CADL, alternating performance weeks and workshops to develop the speeches. Look out also for the competition to develop a logo!

ART

On the 5th of December members of the Art Club, involved with the production of the new prospectus, presented a signed copy of the publication to the College Archives. The autumn sessions of the club culminated with an exhibition at the DLC. Entitled WINTER WORKS the display featured works on paper by various year groups. The Club resumes on Wednesday 9th of January 2019 and is open to all.

WINTER WORKS



THE ART CLUB
PRESENTS A SELECTION OF RECENT PAINTINGS
DLC DEC 3 - 7



Joey McEntee (Transition Year)



Donal de Buitéar (Fourth Year)



Conor Flannery (Fourth Year)



Thomas McCormack (Fourth Year)



Patrick Calma (Fourth Year)



Ben Melly Murphy (Fifth Year)



Art Club members involved in the production of the new prospectus present a signed copy to College archivist Clare Foley

Snapshot of 2nd Half Term 2018



Mr A. MacGinty (Principal) with Matthew Gibney (4th Year) who was awarded the President's Medal by the Classical Association of Ireland for achieving the highest mark in the Junior Certificate Latin examination in 2018. Matthew was guided to this wonderful achievement by Ms S. Henchy.



Rock V RBAI Matthew Wood (5th Year)



Mark Mannion, George Brady and Davitt Gilvarry (Third Year) Rock V CUS



Shane Redehan with his parents at the Fourth Year Family Mass



Joseph Neary with his Dad at the Fourth Year Family Mass



Mark Gadaloff, Conor Griffin (5th Year) and Oisín Reid (6th Year) performing in Joseph



David Arbuthnott with his sister and his grandmother at the Fourth Year Family Mass



Rock V Clongowes



Alex Giblin (Mount Anville), Mark Launders (5th Yr.) and Harry Keyes (6th Yr.) and Rosa Maher (Mount Anville) performing in Joseph



Tim D'Arcy (6th Year) Chris Rolland (6th Year) Rock V RBAI



Ross Barron and Gavin Jones (Rock V Clongowes)

Snapshot of 2nd Half Term 2018



Jack Loscher (6th Year) Tom Gavigan (5th Year) and Ronan McGoldrick (6th Year) SCTV St Michael's



Matthew Keeley (4th Year) and Aaron Ryan (5th Year) performing in Joseph



Mr. T O'Reilly (Head of Religion) with his daughters Keea and Ella at the Third Year Family Mass



Mr B. Grant reading at the Carol Service



Conn O'Byrne with his Dad and brother at the Third Year Family Mass



Jacques De Patoul with his family at the Third Year Family Mass



Matthew Berwick (3rd Year) with his family at the Third Year Family Mass



David Gallagher (6th Year) reading at the Carol Service



Rock V RBAI

10 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE CLASS OF 2018



1 Fifteen boys scored over 600 points with 6 achieving the 'perfect 625'. 70 boys (37.2%) attained over 500 points. 122 boys achieved over 450 points (64.9%) 72.8% scored over 400 points .

2 Five members of the Class of 2018 participated in the Dublin Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes between the 7th and 12th of September 2017; Rory Gallagher, Harry Kearns, Ross Phelan, Stephen Ryan and Josh Slevin.

3 Hugh O'Leary was Blackrock College's recipient of this year's Entrance Exhibition Award to Trinity College.

4 Congratulations to Zachary Al-Mukhaizeem, Karl Conroy, Colm Cooney, Mark Crowley, Matthew Curran, Matthew Dillon, James Dolan, Joshua Garvey, Patrick Hassett, Neil Holohan, Simon Huggard, Harry Kearns, James Kos, Conor Lacey, Art Lynch, David McCarthy, Rory O'Reilly, Stephen O'Reilly, Benjamin Purcell and Oisín Ryan (all class of 2018) each of whom has been awarded an Academic High Achievers Award to U.C.D.

5 Ewan McMahon competed in the Laser Senior European Championships 2017 in Barcelona, Spain, from the 1st – 8th of October, 2017. There were 125 sailors racing in the division. The event ran over six days and averaged two races per day. Ewan finished 3rd. U19. Ewan McMahon was the recipient of College's Sports Personality 2018 of the Year Award for his achievements in sailing both nationally and internationally. Ewan was also awarded a sailing Ad Astra scholarship to UCD.

6 Sean Molony was awarded a rugby Ad Astra scholarship to UCD.

7 Joey Nelson was also awarded a sports scholarship for table tennis to UCD.

8 Forty-seven students from the class of 2018 and 16 parents travelled to Kenya to continue the work begun by 'Rock boys in 2011. €116K was raised by fundraising to contribute to the Rock Reaches out to Kenya project

9 Michael McGagh, played for Ireland U-19s V France U-19s in April 2018 . Thomas Clarkson was selected to play Italy

in the U-18 Six Nations Festival fixture in March 2018.

10 Sean Kirrane rode his first winner on the Johnny Levins-trained Baine in an apprentice handicap at the Curragh on Saturday, May 13th, 2017. Sean rode 2 winners in 2018 : Footstepsintime on the 5th May in Navan and Hasselnott on 29th September in Cork , a tidy 162/1 double. He has embarked on a promising career as a jockey. We wish him well!



Sixth Year



The second half of Term 1 has been a very busy and productive period for the class of 2019 who continue to show excellent leadership in all aspects of life in the College...

General

The application to study has progressed well with Credit List numbers remaining at encouraging levels. As they enter the New Year the Class of 2019 has been advised to press ahead with their study plans, giving Leaving Certificate projects a particular focus at this time.

Outreach

As part of the College's annual Christmas fund-raising for the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, the 6th Year House Representatives organised a 24-hour sponsored fast between the 29th and 30th of November. Accompanying this, the 6th Year Parents' committee under the leadership of Kay Treacy and Sharin Fitter sourced prizes from the parent body to run a Raffle alongside the fast. 150 students (75% of the year group) participated in the fast and between both events, an amazing €6,090 was raised for the VDP. Both figures represent record totals for this initiative. The ending of the fast was celebrated with a meal in the College Dining Room for all those who participated. The raffle was also held at this time. Lochlann Gallagher was the winner of the Graduation Gift Set identified by the House Representatives as the first prize. Many thanks once again to all parents who contributed prizes and to Albert, Mary and their team for the most welcome meal served up. A really positive 24 hours for the Class of 2019!



Mr T. Ryan (Dean of 6th Year) and 6th Years enjoy a meal and raffle in the Dining Hall post the VDP Fast



VDP Poster designed by Fergus Woods & Thomas McCormack

Extra-Curricular

Joseph: 10 Sixth Year students took part in this year's musical Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat between the 19th and 23th of November. This most unique interpretation of the biblical story was full of energy and colour and the megamix finale rounded off a wonderful show each night. From a Class of 2019 point of view, the performances of shared leads Harry Keyes & Tom Dwan, and Oisín Reid (Judah) and Rob Kinsley (Reuben) deserve particular mention from this Blackrock College / Mount Anville Production.

Rugby: We wish Sean O'Brien (Capt.), Gavin Jones (VC) and the rest of the SCT squad well as they prepare for their opening Cup match against Presentation College Bray on 28th January. A narrow victory for the SCT in the Noel Turley Memorial Trophy against St. Michael's provided an insight into the challenges that lie ahead in Term 2. The Cheerleading team for 2019 will be led by Ross O'Reilly and he will be assisted by David Gallagher, Scott Henderson, Evan McCool and Donal McKeon in this leadership role. We wish this group well and look forward to a Blue & White January in the College! The Castle rugby squads have achieved some encouraging performances before Christmas and both teams are preparing for their league campaigns after Christmas. We hope that 6th Year Castle numbers will be high in January, to mark this group of students last term of rugby in the College.

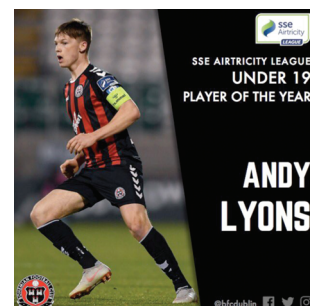
Soccer: The senior soccer squad under the leadership of Peter Quinlan has completed a very busy term with games coming thick and fast. Excellent wins in Manchester by both first and second squads ensuring a 'treble'

double' over St. Bede's was followed by a most cruel exit from the Cup on penalties away to Colaiste Eanna. However the term ended on a real high with an excellent 3-1 Metropolitan League semi-final victory over Moyle Park. We wish Peter and the squad continued success after Christmas.

Golf: A most successful term of golf ended on Dec 10th when Cathal French led the senior team to victory over Dunshaughlin Community School in the Leinster Schools' Final. The All-Ireland final will take place in Portstewart GC next April. We also congratulate Robert O'Callaghan who is a member of the Senior Matchplay squad.

Basketball: Having endured the heartbreak of a narrow defeat against St. Paul's Monasterevin in the All-Ireland Schools' Cup before mid-term, our senior basketball team captained by Robert Brusasca was defeated 45 to 44 by Pobail Scoil Neasáin in the quarter final of the East-Leinster League this term. We wish them better fortune in the South Dublin league in Term 2.

Miscellaneous: A number of notable sporting achievements by members of the Class of 2019 need to be highlighted this half-term. Firstly, congratulations to Andy Lyons who was named the FAI SSE Airtricity U19 Player of the Year for his performances with Bohemian FC and the Irish U19 team this season. JJ Garth has been selected on the Irish 'Wolves' Cricket Tour to Sri Lanka in January, Niall Comerford and Alex Carroll were members of the Kilmacud Crokes Hurling Team that won the Dublin Minor Championship Final and Sean O'Brien was capped recently by the IRFU U19s against Australia. Finally, we congratulate Peter Quinlan on his award as Evening Herald Sports Star of the week for his goalkeeping performance against Moyle Park in the South Dublin Metropolitan League semi-final.



Senior Science: As part of Science Week, 6th Year Biology classes spent time in the company of Dave's Jungle and Chemistry students attended a 'Spectroscopy in a Suitcase' workshop. Unfortunately our three Senior Science teams of Oisín Ellison, Sean O'Brien and Sam O'Carroll (Team 1), Cian Dunne, Daniel Kelly and Niall Meagher (Team 2) and Daniel Cullen, Harry Redmond and Will Stacey (Team 3) who represented the College at the ISTA Greater Dublin Regional Senior Science Quiz all failed to progress to the next round of this competition. Congratulations to Sam O'Carroll who won the Senior Science Quiz Cup for this year and in particular thanks also to Ms Kelly and the Science Department for facilitating these events.

Careers:

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

Since mid-term, speakers from UCD, DCU, IADT and DIT have visited the College to speak with students who have expressed an interest in studying in these Colleges and many of the year group have availed of the 3rd Level Saturday Open Days as registration for CAO now becomes a priority. The HPAT preparation course has also continued on Saturday mornings.

There will be an opportunity for Sixth Year students to participate in 'mock' interviews in a career area of their choice in February 2019. Advice on preparing a CV for these interviews will be offered to



Ms Crimmins present selection box to John Kirby on Christmas Jumper Day

Sixth Year Cont'd



the year group in January. These interviews are arranged by the Blackrock PPU and have proved to be a most valuable learning experience for Leaving Cert students in previous years and we recommend them very strongly. **Places will be limited** and all participants will receive very constructive feedback.



Liturgical:

On November 1st, All Saint's Day, members of the Class of 2019, guided by our chaplains Ms McGlynn and Ms Crimmins and our Musical Director Mr Grumley Traynor, undertook a range of ministries in the Mass

Ms Drew presents selection box to Shane Bresnan on Christmas Jumper Day

to mark the sesquicentenary of the College Chapel in the presence of the Papal Nuncio, Archbishop Jude Thaddeus Okolo. Many thanks to all for giving of their time over mid-term

On Tuesday December 4th, the 6th Year students led the School Community in the celebration of the annual Carol Service for Christmas. The event was marked by wonderful communal singing as well as a selection of seasonal pieces performed by the College Choir under the direction of Mr Grumley Traynor. Many thanks to Harry Keyes, Gavin Jones and Oisín Reid for their wonderful rendition of 'O Holy Night' and to the 6th Year readers who set such a reverential tone for the event. Another treasured memory to store during this final year in the College.

Important Date for your 2018 Diary

Thursday 10th January - 6th Year Parent / Teacher Meeting
TIME: 4.15PM – 6.45PM



Science

This year, our extended Science Week took place from Thursday 8th to Friday the 30th of November. We had a great range of activities and events for the students, from John Daly's workshop on *Exploring Science* for the 2nd Years, to Dave's *Jungle*, which proved highly popular with both students and staff. We also had a staff science quiz, and a science quiz for the all the 3rd Year students. The Science Club visited the Science Gallery in TCD.

The BT Young Scientist Exhibition takes place from January 9th to 12th 2019, and we wish the following students the very best of luck with their excellent projects:

John Huggard (5th Year) Technical analysis line equations and algorithms

Eric Brandt (2nd Year) A study into the use of reflective materials to increase the efficiency of solar panels

Max Mullen & Ethan Leon-Ryan (2nd Year) Becoming Carbon Neutral

In addition, all of the students from the 2nd and 4th Year groups will attend the B.T. Young Scientist Exhibition during the morning of Thursday, January 10th.

On Tuesday the 20th of November, 132 SciFest projects were judged. All the 2nd Year students took part in the competition and Max Mullen and Ethan Leon-Ryan won the overall competition with their project 'Becoming Carbon Neutral.' They, along with other prize winners, will represent Blackrock College in the regional finals in Dublin in April.



Ethan Leon-Ryan and Max Mullins receiving their prize from Ms M. Kelly (Head of Science)

CATEGORY	NAME OF PROJECT	STUDENT NAME(S)
Overall winner	Becoming Carbon Neutral	Ethan Leon-Ryan Max Mullins
Overall Runner-up	Investigating the Mbemba Effect	Conor Hughes Ben Kieran-Glennon Daniel Keeley
Life Science 1st Prize	Which types of cleaning products are the most effective?	Sean Treacy
Life science 2nd Prize	Mars Bars vs Fake Mars Bars	Luke Brophy
Physical Science 1st Prize	How much does drag really affect a moving vehicle	Liam Norton
Physical science 2nd Prize	Aerodynamics: what happens when you expose a flying object to a vacuum?	Will Donnelly
Technological Science 1st Prize	Is it cost and time effective for the visually impaired people to use smart phones?	Rory Kelly
Technological Science 2nd Prize	How fast is a quantum computer?	Aidan Corrigan
Road Safety Awards	(1) The traffic light issue (2) Do elderly people have enough time to cross the road?	Fraser McGinn Jamie Starr Bourke
Communications Award	The impact sports have on the athletes' legs and upper body	Jamie Ahern-O'Connell

The aim of the award is to raise awareness of STEM education in schools and to encourage students, through participation in SciFest, to build on the 21st century skills of communication, presentation, collaboration and creativity, while engaging in self-directed, inquiry-based learning.



Sheila Porter, CEO of SciFest, presenting Ms M. Kelly (Head of Science) with the Schools Award for continuous participation in the SciFest competition.

Guidance and Counselling



CAO – The 6th Year CAO talk for parents on 6th November were highly informative and well attended. The presentation is available in the parents' section of the school website. 6th Year students had received a similar talk. With the CAO application deadline approaching on February 1st, the current 6th Year students are now seriously researching their college options and choices. Any student who is unsure should contact Ms Drew. All students will apply online at www.cao.ie where they can avail of a reduced application fee of €30 if they apply before January 20th 2019. The regular fee of €45 applies to applications made between January 20th and February 1st.



If any student has a learning disability or a medical condition it is important to tick the appropriate box on the CAO application form. DARE applicants are advised to get these applications underway as soon as possible. Students can find out more regarding the DARE scheme on www.accesscollege.ie. Students with Irish and Third Language exemptions must also take necessary action to notify the relevant Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) of their exemption(s) and to submit any supporting documentation to them. Please refer to the relevant individual HEI websites for further information. Students with NUI exemptions should note that there is a new tick box on the CAO application to inform HEIs that you have an exemption.

If you have a query regarding DARE or NUI please contact, fhurl@blackrockcollege.com

Any student considering making a UCD Ad Astra Scholarship (Elite Athlete/Performing Arts) should do so by January 31st, applications can now be made online via the UCD website.

HPAT - Students applying for entry to Medicine in 2019 need to register for CAO to receive their CAO number so they can register for the HPAT-Ireland examination. HPAT-Ireland registration will close on January 20th 2019 and the HPAT test will take place in various centres around the country on February 23th 2019. Our 6th Year students have been participating in a HPAT preparation course on Saturday mornings in the College and have had the option of sitting a practice test. RCSI is holding an open day on January 3rd 2019. Any student wishing to attend must register online via the RCSI website.



UCAS – Approximately 14 students from 6th Year have begun their UCAS applications for a range of universities in the UK. The deadline is fast approaching and students need to be aware of this as the UCAS application is quite detailed. The deadline is the 15th January 2019. Any 6th Year considering making a UCAS application should indicate this to Ms Drew as soon as possible.

USA - You can read the basics about applying to American colleges students on the website: <http://www.fulbright.ie/education-usa/education-usa-undergraduate-study/>

College Talks - Students have recently attended open days at a range of colleges including TCD, UCD, DCU, DIT, and IADT where they had the opportunity to attend talks in relation to the courses they are interested in as well as getting a chance to talk to lecturers and current college students. Since September a number of guest speakers from UCD, DCU and IADT have visited the College and addressed the 6th Years regarding courses offered in their third level institutions and careers. TCD & DIT will be visiting the 6th Years in the New Year. Notre Dame in the USA has spoken to students about study and Guy Flouch from Eunicas spoke to the students about European Studies.

Career Talks - 5th and 6th Year students will have the opportunity to attend a range of career talks offered over two Saturday mornings, 12th & 19th of January. The talks will cover a range of career areas, which will include Business, Law, Art, Technology, Entrepreneurship, Science, Medicine and Engineering amongst others. It is a chance for 5th Year students to start considering what they would like to do after school and it gives 6th Years the clarity necessary to finalise their CAO choices.



CV Preparation – 6th Years students will have a chance to participate in a CV workshop hosted by Robert Connelly (Past Pupil) who runs Amicus, Search & Recruitment Company. This will be held on Tuesday 15th January to assist the students with the Career Interviews in February.

Career Interviews - 6th Year students will have the chance to partake in Career Interviews/Coaching which will be held in the College on Wednesday 13th February 2019 at 7.30 p.m.

TY - All TY students have sat the EirQuest Questionnaire, comprising questions on their interests, abilities and personal qualities without the pressure of time. Their answers are then used to produce a Careers Guidance Workbook covering around 50 broad career areas. They have also sat the Cambridge Profile Assessment which is an assessment of their abilities in such areas as Numerical, Verbal, Non Verbal, Abstract, and Spatial Reasoning & Spelling. All testing is sufficient for a career profile.

5th Year - Students are presently attending one to one career guidance meetings which are ongoing throughout the year. They will also attend the career talks due to be held on January 12th & 19th 2018.

As a department we would like to wish all students and their families a pleasant, restful and safe Christmas.

Wellbeing



Our Amber Flag is flying high. The Amber flag is about bringing a culture change in the promotion of positive mental health in our school. More information about the Amber flag can be found here. <http://www.amberflag.org/>

The committee is presently preparing for the school's first Wellbeing Day on January 21st 2019. There will be a class activity, a poster campaign and linked themes running with Thursday Tunes and the Debating Society.

The Student Wellbeing committee attended "Zeminar" in the RDS. Zeminar is a social enterprise created to bring all those invested in the development and wellbeing of young people in Ireland to one place. Twenty three students attended the event where they heard great speakers discussing mental health issues.



Please encourage your sons to use the anonymous Bully Report Tool on the school website.

Anyone wishing to join or submit suggestions to the committee can do so by contacting any of the committee members in their year group or by sending an email to ndrew@blackrockcollege.com

Pastoral Care Programme



What an amazing half term ... Thank God for it ... the Spirit is alive here in Blackrock.

From Family Masses for Third Year and Transition Year, to remembering our dead in November, to the remarkable Transition Year students on their Matthew 25 Pastoral Placements for two weeks, to the anticipation of Advent, the Carol Service and Staff Eucharist.

3rd Year Family Mass

Fr John Kilcrann CSSp celebrated the Third Year Family Mass at 11.00am on the 11th of November – exactly one hundred years to the minute since the ending of World War I. We remembered all our loved ones but especially those who had died during World War I. At least 164 Blackrock Past Pupils took part in the war - Mr MacGinty did a roll-call of the 55 Past Pupils by name who did not return.



Sean O' Connor (Third Year) with his brother Tom O' Connor (Fifth Year) and his father at the Third Year Family Mass

Transition Year Family Mass

The Transition Year Family Mass took place in early December on the second Sunday of Advent. Our Celebrant was Fr Brendan Carr CSSp. Grandparents were especially invited to attend. The entire morning was a joyful celebration of family and the links that join us together. Fr Brendan spoke about Transition Year being the Advent period of these students' lives – full of excitement and anticipation.



Joey McEntee with his father and grandfather at the Fourth Year Family Mass

Mass of Remembrance

The wider Blackrock Community gathered on the evening of Wednesday 28th November to offer Mass with Fr Marc Whelan CSSp to remember our loved ones who have died. We especially remembered those who have died in the last year and all that are grieving. This year, the Chaplaincy Department erected a Remembrance Tree at the entrance to the College Chapel. We were all invited to write the names of our departed loved ones and place them on the branches of the tree. Over 150 names were recorded during

the month. These names have since been included in a November List of the Dead and Deacon Liam Kehoe CSSp presented this book to the Poor Claire's in Ballsbridge where the Nuns continue to pray for our loved ones and for us.

Matthew 25

Another two class groups of 25 boys have completed a two week placement under the Matthew 25 Programme. These placements have a profound impact on the boys. This is what one of the boys wrote in his Journal... "The placement was very impactful on me. I learned so much about disabilities and those with them. I also learned to be more grateful for everything that I have, which is so much more than many people have. I am now much more comfortable around people with disabilities than I was before and I could happily start a conversation with someone who is disabled."

Carol Service

On the afternoon of Tuesday 4th December, the entire College Community together with First Year from Willow Park gathered in the Des Places Hall where over 1,300 voices joined with the College Orchestra in proclaiming the Season of Advent. Fr Cormac O'Brolcháin CSSp spoke about the importance of Joy and Love in our lives and challenged each boy to make contact with someone who may otherwise be alone. He concluded his reflection in song "I wish you a Happy Christmas, I wish you a Safe Christmas, I wish you a Joy-filled Christmas and a Happy New Year".



Father Cormac O' Brolchain (Spiritual Director) speaks at the Carol Service

What an amazing half term ... Thank God for it ... the Spirit is alive here in Blackrock.

Join us for Morning Mass in the College Chapel any Mon - Fri at 8.15am.
If you have any special intention or anniversary you would like remembered, please email fmadden@blackrockcollege.com or phone 01 275 2125. All are welcome to attend this Morning Mass.

Green Schools



We may not get a White Christmas this year
Why not make it a **Green Christmas!**

The 12 days of Christmas is something we are familiar with at this time of year but the number 12 has a global significance with the UN Climate Change Conference urging us to take action as we have only 12 years to take effective action to change the destructive approach to our fragile earth. Let us start now!

Local Action has a Global Impact

Christmas is very much about children and surely our Christmas wish should be to make sure the planet earth that the next generation inherits is one that protects and enhances the natural world of which we are an integral part. Ireland's performance on climate action in response to global warming has been ranked as the worst in the EU and among the worst in the world in a major international assessment (Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI) 2019, Irish Times 10th Dec). Let's act now to change this and make our **Green Isle** a reality in a truly environmental sense.

The Green Schools' Committee has recently commenced a campaign focusing on reducing our use of single-use plastic and making the Blackrock campus and community a plastic free environment.

For the festive period here are 12 tips to help make your Christmas more eco-friendly:

1. Stop using single-use plastic

Leave plastic packaging in the supermarket. Get reusable water bottles and coffee cups.

2. Green presents this Christmas

Why not buy our family and friends an eco-friendly gift.

3. Experience as a gift

Think about giving an experience as a gift rather than an object. Not only is this environmentally friendly but generally cheaper too!

4. Eco Candles

Paraffin candles are made from petroleum residue and are not good for your health or for the environment. Why not buy candles made from soy or beeswax? They are biodegradable and smoke free.

5. Reduce Waste

Compost all your food peelings or get a wormery to help break down the vegetable food waste into rich soil nutrition.

6. Defrost your freezer during Christmas

It will work more efficiently and create more space to store leftover food, so that it doesn't go to waste.

7. Fruit and Veg

Buy your fruit and vegetables loose and ditch all that wasteful plastic packaging. Make sure the goods that are packaged are made from recycled materials.

8. Christmas tree lights

For example if left on for 10 hours a day over the 12 days of Christmas they produce enough CO2 to inflate 12 balloons, so turn them off when they are not needed.

9. Recycle!

Households will throw out an average of five sacks of rubbish over the festive period. Much of this will be waste that could have been recycled.

10. Support local family farmers

Not only does local, organic food taste better, but you'll also be doing your part for your community and the planet too.

11. Christmas Tree

While your tree won't fit in the recycling bin with your newspapers and bottles, you can recycle your tree: many places offer programs to turn your tree into mulch or wood chips.

12. Bird Feeding

Why not help our garden birds and winter visitors. Make sure you provide this food on a regular basis.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from Blackrock College Green Schools' Committee.

Badminton

The last few weeks have been very busy for our badminton players. The under 19A team captained by Luke O'Brien (5th Year) has had some very good results, beating Terenure and The High School, drawing with ArdScoil Ris and a solitary loss to a very talented Wesley team. We're awaiting confirmation but it looks likely that the team will qualify for the semi-finals of Division 2.

The under 19B team captained by Jack Kane (5th Year) performed admirably and were unfortunate to lose to Lycée Francais and St Fintan's, however they finished off the group stages with a brilliant performance against Castleknock winning 6-0.

The Under 16A team, captained by Darragh Harrison (TY) have safely navigated their group and have qualified for the Division 2 semi-final. The Under 16B team captained by John Dennison have won 3 and drawn one of their groups games. And finally the U16C team captained by Andrew Ryan (TY) have won 4 and lost one of their group games. Overall the players are improving greatly and for a school that had no competitive badminton three years ago things are looking very promising as we look forward to some quarter finals and semi-finals in the New Year.

Gaelic Football

The Blackrock U16 Gaelic football team started their season with a win in their first group game on Thursday 22 November. They illustrated their class and potential for the majority of the game and played free flowing football throughout. Blackrock was in a comfortable position at half time leading 3-5 to 1-4. However, the momentum then swung in the Knocklyon's favour and they scored 4-2 without reply in the opening stages of the second half. Trailing by 7 points with 15 minutes remaining, Blackrock displayed great character to come back and win the game. Goals from Mark Murphy, Michael Nealon, Tom Henderson, Darragh Dempsey and Louie Maguire gave the upper hand to Blackrock once again as they confidently finished the game. This was a great team effort as all twenty players received game time.

In the second round robin game Blackrock took on Oatlands. Blackrock took a while to get to the pace of the game with Oatlands cruising to an 8-point lead. Blackrock would rue the scoring chances missed throughout the first half. A goal from Sean Purcell gave us a fighting chance going into the second half. Blackrock started the second half brightly as substitute Fionn Dougan rattled the net with his first touch. However, every time the boys clawed themselves back into the game, a silly defensive error was made leading to simple goals for the opposition. Down by seven points with 3 minutes remaining, Blackrock displayed great character with both Louie Maguire and Matthew McCarthy scoring a goal each. However, it was too little too late and Oatlands hung on for victory by the lowest of margins. Blackrock now will play Clonkeen College after the Christmas break for a chance of finals qualification.

Basketball

Under 19

Unfortunately the U19 basketball side suffered a heart-breaking 1 point, on the buzzer defeat to Pobail Scoil Neasáin in the East-Leinster Quarter final. Pobail Scoil Neasáin eventually lost the final by 4 points to St Andrew's who Blackrock had beaten earlier in the season but unfortunately it is a case of what might have been for the senior side. Nicolas Brusasca (5th Year) with 20 points was superb along with his brother and captain Roberto (6th Year) who displayed phenomenal leadership to bring the team back into the game.

Under 16

The U16 Basketball side defeated Donabate 52-27 in the East-Leinster Quarter final, placing them in semi-final against Adamstown CC. With the side hit with injuries the extended squad had to dig deep and performed superbly against Adamstown in the semi-final pushing them all the way before eventually losing on a 57-45 score line. The U16s can now look forward to an All-Ireland semi-final in the cup after the Christmas break.

Rugby Junior

The junior squad has had a very busy time since the Halloween break. Five matches in November saw wins against Terenure, RBAI, Clongowes Wood College, St Mary's, Belvedere College and Crescent. The Schools' Cup Draw was held on the 9th of December and pitted the junior side against Belvedere College, a fixture to be played in early February. The countdown to the 1st round of the competition has commenced and further matches against Methody College, St Munchin's, Ballymena and CBC Cork will take place prior to the cup fixture. A strenuous two months await the squad with preparations on going throughout the Christmas break. We wish Gus McCarthy (Captain), Hugh Cooney (Vice-captain), Kevin Jackson (Vice-captain), and all the boys in the extended squad the best of luck as they prepare for our Cup Campaign in the New Year.

Senior

The senior rugby squad has had a busy two months since the October mid-term break. Players returned fresh and ready for the difficult run of fixtures November and December always provides. A tight victory in terrible conditions against RBAI kept us on our toes coming into the annual friendly against St Michael's. Whilst this game always brings its own edge for the players, this year was particularly special for the wider Blackrock and St Michael's communities alike as we competed for the first time for the Noel Turley Memorial Trophy, kindly donated by Noel's widow, Catherine. It was a great occasion and a fitting contest in his name where neither side gave an inch. We came out on the right side of a 30-27 score line - a result that could have gone either way in reality. Both sides will be hoping to get a shot at each other again later this year.

The term continued with victories over Belvedere, Crescent, Clongowes and Roscrea and the ever-anticipated Senior Cup Draw in which we have been paired with Presentation College, Bray. This will no doubt prove to be an excellent contest, as it ended up being three years ago in the Junior Cup, when a similar collection of players in both squads represented their schools so well.

Soccer

The senior soccer squad had a successful trip to St. Bede's, Manchester. Both sides played excellent football. Stephen Murphy (6th Year) lead the 2nd team to a comprehensive victory whilst Peter Quinlan (6th Year) led the 1st team



Matthew Woods and Sean O' Brien (SCTV St Michael's)



Tom Henderson (Fourth Year)
Rock V Clongowes



Jude O' Reilly (4th Year) and
Cameron O' Neill (6th Year) Rock V Clongowes



Hugo Kelly (Third Year) Rock V CUS



Scott Barron (Fourth Year) SCTV St Michael's

to a 3-1 victory. One of the highlights of the trip was the training session held in Manchester City's training ground.



Soccer Squad after training at the Manchester City training grounds

In the Metropolitan League a 4-1 victory against Belvedere College and a 2-2 draw with St.

Benildus qualified the team top of their group. A home semi-final against Moyle Park CC was the result. It was an excellent game against an excellent side. Billy Griffin (6th Year) scored twice and Camilo Fernandez (6th Year) sealed the 3-1 victory in the second half. We look forward to the South Final after Christmas and hopefully a run in the Leinster League as well as the start of the Joe McGrath Cup.

Table Tennis

A quiet term so far for table tennis, with most of the matches coming after Christmas, however Senior A have got their quest for a record extending 10th consecutive Leinster title off to the best of starts with a 6-0 win over CBC Monkstown. Junior 2B have also begun solidly, with a 5-1 league victory over St. Benildus', as well as a 4-0 win against CBC in the Cup, while Junior 2C also got off to a winning start with a 6-0 result against DeLaSalle, however it will be a tight division for 2C as they also suffered a 2-4 loss against High School in both League and Cup. Minor A will have work to do over the Christmas break, suffering an early loss 2-4 against Castleknock.

Several players have also received some early season representative honours, with Maitiú Heckmann, Ben Kieran Glennon & Ciaran Patchell (all 2nd Year); James Hamilton, Sean Patterson & Adam Tunney (all 3rd Year); and Conor Hughes & Lorcan Patchell (both 5th Year) all called into Leinster Squads, while Heckmann also continued in the Irish Squad, with Tunney receiving his first call up at that level. Maitiú Heckmann also represented Ireland at the week-long Portuguese Cadet Open, which took place in November.

Rowing

Congratulations on a very enjoyable and successful Christmas event in Blessington on Saturday 8th December. Thank you to Fr. O'Brolchain for blessing the boats and to Mr Alan Mac Ginty, Mr Evan O'Brien and our designated teacher, Ms. Maire Ni Choncheanainn, for their continued support of Blackrock College Rowing. Thank you to all the parents and families who attended on Saturday to support the event and be a part of the rowing community in Blackrock College.



Michael O' Sullivan, Sam Horkan, (4th Year) Mr A. MacGinty (Principal), Oisín Tiernan, Ethan Swan and Guy Mangan (2nd Year) at the blessing of the boats.

Well done to the committee, past and present, and the specific event organisers, for all the preparations over the past number of weeks to make this a special day for the club.

Finally, a huge thank you to all the rowers and coaches who, despite the weather, took part in the Christmas Rowing Competition. The 2nd Year students don't see much racing this side of the season, so thank you to the senior rowers who took a day off training to team up with the 2nd Year rowers for the competition.

Swimming

After 15 years of coaching our swim team coach Carole Walsh has stepped back from her role. Carole has been central to the growth of our swim team over these years. Our relationship with both Eton College and Harrow School are thanks to Carole's drive to give our swimmers more competition and an annual swim meet that they can train towards every year. The esteem that Carole is held by both pupils and past pupils was evident in the reception held here in the school in December. Past pupils from as far back as 2011 came back to thank Carole for her encouragement during their time with the swim team. We wish Cindy Hurley all the best taking over from Carole. Thank you Carole!



Mr MacGinty with Ms Carole Walsh on the occasion of her retirement

NOTE

An tSraith Shóisearach do Mhúinteoirí
JuniorCYCLE
for teachers



Blackrock College will close on **Monday 11th February 2019** for a whole staff planning and in-service day. This whole school closure day was previously scheduled for April 1st 2019 but the College will now be open on that day. The new closure date was scheduled by Junior Cycle for Teachers and is a requirement by the Department as specified in DES Circular 0015/2017 as part of the continued implementation of the new Junior Cycle. There will be no classes for students on this day, however, night study will go ahead for 3rd, 5th and 6th years.

Health and Safety Notice

There is no exit via the Cross Avenue gate between 8.00 am and 9.05 am Monday to Friday. We would appreciate your full cooperation with this to ensure the safety of all members of our school community.

Photos courtesy Rock Photography
www.rockphotography.ie

REFLECTION

