

BLACKROCK COLLEGE NEWSLETTER



Christmas 2019

Dear Parents,

The **"true meaning of Christmas"** is a phrase coined in the middle of the 19th Century as people lamented the secularisation of the celebration of the birth of Christ.

Substitute 'commercialisation' for 'secularisation' and it still has currency today. For some, the world-famous Coca-Cola ad flags the start of the Christmas season. There is no let up as advertising on social media and the advent of online sales add to the fever pitch. Of course, this has a place and contributes significantly to the celebratory atmosphere, brings people together and encourages a welcome generosity of spirit. However, it is interesting to note that only 67% of adults surveyed in the U.S. believed that the infant Jesus is more important to Christmas than Santa Claus. 14% had no opinion. Keeping the Christian Christmas in the face of the Santa Claus version is a challenge but one we should be willing to tackle.

Christmas matters because in the words of C.S. Lewis, **"The Son of God became man to enable men to become sons of God"**. This is a powerful message.

It is for this reason that Christmas is a time of hope, joy, love and peace. It is a time of wonder and awe, a time for humility, a time to put others first. The great Fr Stanley, Principal of Willow Park School, Senior and Junior, for over 30 years used to tell the boys about the **JOY** of Christmas - Jesus, Others, You. The most important gift we bring to any gathering is one which cannot be wrapped. It is our **presence** rather than **presents** that makes the difference.

Christmas is a difficult time for many, be it the bereaved, the infirm, the elderly or the lonely. There are many on the margins of society for whom the season brings little comfort or joy. We must reach out to them. As Fr Peter McVerry put it, **"Because of Christmas, we Christians believe that we encounter God not in sacred places but in other human beings. We Christians worship God by loving God in each other"**.

To love God in each other, goodwill is not enough; action is key. The response of the boys, the parents, my colleagues and the Union to the St Vincent de Paul appeal has been phenomenal. The time and personal commitment to the 24 hour fast, cyclothon, Soccer Marathon, mince pies morning, Christmas Tree project, duck races and hamper delivery is faith in action.

And of course, this spirit is not just a seasonal step but one that should remain constant in our minds and hearts throughout the year.

Our recent Climate Action Day provided further evidence of the determination of our boys to tackle this challenge by putting before our school community practical ways in which we can make a difference. I commend the Student Council, Green Schools, Development Education and Student Wellbeing Committees for their enterprise and leadership.

This had been an extraordinarily busy half-term. The sensational West Side Story production, the impressive B.C.R., our inspirational Carol Service, the overflowing (what a crowd!) Transition Year Family Mass and the Blessing of the Boats alongside a comprehensive extra-curricular programme and a dynamic classroom experience provide the boys with boundless opportunities for personal, social, intellectual and spiritual development.

The recent W.S.E.- MLL inspection has provided a searching examination of this offering. Parents, teachers and students have been surveyed, classrooms visited, focus groups met. We await their report.

Finally, I wish you all a peaceful, restful and holy Christmastide. At Blackrock, we place the birth of Christ firmly at the centre of our celebration. May His coming amongst us continue to inspire care, compassion and concern. I thank the Spiritan Community, my colleagues, the parent body, our past pupils and of course the boys for sharing our Christian vision.

ALAN MacGINTY
Principal

Photos from L to R :

- a) David Ryan (6th Year) reading at the Carol Service
- b) Jamie McLoughlin (Fourth Year) working hard selling trees for SVP
- c) Callum Byrne (6th Year) as Riff in West Side Story



Second Year



Our Second Years have completed an active first term in the College and have set some excellent standards. They continue to make good progress on their weekly **Application Cards** and the value of this effort and commitment cannot be overstated. When the new term commences, we ask parents to congratulate their son on his weekly Application Card, which he takes home each Monday. This is a very important opportunity to reinforce the good behaviour and practice that is acknowledged on the Card. A regular check on each boy's Homework Diary is also advisable, to assist him in the organisation of his daily homework and revision.

The **House Competitions** continue with the Table Tennis competition which began with great enthusiasm after the Halloween break. As the exams begin, the blue and white leagues draw to a close, with some exciting finals awaiting our return in January. Well done to all our participants and to our House Captains who organise the matches and encourage all involved.



Under 14s V Belvedere in December

The **extra-curricular activities** available in Second Year are a vital part of each boy's experience and contribution to our College community. Consequently, it is great to see high levels of participation and engagement with the many activities on offer. The vast majority of our Second Years are involved in sport or another activity. Some highlights include a great season for the Gaelic team, along with a very good term of U14s rugby, with some tough matches and some great wins.

There is active involvement in the **Chess Club** and the Junior Chess team has had a very good term. The Newbridge tournament was a first for many and the boys did very well, achieving 11th place out of 28 teams. They will go on to compete in the Swiss tournament in the spring.

In **Debating**, we held our inaugural Junior Mace competition in the College in November and there was terrific Second Year participation. Well done to Luca Kenny, Jack Leyden, Amlan Parida, Harry Pierce and Gregory Quinn for their excellent contributions. Equally well done to Aran O'Flaherty who has represented Second Year in **Model United Nations** this term.

Other extra-curricular activities involving many of our Second Years include

basketball, cycling, badminton, squash, swimming, public speaking, the Art club, the Science club, the Orchestra, cricket, tennis, table tennis, and rowing. We wish them well in the forthcoming events and look forward to hearing about their progress.

The **Scifest Competition** took place this term and the projects have been on display along the Senior Science corridor. Well done to all boys on their wonderful work. A panel of external examiners from Scifest made awards in various categories. Congratulations, especially to the overall winners Simon Considine and Diarmuid Byrne for their project *Investigating the effect of concentration on temperature in an exothermic reaction*. All Second Years will attend the **Young Scientist Exhibition** in the RDS in January.



Harry Brady at the Carol Service.

Many of the boys attended the opening night of the fantastic **College Musical** *West Side Story* and no doubt they have gained a few insights in preparation for their own production with Fourth Year in term three.

During this half-term we also had our **Carol Service** for the season of Advent, with the entire College in attendance in the Sports Hall. It was both a festive and prayerful occasion with Fr Cormac O'Brolchain reminding us that 'God is with us and in us.' Well done to all our Second Years who participated in this Service, especially in our Choir and as members of the College Orchestra.

Sincere thanks to all the Second Years who helped to fundraise for our annual **Duck Race** in aid of the **St. Vincent de Paul Society**. They raised in excess of €2,000. Our message to the boys is to reflect on the difference between 'somebody must do something' and 'I must do something'. The challenge is to recognise the impact of our own actions. This theme will be revisited and reinforced on our return in the New Year when we ask Second Years to embark on their *Auxilium* service.



Gregory Quinn and Amlan Parida at the Junior Mace Competition



Harry Pierce at the Junior Mace Competition

Dates for your Diary

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

Sunday 19th January: Leman Concert: National Concert Hall

Friday 7th February: Progress Cards

Thursday 13th February: Second Year Parent-Teacher Meeting 4:15pm-

Third Year



As the first term draws to a close, I have no doubt the Third Years will use the break to rest up, relax and recharge the batteries. But it also provides an opportunity for reflection. I would encourage all the students to look to page 67 of their homework journal where they have a framework to look back on the term and plan for a productive and successful second term in the New Year.

Activities which have made this a busy half term include Science week, the Third Year Family Mass, Christmas Aural in Irish and modern languages and a fantastic Carol Service with the Third Years in full voice !

The group continues their very positive engagement with extracurricular programme in the school with many highlights since the Halloween break.

In **debating** Third Year has been well represented. Frazer McGinn, Daniel Keeley, Gavin Bowen-O' Connor and Jamie Starr-Bourke were part of the team that represented the college in rounds two and three of the UCD Junior Debating Competition. Then on the 23rd of November, Daniel alongside Ben Kieran Glennon and Alec Linklater competed in the inaugural Junior MACE held in the College. We wish them well at the next junior MACE to be held in Castleknock in January. Gavin was again involved, this time as a member of our junior Irish debating team which included Conor Hughes and Ben Kieran Glennon. They successfully qualified for the next round speaking in favour of the motion "School Days are the Best Days of our Lives" In my mind a very easy topic to speak on! Finally, our Third Year representatives of MUN had a successful conference in Rathdown over the weekend of the 8th of November. Conor Casey, Jamie Starr-Bourke, James Lee and Frazer McGinn were members of the Brazil delegation with Conor winning a Distinguished Delegate award.

Third Year



Our **basketball** team bounced back from disappointment in the UI6 All Ireland league to mount a strong run in the Plate Competition. The team including Dan Barry, Eric Brandt, Tom Cherico, Jack Dempsey Salley, Maitiu Heckmann, Conor Ryan and James Sheridan made it to the final of the Plate where they narrowly lost to Donabate 31-24. The squad was very happy with their performance overall and the future looks bright for this young team.



Third Years take time out as Father O' Brolchain led the whole school in meditation during the Carol Service

The Third-Year **rowers** never cease to amaze me. Their commitment to training is something else. Whether it is running laps up to the NII, gruelling gym sessions or the early morning weekend starts they all give 100%, evident most recently at the Skibbereen Head of the River on the 16th November. Great numbers from the year competed including Matthew Gadaloff, Guy Mangan, Frazer McGinn, Aaron Murtagh, Freddy O' Connail, Ted Power, Jamie Starr Bourke, Ethan Swan and Oisín Tiernan. Highlights included the J15 4x+ led by Ted Power finishing 2nd and Guy Mangan in the J14 1x. Next up is the Dam Buster in Blessington in February.



Ben Kieran Glennon and Daniel Keeley prepare at the MACE debates.

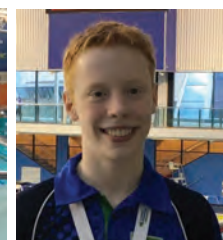
In **swimming** congratulations to Ronan Fahey, who had great success at the recent Leinster Short Course Swimming Championships, taking first place in the 200m butterfly and second place in the 800m and 1500m freestyle events. Finn O' Neill, competing at the same event, took gold in the intermediate 800 and 1500 freestyle and bronze in the 400 free. Well done lads! Both students are currently competing in the National SC Championships. We wish them well.

Finn also competes in **cross country** and led his club DSD to gold in the

Dublin Cross Country championship. Recently Finn alongside Liam Norton represented the school in the Brother Cross Country meet with both securing places in the top 20.



Finn O' Neill at the Irish National Swimming Championships



Ronan Fahey at the Irish National Swimming Championships

Commiserations to our **junior golf team** including Jake Foley and James Heavey, who despite competing very well in the Leinster Finals, did not progress. Up against 11 other teams, they did well on a tough course.

Next to **rugby**. Congratulations to Greg Barron on his election as Captain of the JCT alongside Tom Brigg and Oliver Coffey as Vice Captains. The squad is currently preparing for two fixtures over the Christmas break and then St Andrew's in the first round of the Cup. Elsewhere the other junior squads are anxiously awaiting the draws for their respective leagues. Fixtures will be finalised in January.



Liam Norton competing at the Brother Cross Country meet

Dates for your Diary

Days of Reflection

Tuesday 14th January

McQuaid & Shanahan

Thursday 16th January

Ebenrecht & Leman

Friday 17th January

DeValera & Duff

Thursday 23rd January – Third Year Parent Teacher Meeting

Transition Year



It would be an understatement to say that it has been a busy first term in TY. I cannot praise this year group highly enough. TY presents a multitude of opportunities to the boys on a monthly, weekly and often even a daily basis. It is critical for all the boys within the busyness of the year to take time to reflect over the Christmas break on their TY experience so 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 they should rightly be proud of an excellent first term. If the answer is no or a 'qualified yes' then I would put it to the students to think about the serenity prayer which says 'Grant me the serenity accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can and the wisdom to know the difference'. My hope for the boys then would be that they realise they have it entirely within their power to get involved and have a fantastic second half to their TY Year. January is a great time for positive resolutions! I encourage the students to reflect 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; the boys have done themselves, their families and the school proud throughout.



BCR Rugby Show: Cian O'Brien, Gus McCarthy, Ethan Laing, Hugo Martin, Brent Pope, Inigo Cruise O'Brien, Tony Ward, Charlie O'Brien, Jacques De Patoul and Mr A. MacGinty

Blackrock College Radio

We were delighted to welcome Mary Mitchell O' Connor to launch the station on

Monday 18th of November. It proved to be a phenomenal week of broadcasting, but more than two months of preparation went into it. When you think that five months previously the boys were in the middle of their Junior Cert; to then produce 47.5 hours of radio content for a week of broadcasting is outstanding. This was far removed from a "school project" and this was never more evident than when I observed how the students engaged with our guests from the world of sports, politics and journalism. Many of our guests commented on the standard of questions, with one politician commenting how impressed he was with a question about a comment he had given in an interview that same morning! From advertising to the News Team to Showcase, Noon Show and Guests and Requests, BCR 2019 was a real legacy building event for the year group and all involved should be rightly proud. We hope to have the week of broadcast available to download in a podcast type format and will be in touch with parents once this is the case.



BCR Guests and Requests: Alex Maguire, Sean Patterson, Ryan Tubridy (Class of 1991), Jamie McLoughlin and Alex Hughes

Soccer Marathon

The annual soccer marathon in aid of Saint Vincent De Paul took place Friday November 29th until 6am Saturday morning the 30th with a record 144 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.

Transition Year



Though the rain arrived in the afternoon, the spirit and energy never wavered, as the outdoor portion of the tournament finished at the last 16 stage.



TY Group at the beginning of the Soccer Marathon

After tea we reconvened to the Jubilee Hall. At around 10pm students took a break from the tournament and the teams they had known for a day and a quick-fire house tournament decided the three teams to challenge the teachers.

Finally 11pm arrived and the teachers' team took to the pitch captained by Mr. E O'Brien. The atmosphere was hostile, silenced only by the exquisite finishing of Mr. O'Brien. As expected, the teachers won all three matches. And so, we moved into the home economics room for the well-deserved, much-anticipated wagon wheel pizzas.

Through the night as the energy levels were challenged the boys stuck to the task and the activities continued with FIFA tournaments, swims and even a movie or two. When energy might have dipped 'Karaoke Classroom' was the perfect antidote!

I would like to thank my colleagues who played that night: Mr. O'Brien, Mr. Grant, Peter O'Reilly, Jack Gardiner, Scott Cullinane, Tom Sheerin, Peter Quinlan and Matthew O'Carroll. I would like to especially thank the student coordinators of the event Michael English, Bobby Dowling, Josh Scallan, James Boland, Marcus Noble and Will Fitzgerald. Finally I commend the boys on their incredible fund raising efforts as we collected over €19,000 for St Vincent DePaul, and their energy and cooperation throughout the day - well done!

Mince Pie Morning

On Tuesday the 3rd 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 fantastic €420 was raised. Many thanks to Ms Karen Marren for making it all possible.

Hampers

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 14th December. It is so critical given the pace of the year and opportunities on offer week to week that the boys have opportunities where possible to see their fundraising efforts go full circle. The trip out to deliver the hampers to the families in Killinarden in West Tallaght is humbling and powerful in equal measure and I thank all the parents who helped with the delivery, your support as always is hugely appreciated.

West Side Story

It was great to see so many Transition Years involved in all aspects of the senior musical, from front of house, crew, orchestra and stage and what an incredible show to be involved in! What a week it was for them with it running side by side with BCR! The policeman in West Side Story was also ironically a key member of our hospitality team in BCR! Well done to all involved.



Mark McCabe, Alex Maguire, Mark Phelan, Kai Murtagh and Colm Fagan

Corporate Duck Race

Amid the preparation for BCR we also managed to have the Corporate Duck Race in Grand Canal Basin on the 8th November. The Duck Race Sales team did a superb job emailing and making calls trying to get sales made! The amount raised was an incredible €9,000, 100% of which will go to Solely Haiti for the purpose of paying the salaries of 9 primary school teachers in a deeply impoverished community in Northern Haiti.



TY Duck Race Team in Grand Canal Basin

Pastoral Programme

Four pastoral placement groups went out in the first term with another four to come

before the end of the year. We thank Mr Madden for his endless dedication to the preparation of the boys for the programme, the support of the boys during the placement itself and of course the debrief on their return. Pastoral Placement is a unique experience, indeed a privilege and truly one of the most powerful of their TY experience.



Stephen Curran and his family at the TY Family Mass

It would be remiss of me not to mention here the incredible numbers in the congregation at the TY Family mass on Sunday 8th December. When you nearly have to knock down the wall of the 6th Year study to fit more people in you know it's a big crowd! It was fantastic to have so many grandparents there and it was a very moving, powerful ceremony for many. I want to thank all parents and guardians for their constant support. TY wouldn't be the programme it is without the support and engagement of the parents as well as the boys and we have been truly blessed in that regard this year.



James Brophy and his Mum at the TY Family Mass

Extra-curricular

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

Congratulations to Matthew O'Brien on representing the TY Team on the senior golf team and getting to the Leinster Final. Though they unfortunately fell short on the day, congratulations to Adam Allabachani (Captain) and Rory O'Shea who were part of the junior golf team who made it to the Leinster finals in Lucan Golf Club on the 19th November.

Hard luck to Murray Baker (Captain) and the U-16 basketball team who narrowly lost the East-Leinster Plate final on November 29th. Transition Years are very well represented in the U-19 team also with Jimmy Gilligan, Hugo Kelly, Kevin Keane, Paddy Morris, Murray Baker, Leo Zhang, Vincent Pang, Matthew Harvey all members of the squad who unfortunately lost out to St. Mark's in the East-Leinster Quarter Final.

Volunteering & Service

Being of service to others has been an obvious priority of this TY group in the first term. Over 70 students volunteered to take part in the SVP envelope drop on Wednesday the 4th December. The group distributed letters in the local area about the Saint Vincent De Paul Christmas appeal. Students have also readily made themselves available for helping with the duel in the pool, collections in aid of Down Syndrome Ireland and Oxfam Ireland taking place this term also. Aisling Wallace of Oxfam remarked "The students arrived promptly and they were so helpful and well behaved they were a credit to Blackrock College. There were so many lovely comments from both M&S staff and shoppers alike. Please pass on our thanks to the boys. We are delighted to let you know that Oxfam's recent bag pack event at M&S Dundrum raised €4,273". 17 students attended a Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Comhairle na nÓg AGM in the Talbot Hotel in Stillorgan where the theme of the day was climate change. They have been busy working on the Christmas Trees project in aid of SVP, AIB Build a Bank has been launched, there were TY Tours on the 5th November. 20 students also assisted in the coordination of Willow STEM week and there has been plenty more besides! I have thoroughly enjoyed the first term and I hope the students have as well. We look forward to more of the same in the New Year.

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

Dates for your Diary

Sunday 5th – Friday 10th January – Holy Ghost Prep USA Visit
Tuesday 7th, Wednesday 8th, Tuesday 14th – Thursday 16th January, – Part two of the Leadership Course.
Thursday 9th January – Young Scientist Exhibition
Sunday 19th January – Leman Concert
Monday 20th – Wellbeing Day
Friday 24th January – Transition Year Parents' Social
Monday 10th – Friday 14th February – Work Experience

The second half of term one continued to highlight the busy and productive work ethic of Fifth Year students who 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 - Cyclathon

Congratulations to Fifth Year students for raising €2,500 for the St. Vincent de Paul's Christmas Appeal. On Thursday 28th November, students were involved in the annual Inter-house Cyclathon. Good humour, healthy competition with in-house DJ's and Buskers ensured that all enjoyed a wonderful event. The House Captains once again were excellent in their organising of this event and congratulations to Aaron Lysaght Walsh for winning the fancy-dress competition in not one but three different outfits! Fastest cyclist went to Alex Cronnelly and Leman cycled the furthest. Thank you to our in-house support teams for organising the speakers and equipment. Special thanks to our sponsors MCSPORT.IE for providing the spinning bikes 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.



Aidan Kennedy and Stephen Corr

5th Year Career Talks

We are grateful to Head of Career Guidance, Ms Natasha Drew, together with Mr Maurice Tunney (Class of 198) and the Past Pupils' Union for organising several worthwhile and engaging career seminars over two Saturdays in November. A good number of students turned out each day to listen to speakers in several career areas including medicine, accounting, law, finance, science, engineering and marketing. The seminars were very useful for all students present. Students were also encouraged to complete and submit career plans to Mr O'Nuallain.



Mr Niall Woods (Class of 1989) speaks to the boys about Career Choices

Green Schools and Climate Action Day

Green Schools committee members helped promote increasing environmental awareness on the most recent Climate Action Day. The diverse spectrum of Green ties and socks were a sight to behold, while House Captain Rory McGuire patrolled the car park collecting the 2-euro Carbon Tax fee for cars driving through the car park on the morning of the 29th of November. Well done to all on the funds raised to support the St. Vincent DePaul Christmas campaign.

RTE Youth Assembly on Climate

Conor Slattery was selected as one of the 157 delegates from across the country to participate in the inaugural Youth Assembly on climate hosted by the Houses of the Oireachtas in association with RTÉ on Friday 15th of November. The event was chaired by Ceann Comhairle Seán Ó Fearghail and broadcast live in two sessions: the first setting the agenda, the second to ratify a climate proclamation – coinciding with the centenary of the first Dáil. 37 proposals were put forward for discussion, including Conor's entitled "All data centres should be contracted to account for 100% of their energy consumption through the generation or purchase of renewable energy." Congratulations to Conor on his participation in this event and for all the work he does with the Green School Committee in school and with the environmental group *Fridays for Future*.



Conor Slattery with Ryan Tubridy (Class of 1991) in RTE

Sailing

Nathan Van Steenberg has participated in two Major International Sailing events in the past month, representing his club, the National Sailing Club. Firstly, in the Euro Cup Competition in Lake Garda in Italy he competed against both Youth and Adults in double handed 29ers. He also participated in Ovington Champs

in the UK against 50 other boats. Well done to Nathan on his participation in a very busy season which is now coming to a close.

Golf

As the active term draws to a close, we congratulate the senior golf team for their efforts so far in the Senior Schools' Championship. With an excellent victory in the semi-finals against a strong Naas CBS side, winning 4.5 to 0.5. The Leinster final will take place on the 16th of January in Delgany GC. Blackrock will be facing a strong St. Benildas side in the final. Best wishes to our all the team including 5th Years Alex Simpson, Paul White and Thomas Harte in the next round.

Basketball

The senior team started the cup campaign with a great home win against a well-rounded Carrigaline Community School, after a good performance from the 4th Years. Unfortunately, they were defeated by the reigning All Ireland "Division C" champions, Waterpark college. It was also the last match for vice-captain Todd Blacklaw, of 5th Year before his return to Scotland. The senior team then exited the Schools' League at the hands of St Mark's Tallaght, a very strong side who should go far in the competition.

Overall it was a promising season for Blackrock basketball, although there was no success this year, there is plenty of potential for both the junior and senior teams in years to come.

Rugby

We congratulate the Fifth Years and all members of the SCT squad who have enjoyed success over St Michael's in the Noel Turley Memorial Trophy. Blackrock just shaded a high octane encounter which was a fitting tribute to Noel who gave so much to education and to rugby in both colleges over a career that stretched from 1963 to 2013. They followed this with a good win over Crescent with great contributions from the 5th Years. A tough match against the excellent visitors from The King's School, Australia came next. The SCT now regroup and prepare for the next challenge ahead.



Fionn Dougan (Rock V The King's School, Australia)

As the competitive stage of the rugby season begins soon, we wish all involved in House Rugby well in their participation in Leinster Branch Rugby Leagues. May their undefeated status continue into 2020!

Fifth Year is strongly represented on the senior teams and thoroughly enjoyed their successful away trips this term. All are looking forward to the draw and the upcoming first round match.

Soccer

A loss in the final cup match in extra time to Clonkeen saw Blackrock also lose their goalkeeper Conor O'Kane in a freak injury. Though Michael Nealon got his second cap, Blackrock lost to a strong Coláiste Eanna side. In the league campaign two wins out of three were needed to qualify. Congratulations to 5th Year Riley Smith whose goal helped the team to qualify through to the semi-final of the league, where Blackrock will face St. Benildus.

Model UN /Debating

Two delegations from Blackrock were sent to the RADMUN conference hosted by Rathdown School. Representing the United Kingdom were 5th Years Andrew McSweeney, Joey Houghton, Alex Kirrane, Matthew Keeley and Stephen Corr. 5th Year Evan Walsh was on the team representing Brazil. The Blackrock delegations were once again very successful, with Matthew Keeley, Andrew McSweeney and Joey Houghton all winning Distinguished Delegate awards. The UK delegation also won one of three Outstanding Delegation awards given out at the conference.

Blackrock also attended the Inaugural Mount Anville MUN. Joey Houghton and Andrew McSweeney both came away with distinguished delegate awards.

Congratulations to all and here's looking forward to the highlight of the MUN Season at ROCKMUN 2020.

Libermann Choir

Twenty-three 5th Years participated in the Libermann choir at a unique event in a concert in aid of Aidlink. The choir performed with Irish singer Ailbhe Reidy in the National Stadium raising funds for this excellent cause.

Fifth Year Cont'd



Music

Congratulations to Evan Walsh who was selected along with other flute students from the Royal Irish Academy of Music to play alongside Sir James and Lady Galway for his 80th birthday celebration in the National Concert Hall on Wednesday 27th November. Evan has also accepted an offer of a flute placement with the Symphonic Waves Orchestra next September which will fulfil a calendar of events in Galway, The European Capital of Culture 2020

School Musical

Fifth Years' presence in this year's musical, *West Side Story*, was truly wonderful. Both those in cast and in crew put heart and soul into the outstanding production. From weekend long rehearsals, to late night performances all are to be commended for their wonderful efforts providing such wonderful entertainment.



Members of the *West Side Story* Cast

Carol Service

In full voice the Fifth-Year group showed great community spirit at the recent whole school Carol Service. Whilst all participated commendably, the Fifth Year members of the choir and the orchestra were of particular note for their remarkable leadership of the year group and performances, especially Freddie Noonan and Luke Reynolds (6th Year) for their memorable final note contribution in 'Carol of the Bells'.

As term one draws to a close, we commend Fifth Year students for their participation

and contribution to school life. We wish them a happy and healthy Christmas break and look forward to the New Year with high hopes of continued excellence.

5th Year Family Mass

The 5th Year Family Mass will be celebrated in the College Chapel on **Sunday 2nd February**. It is hoped that as many parents and sons as possible will be in attendance.



Daniel Welch singing at the Carol Service.

Dates for your Diary

Thursday 30th January:	5th Year Parent Teacher Meeting
Sunday 02nd February:	5th Year Family Mass
Friday 28th February:	5th Year Annual Parents' Dinner

The Arts



Art Club

Fifth Year Art Club' members Ned Fitter, Eoin O'Sullivan, Donal de Buitléir, Shane Redahan and Conor Flannery produced a large scale poster for the Éire Ón Spéir (Ireland from the sky) exhibition in the Creative Arts and Digital Learning Centre.

The first Art Club of the new decade starts on Wednesday the 8th of January 2020



Joey McEntee (Fifth Year)



Richard McSweeney (Third Year)



Donal de Buitléir (Fifth Year)



Eugene Scallan (Third Year)

Junior Debating

The second half of Term 1 has seen Blackrock College host a Junior Debating MACE, comprised of more than 120 students from 1st, 2nd and 3rd Year from over 30 schools in Leinster. Nine boys volunteered to represent Blackrock College: Ben Kieran-Glennon, Daniel Keeley and Alec Linklater (All 3rd Year students) and Oisín Daly, Harry Pierce, Amlán Parida, Gregory Quinn, Luca Kenny and Jack Leyden (All 2nd Year students). Our next MACE competition will be on January 25th in Castleknock Community College.

The Junior Debating Society was delighted to host six Willow Park 1st Year students alongside our ten 2nd and 3rd Year debaters to our Friday night debate at the end of November, where we saw Harry Pierce (2nd Year) and Peter O'Connor (1st Year) nominated as the best speakers of the competition. We look forward to hosting this event again in 2020.

As always, we welcome all new members to join us on Mondays at lunchtime in classroom 28. No prior debating experience is required. You are always welcome to listen in.

Senior Debating

Our first competition was at the inaugural Senior UCD Mace debate. The school was represented by Conor Slattery, James Carroll, Michael Lucey, Mathew Keeley, George Francis, John MacDermott. This was a wonderful opportunity for the boys and, although none reached the final, all have gained from their participation.

Blackrock got off to a great start in the prestigious L&H Leinster Senior Debating Competition, with all advancing into the next round. Representing the College were: Tom Dooley, George Francis, Conor Slattery, Mathew Keeley, Michael White, James Carroll, Mark McGrane and Michael Lucey. We wish them the best of luck in January in their endeavours to reach to final. Many of the above also took part in Mace debates in Trinity and U.C.D. and were joined by Sean O'Connor (Fourth Year).

The tradition of holding lunchtime debates has continued. Michael Lucey, Mark McGrane, James Carroll and George Francis tackled the issue of Irish Neutrality in the CADLC during the superb "Éire ón Spéir" week of exhibitions. We look forward to a successful 2020 and will be delighted to see new members.

MUN

On the 8/9th November, Blackrock's MUN society attended their second conference of the year, RADMUN, hosted by Rathdown school. Two delegations from Blackrock



Ben Kieran-Glennon (3rd Year) Best Speaker in the final round of The Belvedere College MACE

were sent to the conference, Brazil and the United Kingdom. Representing the United Kingdom were Andrew McSweeney, Joey Haughton, Alex Kirrane, Matthew Keeley and Stephen Corr (Fifth Year) and Conor Casey (Third Year). Representing Brazil were Aaron O'Flaherty, James Lee, Frazier McGinn and Jamie Starr-Bourke (Third Year). Evan Walsh and Michael Lucey (Fifth Year) represented Blackrock as the president of security council and Oliver Bosworth was the chair of SOCHUM. The Blackrock delegations were once again very successful, with Conor Casey (3rd Year), Matthew Keeley, Andrew McSweeney and Joey Haughton (Fifth Year) all winning Distinguished Delegate awards. The delegation of the UK won one of three Outstanding Delegation awards given out at the conference.

Creative Arts and Digital Learning Centre Exhibitions

Several exhibitions were showcased in the Creative Arts and Digital Learning Centre. In October Mr Orrock's 23 English did group projects for **'Of Mice and Men'**. Each group presented different strands of the story such as racism, sexism and power. All projects were displayed on the exhibition stand for a week. In November the Educational Development Committee compiled an exhibition for **World Toilet Day**. This was a very well laid out exhibition and highlighted issues to do with sanitation and water usage, especially in the developing world.

We commend Oide Ní Shuairc's 44 and 45A Gaeilge classes, who worked in collaboration with Andrea Dillon in the Creative Arts and Digital Learning Centre, on their **'Éire Ón Spéir'** exhibition. The bi-lingual exhibition ran from the 28th of November to the 12th of December and celebrated Ireland from the sky, through landscape photographs, historic memorabilia from the Second World War and remembered members of the Spiritan Community and past pupils who played pivotal roles in Irish aviation history.

We were honoured to welcome Commandant Aonghus Ó hAlmhain from Blackrock, as our guest speaker, to officially launch the exhibition. As a pilot with the Irish Air Corps and with the European Union, he shared his wealth of knowledge and experience, through his Irish language presentation to the Transition Years.

We thank Ms. Kelleher's Tuesday Talks who discussed air travel, Mr. Sheil's English debating team, whose motion was based on Irish neutrality and Mr. Wyer's Art Club who created an eye-catching poster to promote the event. Well done to the ninety-six students who entered the cross-curricular quiz, which included aviation-related questions.

Chuaigh Gaeilge na scoláirí ó neart go neart, le linn an ama seo, agus molaimid iad as an taighde iontach a rinne siad don taispeántas agus as a gcuid ceisteanna ar an aoi-chainteoir.

"Bail ó Dhia ar an Obair".

Library Committee

A library committee has been set up. The committee members are **2nd Year:** James Kilroy, Dónal Robinson. **3rd Year:** Frazier McGinn, Jamie Starr Bourke. **TY:** Robert McNabb, John Duffy. **5th Year:** Eoin O'Sullivan, Joey McEntee. **6th Year:** Mark McGrane. The committee meets at 8am every Thursday A to discuss how we can enhance the Creative Arts and Digital Learning Centre. The library committee has been very helpful in promoting the various events that have taken place. The two 3rd Year members are in training to help behind the desk and, so far, can issue, return, renew and reserve books. They are also being taught how to catalogue and classify new books on to the system. In mid-November we took a tour of Dun Laoghaire Lexicon where we were shown the wonderful array of resources it has to offer.

Research Skills

It is more important than ever that students learn how to research effectively online. Ms A. Dillon (Manager of the CADLC) gave various research skill classes to students including a workshop with 6th Year history students, researching the media to 2nd Years for their CBA 'Geography in the News', how to detect a fake website with 3rd Years and issues with Wikipedia with TY and 5th Year students. Students can also access help sheets on research skills and/or for their CBAs under the Creative Arts and Digital Learning Centre folder in Moodle.

Lunchtime Activities

Lunchtime is a very busy place in the Creative Arts and Digital Learning Centre. Students can come to study, do research/homework, read, play a board game or come watch the various activities that take place including Tuesday Talks and Thursday tunes. Each of these activities takes place once a month. Tuesday Talks involves students getting up and speaking about a random topic for however long they wish. Previous topics have included air travel and what advice would you give to yourself when you were 10. For Thursday Tunes, students from various year groups and teachers are invited to play an instrument or sing a song. It's a fantastic way to see the amazing musical talent we have in Blackrock College in a relaxed setting.

Music & Drama Carol Service

This year the annual Carol Service was another success, with even the Whole School Inspectors in attendance. Some new music was included this year to keep it fun and fresh. Father Cormac O'Brolchain's great prayer service reminded us of the importance of telling your loved ones that you do love them, even in the busy lives we live today we always have time to do these little things that make a big difference. The singing this year was very joyful with the Sixth Years, Mark Landers, Elliot McNamara, Aidan Cavanagh and Jack Tiernan leading the whole choir and orchestra encouraging everybody to lift the roof with their voices. The Carol Service is never complete without the spectacular performance of Carol of the Bells, sung by the Libermann Choir. This year Luke Reynolds and Freddie Noonan, Sixth- and Fifth-year basses respectively, had the honour of bringing the piece to the end with the last 'dong'. The whole school loved it the great round of applause indicated their appreciation. Our Fifth-Year soloists, Daniel Welch, Robert Byrne and Conor Slattery also performed a rousing rendition of 'The Holy City' alongside all the choirs and musicians.



Jack Tiernan and Elliot McNamara at the Carol Service



Members of the Choir at the Carol Service

Past Pupils' Choir (Mass of Remembrance)

The Past Pupils' Choir came together for their first event of this academic year, the **Mass of Remembrance**, on November 27th in the College Chapel. We were delighted to welcome some of our most recent students into the choir, all of whom very ably supported the liturgy and sang with depth and warmth in remembrance of those in the extended College Community who have passed away. Special thanks to Charlie Byrne (Class of 2018) who was our cantor.

Adult Choir

The Adult Choir has been carolling throughout December with the Past Parents' Association Carol Service in the College Chapel, a concert in Blackrock Bowling and Tennis Club and we are now preparing for the Willow Park Senior School Carol Service. Numbers are very healthy, and we are delighted to have many new members this year. We look forward to the Carol Service with Willow Park First Year.

Liturgical Music

The Third Year Family Mass took place on 3rd November. Third year members of the **Corless Choir** and **College Orchestra** led the congregation in song. The music helped to create an uplifting and prayerful atmosphere for the Celebration of the Eucharist.

On Sunday 8th December, the Transition Year Family Mass took place, celebrated by Fr Myles Healy. In his homily, Fr Healy reflected on the true values of Christmas. The atmosphere was greatly enhanced by music which provided by the 4th Year Choir and Cantors, Mark Phelan, Timothy Jordan and Kai Murtagh. The participation of the congregation in the singing was fantastic and made it a truly joyous celebration for all.

West Side Story

This year from the 18th to the 22nd of November, Blackrock College and Mount Anville put on Bernstein's classic **'West Side Story'**. This dystopian rendition was met with huge praise, selling out every night! This was down to the amazing work of Ms Ryan, Mr Traynor and of course Mr Toirleac O'Brien who said his final farewell on the Friday night. Well done to all those involved for producing an amazing show!

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.



Matthew Curran (Fourth Year) and Commandant Aonghus Ó hAlmhain



Members of Library Committee on their day trip to Dun Laoghaire Lexicon

Snapshot of 2nd Half Term 2019



Mark Foster (Rock V King's School Australia)



The Blackrock Invitational Swimming Gala



Members of the Choir perform at the Carol Service



Matthew McCarthy (Fifth Year) at the SVP Fundraiser Cyclathon



Tom Henderson (Fifth Year) SCT V St Michael's



Members of the Cast of West Side Story



The Libermann Choir performed alongside Irish singer and song writer Ailbhe Reddy in the National Stadium as part of a fundraising concert in aid of Aidlink.



Boarders enjoy their Christmas Party



Conor Slattery (centre) (Fifth Year) at the inaugural Youth Assembly on climate hosted by the Houses of the Oireachtas



Matthew O' Donnell and Michael Paran (Fourth Year) at the SVP Fundraiser Duck Race



Mr Killian Grumley Traynor and Sixth Years carolling on Christmas Jumper Day



Adam Harvey (6th Year) and Jacob Antonio (5th Year) in West Side Story

Snapshot of 2nd Half Term 2019



Naoise Golden, Liam Heylin and Patrick O' Connor (SCTV Crescent)



Mr Brian O' Neill (Class of 1981) talks to Fifth Years about Career Options



Paddy Van Zuydam (TY) SCTV King's School , Australia



Colum Corless (Fourth Year) performs at the Carol Service



Mikey Yarr and Michael Colreavy (Third Year) JCTV Crescent



Father O Brolchain at the Carol Service



Tom Dooley (6th Year) reading at the Carol Service



Charlie O' Carroll (Sixth Year) SCT v St Michael's



Mr R. Barrett reading at the Carol Service



Josh Scallon with his parents and grandparents at the TY Family Mass

10 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE CLASS OF 2019



1 Leaving Cert 2019

- 12 Boys scored over 600 points with 3 achieving the 'perfect 625'.
- 6 Boys (43%) attained over 500 points
- 125 Boys achieved over 450 points (62.5%)
- 78% scored over 400 points

2 Five members of the Class of 2019 participated in the **Dublin Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes** between the 7th and 12th of September. Diarmuid Foley, David Gallagher, James Gibney, Robert Kelly and Mark O'Donoghue accompanied by Mr Garry Sullivan spent a busy but most rewarding few days in the company of VIPs (Very Important Pilgrims) who needed special assistance.

3 Congratulations to **Robert Kelly** and **Niall Meagher** on their selection for an **Entrance Exhibition Award for Trinity College**. Each school is awarded two scholarships.

4 A record number of 28 **entrance scholarships for UCD** (which represents 14% of the class of 2019) were awarded to Blackrock College students this year. Congratulations to Conor Austin, Ben W. Brown, Garry Byrne, Alex Carroll, Daniel Cullen, Cian Dunne, Tadhg Egan, Oisín Ellison, Michael Ennis, Jack Freeman, Lochlann Gallagher, James Gibney, Michael Hayes, Daniel Kelly, Sean Lardner, Rob Lenehan, Conor Mahon, Cormac McCabe, Fergal McCluskey, Stephen Murphy, Zach Donnelly, Sean O'Brien, Harry Redmond, Andrew Ryan, Finn Ryan, Thomas Ryan, Ben White (all class of 2019) and Adam Thompson (class of 2018) each of

whom has been awarded an Academic High Achievers Award to UCD.

5 Andy Lyons was named the **FAI SSE Airtricity U19 Player of the Year** for his performances with Bohemian FC and the Irish U19 team.

6 JJ Garth was selected on the **Irish 'Wolves' Cricket Tour to Sri Lanka** in January 2019.

7 Niall Comerford and Alex Carroll were members of the **Kilmacud Crokes Hurling Team** that won the Dublin Minor Championship Final 2019

8 Sean O'Brien was capped by the **IRFU U19s** against Australia.

9 Congratulations to Alex Carroll who has been awarded an **Institute of Biology of Ireland medal** for his 100% score the Leaving Certificate Biology Examination of 2019.

10 The largest group ever, 45 boys from the class of 2019, and 18 parents travelled to Machakos in July 2019. The group raised in excess of €100K through fundraising and while there started work on the new Technical College, poured a concrete slab and built eight classrooms to first floor level. An enormous contribution to the **Rock Reaches to Kenya Project**.



The second half of term one has been a very busy and productive period for the class of 2020 who continue to show excellent leadership in all aspects of life in the College. The application to study has progressed well with Credit List numbers remaining at encouraging levels. As they enter the New Year the Class of 2020 have been advised to press ahead with their study plans, giving Leaving Certificate projects 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 28th and 29th of November. Accompanying this, the 6th Year Parents' committee under the leadership of David Kennedy, Mary Jones & Rachel MacGabhann sourced prizes from the parent body to run a Raffle alongside the fast. 129 students completed the fast and between both events, an amazing €6,450 was raised for the VDP. 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. Matthew Byrne 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 2020!



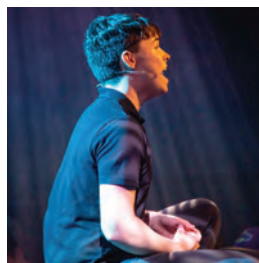
6th Year House Captains waiting for the Hungry Mob!



Food Glorious Food

Extra-Curricular

West Side Story: Twelve Sixth Year students took part in this year's musical *West Side Story* between the 18th and 22nd of November. This dark but powerful interpretation of the Romeo & Juliet story was performed wonderfully by cast and musicians each night. From a Class of 2020 point of view, the performances of Michael Cagney (Tony), Mark Landers (Bernardo), Callum Byrne (Riff) and Adam Harvey (Chino) deserve particular mention from this Blackrock College / Mount Anville Production.

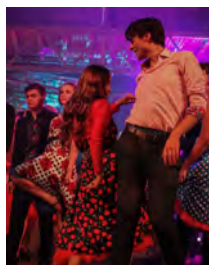


Michael Cagney (Tony)
in West Side Story

Rugby

We wish Mark Morrissey (Capt), Hugo O'Malley, Jeff Kenny (VC) Matthew Cullen (Leader) and the rest of the SCT squad well as they prepare for their opening Cup match against last year's beaten finalists Gonzaga College in January. A narrow victory for the SCT in the Noel Turley Memorial Trophy against St. Michael's provided an insight into both the challenge and the potential of what lies ahead in Term 2. The Cheerleading team for 2020 will be led by Gerard Jones and he will be assisted by Thady Connor, David Halpenny, Jack Moriarty and David Ryan 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 had a run of encouraging performances before Christmas and this group is preparing for Leinster League campaigns after Christmas. We hope that 6th Year Castle numbers will be high in January, to mark the last term of rugby in the College for this group of students.



Mark Landers
(Bernardo)

Soccer

The senior soccer squad under the leadership of Ronan Cowhey has completed a very busy term with games coming thick and fast. Our Senior Cup run came to an

end with an extra time defeat against Clonkeen College and this was quickly followed by a 0-3 defeat against Coláiste Eanna in the League. However, this squad managed to turn their season around and the term ended on a real high with excellent victories over St. John's Ballyfermot (A) and Old Bawn CS Tallaght (H) to ensure competitive soccer after Christmas. We wish Ronan and the squad continued success.

Golf

A most successful term of golf has seen our senior team make progress in the Leinster Schools' Fourball Championship and most recently qualify for the Leinster Matchplay Final courtesy of a victory over a strong Naas CBS team on Friday 29th November in Killeen GC. This team included Robert Galligan and Tom Kelly from 6th Year and we also congratulate squad members Ronan Cowhey, Andrew Doyle and Aidan Quigley.



6th Year History Students with Ms Pierce
& Mr Carroll on the steps of Stormont

Miscellaneous

Two notable achievements in the world of gaelic games by members of the Class of 2020 need to be highlighted this half-term. Gerald Boylan was a member of the Naomh Mairtin, Monasterboice minor football team that won the Louth Minor Championship and Jack Slattery was a member of the Kilmacud Croke's team that won the Dublin Minor 'A' Hurling Championship recently. Congrats to both.

History Trip

On Friday 15th November, Ms Harlowe and Ms Pierce (accompanied by Mr Andy Carroll) brought their History classes on a tour of Belfast. On a very busy but informative and enlightening day, guided by Mr Brian McKee who was a community worker during the period of the Troubles, the group also visited Stormont, Belfast City Hall and Milltown Cemetery. Many thanks the History Department for providing this most important educational experience.

Senior Science

We entered three senior science teams in the ISTA Greater Dublin Regional Senior Science Quiz and were delighted with the results: Team A of Aidan Canavan, Michael Gadaloff and Max Potter, Team B of Conor Bowler, Jonathan O'Neill and Luke Reynolds and Team C of Oisín Luff, Patrick O'Connor and Aaron Ryan, sub Mark Lauders all qualified for the National Science Senior Science Final in UCD. An outstanding performance on the night by the Class of 2020 which culminated in all three teams qualifying for the National Senior Science Quiz in UCD where they were placed 2nd, 4th and 10th respectively. Many thanks to our Head of Science Ms. Groves and all the science department for their preparation of the boys.



Alexander Doyle reading at the
Carol Service

Libermann Choir

On November 2nd, 29 Sixth Year members of the Libermann Choir performed alongside Irish singer and song writer Ailbhe Reddy in the National Stadium as part of a fundraising concert in aid of Aidlink.

Carol Service

On Tuesday December 3rd, 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 Aidan Canavan, Adam Harvey, Mark Landers, Elliot McNamara and Jack Tiernan for their wonderful rendition of 'O Holy Night' and to the 6th Year readers and altar servers who set such a reverential tone for the event. Another treasured memory to store during this final year in the College.

Green Schools

The Green School Committee has certainly had a busy and high-profile term. Chaired by Aidan Canavan, this group of students organised a Climate Day of Action in the College on Friday 29th November. Over 900 euro was raised for the VDP by introducing a carbon tax on cars entering the campus, and vegetarian food was served throughout the College community. We wish this group well in their planning for 2020.

Careers

- On Tuesday 12th 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 a variety of 3rd level colleges have visited Blackrock to speak with 6th Year students and many of the year group have availed of the 3rd Level Open Days as registration for CAO now becomes a priority. The HPAT preparation course has also continued on Saturday mornings.
- On Thursday 16th January, there will be a new addition to the Blackrock College calendar as our first ever Careers' Fair will be held for both parents and sons. Colleges and employers will be in attendance on this evening which will start at 7pm and we wish Ms Drew well with this venture.
- There will be an opportunity for Sixth Year students to participate in 'mock' interviews in a career area of their choice on Wednesday 12th February 2019. Advice on preparing a CV for these interviews will be offered to 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 most constructive feedback.



Rory Ahearne, Padraig Casey, Mark Hughes & Adam Nealon, Winners on Christmas Jumper Day



Class of 2020 Christmas Jumper Day - Mathieu Demichel, Patrick O'Rafferty (bah Humbug!), Rory Martin, Jack Keegan & Mark Foster

Important Date for your 2020 Diary
Thursday 9th January – 6th Year Parent / Teacher Meeting
TIME: 4.15PM – 6.45PM

Guidance and Counselling



CAO – The 6th Year CAO talk for parents on 12th November was 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.



Ms Natasha Drew (Head of Career Guidance) at CAO talks for 6th Year parents

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. There is a new tick box on the CAO application to inform HEIs that you have an exemption for students with NUI exemptions,

If you have a query regarding DARE or NUI please contact, Mr. Owen Brennan at obrennan@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 2020 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, 2020 and the HPAT test will take place in various centres around the country on February 22nd, 2020. 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, 2020. Any student wishing to attend must register online via the RCSI website.



UCAS

UCAS – 11 students from 6th Year have applied to Cambridge/Oxford and several more 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 2020. Any 6th Year considering making a UCAS application should indicate this to Ms Drew as soon as possible.

College Talks - Students 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 several guest speakers from UCD, TCD and IADT have visited the College and addressed the 6th Years regarding courses offered in their third level institutions and careers. DCU will be visiting the 6th years in the New Year. Note Dame in the USA has spoken to students about study on their campus as well as Guy Flouch from Eunicas who spoke about Europeans studies.

Career Talks - 5th and 6th Year students had the opportunity to attend a range of career talks offered over two Saturday mornings, 9th & 16th of November 2019. The talks covered a range of career areas, which included 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

Guidance and Counselling Cont'd



a CV workshop hosted by Robert Connelly (Past Pupil) who runs Amicus, Search & Recruitment Company. This will be held on Tuesday 28th, January 2020 to assist the students with the Career Interviews in February.



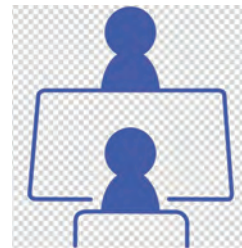
Ms N. Drew, (Head of Career Guidance) Peter Cross (Class of 1985, St Mary's), Maurice Tunney (Class of 1990), Brian O'Neill (Class of 1981), Niall Woods (Class of 1989), Karl O'Neill (Class of 1993) and Stephen Quinn (Class of 1989).

Career Interviews -

6th Year students will have the chance to partake in Career Interviews/Coaching which will be held in the College on Wednesday 12th February 2020 at 7.30 p.m.

TY - All TY students have sat the EirQuest Questionnaire, comprising of

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 CAT which is an assessment of their numerical, verbal, non-verbal, abstract, spatial reasoning & spelling abilities. 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 sit an Interest Assessment at the end of 5th Year to assist with college choice in 6th Year. They will receive the results of the assessment at the beginning of 6th year.

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



Science

Science Olympiad

The Irish Junior Science Olympiad (IrJSO) is a science competition for Fourth Year students. Finalists qualify through the Junior Certificate Examinations and are identified by the State Examinations Commission (SEC). The top 130 students from the 60,000 were invited based on their scores in their Maths and Science. Three students from Blackrock College were invited - Oscar Lubliner, John Duffy and Kai Murtagh. A great honour and well deserved!



Gold Medal Biology Award 2019

Congratulations to Alex Carroll (Class of 2019) who has been awarded an Institute of Biology of Ireland medal for his 100% in this year's Leaving Certificate Biology Examination. This is a tremendous achievement which reflects well on him and his teacher Ms Groves.



SciFest@School

A SciFest@School competition was held on Tuesday 26th November. Students from Second Year exhibited 109 projects. This was the school's eighth SciFest@School competition. Students demonstrated their knowledge of science and technology through their creative and innovative projects.

Overall Winner - Investigating the effect of concentration on temperature in an exothermic reaction. Simon Considine and Diarmuid Byrne

Runner Up - The 5 Second Rule and does it exist? Hugo Brosnan

And Can you memorise music while sleeping? Malachy McLoughlin and Amlan Parida

Innovative Award - Shapes Effect on Drag AJ Adoghe and Luca Kenny

Society of Irish Forestry Award - Is grey water great for plants? Patrick Hayden, Senan McCloskey and Philip O'Neill

Ms Jennifer Groves, Alex Carroll, Mr A MacGinty

Science Week Activities

This year, Science Week, ran from Monday 11th of November until Friday the 15th. There were over 150 posters along St. Patrick's Corridor with information about STEM careers. There were also posters of celebrities, sports stars and actors stating their Science Degree and the college from where they had graduated.

The week started off with 'A Case of Conspiracy?' for all Second Years, comprising of 3 sessions throughout the day. This was an interactive Forensic Workshop. It was an engaging experience for all the students.

We had DNA Profiling Kits from AMGEN, who are based in UCD. To borrow the equipment, teachers must take part in a CPD workshop. Sixth Year and Fourth Year biology students have had the opportunity to use the equipment as part of their practical work. This equipment gave students the hands-on skills relevant to the microbiology and DNA technology component of the Biology syllabus while also expanding their knowledge of genetic engineering and DNA fingerprinting.

On Tuesday 12th Prof. Jane Farrar from Trinity gave a lecture to Fifth and Sixth Year Biology students. Jane is a Professor of Genetics in TCD. Her area of interest is in genetic diseases which cause blindness. The students really enjoyed her talk, especially the Sixth Years, as it was relevant and current to what they are covering on the

syllabus now.

Dave's Jungle was also a great success again – the physical interaction with the animals appeals to all year groups and some teachers too. It is both an engaging and educational experience for the boys –

The Third Year Science Quiz, held on the 14th and 15th of November was as always, a noisy, fun-filled afternoon and the students didn't disappoint this year with their very active participation. The teams are made up of one student from each of the four 3rd Year science class group.



James Gilvarry (Fourth Year)

Science Club

On Wednesday 13th, the Science Club attended a lecture called "Rapper's Guide to the Solar System" presented by Jon Chase, a science communicator, rapper and author based in Wales. The boys thoroughly enjoyed this interactive and engaging show, which was organised by Science Foundation Ireland in TU Dublin, Kevin Street. The students have also engaged in a wide range of biology, chemistry and physics experiments during the half term including making bath bombs. Thanks to Michael Gadalloff (6th Year) who taught the boys about Planck's constant and showed them several practicals on the topic.



Thursday's winners were Max Mullen, Ben Loughrey, Harry Mellon and Killian McKenna

On Thursday 14th we hosted the Teachers' Science Quiz in the staff room. This was a lively social event for all teachers.



Three teams took part in the regional final of the ISTA Science Quiz on November 14th in TBSI. Team A: Michael Gadalloff, Aidan Canavan and Max Potter. Team B: Conor Bowler, Jonathon O'Neill and Luke Reynolds. Team C: Patrick O'Connor, Aaron Ryan and Oisín Luff; Sub: Mark Landers. Team B placed 1st, Team A placed 2nd and Team C placed 4th. For the first time ever, Blackrock had three teams in the National Final. The Senior Science Quiz Final took place in the Trinity Biomedical Sciences Institute. Forty-Six teams from all over Ireland, took part.



An amazing achievement – well done to all.

Patrick O'Connor, Michael Gadalloff, Max Potter, Aaron Ryan, Oisín Luff, Conor Bowler, Aidan Canavan, Luke Reynolds and Jonathon O'Neill

Pastoral Care Programme



What a busy couple of months it has been from November when we remember our dead to Advent, a time of preparation and a time of creation.

3rd Year Family Mass

Fr Paddy Dundon CSSp celebrated the Third Year Family Mass on Sunday the 10th of November. Fr Paddy preached on St Matthew's Gospel about parents bringing their children to Jesus to bless them and how 2,000 years later parents are still doing the same thing, passing on the faith and hoping for what is best for their children.



Mass of Remembrance & Eucharistic Adoration.

The wider Blackrock Community gathered on the evening of Weds 27th November to remember our loved ones who have died. We especially remembered those who have died in the last year and all that are grieving. Fr Myles Healy CSSp was Chief Celebrant and the theme of the evening was celebrating the lives of our loved ones and asking the Lord for his blessings during the coming months to heal all of us in our heartfelt loss. Our prayer is that all will be strengthened by the prayers and the support of the Community and Staff, finding consolation in a shared experience with other bereaved families, "they whom we love and lose are no longer where they were before, they are now wherever we are".



Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

On the morning of Friday 29th November, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament took place in the College Chapel after Morning Mass at 8.15am and concluded at 11.45am. During the morning several hundred visited the College Chapel to pray in silence comprising, past and present students, past and present parents, past and present staff, and the Spiritan Community.



Transition Year Family Mass

The Transition Year Family Mass took place in early December on the Second Sunday of Advent. Our Celebrant was Fr Myles Healy CSSp. Grandparents were especially invited to attend. Mr Jim Murphy, President of the St Vincent de Paul Society in the College thanked the Blackrock family for their generosity. He highlighted the obvious good work with the hampers and how over 400 families benefit from the various fundraising activities in the College. Jim also referred to some of the less well known work of the College's SVP, organising internships and work placements for people less fortunate, supporting counselling and after school services with Sr Mairead Hughes in Youth Horizon in Tallaght, and also the provision of scholarships for up to 20 third level students who otherwise would not be in a position to go to third level. Over Christmas, please give a little – it will help a lot.



Matthew 25

Another two class groups of almost 50 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... "I was impacted greatly during my two weeks of placement. I learned many new things about dementia and the amazing life stories of those affected by it, I can now relate to my Grandmother much better and am far more patient with her even when she repeats herself over and over".



Patrick van Zuydam and his family at the Fourth Year Family Mass

Carol Service

On the afternoon of Tuesday 3rd December, the entire College Community together with First Year from Willow Park gathered in the Des Places Hall where over 1,200 voices joined with the College Orchestra in proclaiming the Season of Advent. Fr Cormac O'Brolcháin CSSp led the gathering in a centering meditation for almost four minutes when you would have heard a pin drop. Fr Cormac urged the boys not to forget God this Christmas; he told the assembled school body that "God our Father is with us and in us!" He asked us all to share the Love, find time for Grandparents and to tell parents that they are loved.



Mr B. Herlihy, Ms S. Nolan (Deputy Principals), Father O' Brolchain, Mr A. MacGinty (Principal) and Ms Y. Markey (Deputy Principal) at the Carol Service



We await full of anticipation and excitement the season of Christmas ... 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



In November, we held a day of climate action here in the College. Several students braved the winter chill to arrive early, to man the school gates, and implement a carbon tax on all vehicles entering the school grounds. The funds raised were in excess of €959.00 and are being donated to the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul.

On the same day, students were asked to make a pledge to reduce their carbon footprint. We are interested to see what our student choices are. Blackrock College's greatest strength, in our opinion, and in many others, is the community it provides. Just as each of us comes together to form this community, each of these seemingly insignificant actions add up, creating a real, tangible, positive result.

We invite you, students, past pupils, parents, readers to sit down with your family and friends and consider making a pledge. As William H. Johnsen once famously said, 'If it is to be, it is up to me.' So please, get involved, take pride in all that we

have done so far, and in what we aspire to do in the future.

In the New Year we embark on our Global Citizenship Travel Programme, with the aim of increasing the number of students walking, cycling, scooting, using public transport or carpooling on the way to school. We'll keep you posted.

If you think you are too small to make a difference, try sleeping with a mosquito.

- Dalai Lama



Wellbeing - Resilience



In the College's last newsletter, we mentioned the Nine Boxes that featured as a key part of our Mental Health Awareness Day. The Nine Boxes represent protective factors in our lives that help to safeguard our mental health and that facilitate us in developing a resilient mindset. Over the Christmas break take a moment to re-visit the goals that you set for yourself in each of the boxes. Did you achieve them? If not, set new specific and achievable goals for yourself between now and the February mid-term.

We look forward with anticipation to our next feature day, Wellbeing, on January 20th, 2020.

Friends	Family	School
Physical Health	Self-worth	Relationships
Fun	Faith - values and beliefs	Volunteering/ Giving Back

Sport



Basketball U19

The U-19 side unfortunately lost out in the East-Leinster Quarter final to St. Mark's by a score line of 69-39. This was a very similar game to the Waterpark College defeat in the All-Ireland Schools' Cup – our young U-19 team played excellently but unfortunately came up against an experienced and hugely physical team that just had a little bit too much for us at this stage. Though missing three of our squad members, the boys that stepped into the breach were excellent; special mention must go to Robert Byrne and Conor Crumlish who defensively were very strong and Killian Tinsley (all 5th Year) who brought a real pace to our offence.

15 points apiece for Nico Coll (5th Year – Captain) and Jimmy Gilligan (4th Year) was outstanding. After Christmas, it is hoped to start a new senior basketball competition with the details to be confirmed.

U16

The Under 16 Basketball team took part in the U16 All Ireland and the U16 Plate. The team is made up entirely of 2nd, 3rd and 4th Years.

During the All Ireland, the team played St Benildus College and Crescent Comprehensive Limerick. Unfortunately, the team lost both games and they were knocked out of the U16 All Ireland by Crescent Comprehensive Limerick, who beat Blackrock 68-34.

Despite their defeat the U16's continued to train hard for the U16's plate. They beat Marian College, St Michael's College, St Paul's College and Ard Scoil Rís. The young team made it to the U16 Plate final against Donabate in Oblates Hall. It was an exciting final from start to finish, although Blackrock were defeated 31-24.

Chess

Our U16 team played Colaiste Éanna on Friday 25th October in the Leinster League semifinals with a great win of 3.5-1.5. Team players were: Sean O'Connor, Matthew Collins, Jamie Blackburn (Fourth Year), Conor Hughes and Liam Norton (Third Year). We progressed into the finals on the same day, played against a strong Gonzaga team and were unlucky to lose 3-2.



Chess Team: U16 Senior Team:
Conor Hughes, Matthew Collins,
Sean O' Connor, Liam Norton,
Jamie Blackburn

A new League commenced on Friday 29th November in which our junior team travelled to Patrician Secondary School in Newbridge to compete in a tournament against 28 other teams! Our junior team consisted of Conor Hughes, Liam Norton (Third Year), Andrew Welch, Charlie Parsons, Hugo Brosnan, Harry Pierce, Senan McCloskey and Iban Connolly (Second Year). We have qualified for the Swiss Tournament that will be held in the spring.

Training is every Monday and Thursday in Junior Science 2 from 4-5pm, new members always welcome!

JCT

The second term has proven to be a real test of the depth and quality of the junior squad. Whilst training intensity has increased exponentially, they have also had to withstand some difficult opponents. Producing some powerful performances in tough conditions, led by their captain, Greg Barron, the Junior Firsts have defeated RBAI, Clongowes, Mary's Belvedere and Crescent whilst the seconds have beaten RBAI, Clongowes, Armagh and Belvedere. Bigger and more important games await both sides after Christmas and the boys are all set for training during the holiday period in anticipation.



Rock V King's School Australia



Tom Gavigan (6th Year) 'Rock V King's School Australia

SCT

The second term is always an incredibly busy and competitive one for our senior panel and this year was no different. Multiple fixtures in close succession results in players getting opportunities to test themselves against excellent opposition and grow as a group as the teams start to take shape.

Tough games for the seconds against RBAI, St Michael's, The King's School

(Sydney) and Clongowes provided great learning, whilst the first team took on RBAI, St Michael's, Belvedere, Crescent and Clongowes, with Leinster Clubs still to play leading into Christmas. Victories in all but the latter Clongowes game show that we have a competitive side again; we cannot afford to rest on our laurels. The recent Cup Draw, pairing us with Gonzaga, only emphasises this further and sharpens the focus. Christmas will be a busy and exiting period once again as we prepare for the tough challenge ahead.



SCT V Michael's

Badminton

The first term has been very busy with five teams competing in the Dublin Schools' Badminton League. Our U16 team captained by Joshua Scallan (TY) has been plying their trade in Division 2 this year. The team played very well and competed admirably; however, they came out on the wrong side of some very tight matches, losing 4-2 in four of their five games.

In U19's we fielded 4 teams, two in Division 2 and another two in Division 3. The A team captained by Luke O'Brien (6th Year) has had some very encouraging wins, notably over Wesley College and St Colmcille's. They have now progressed out of their group and await their semi-final opponents after Christmas. The B team, captained by Robert Byrne, was very competitive all year, and had a very impressive win over Wesley College and drew with St Colmcille's. However, progression to the next round eluded them as they ultimately finished third in their group.

The U19 C team, captained by Darragh Kelly (6th Year) topped their group with 3 wins out of 3. They await confirmation of their quarterfinal due to be played before Christmas. The U19 D team, captained by Patrick Leavy (6th Year) has qualified from their group with impressive wins over De La Salle and Kishoge Community College, they too are due to play their quarterfinals before Christmas.

Golf Junior Golf

We had a very successful start to our golfing year with our junior golf team leading qualifiers in the Irish Schools' Junior Championship held in Delgany Golf Club in late October. The team on the day included Rory O'Shea (4th Year), James Heavey (3rd Year), Captain Adam Allabbachani (4th Year) and Jake Foley (3rd Year)

The Leinster final was held in Lucan Golf Club on 19th November. 12 teams competing with one overall winner. Unfortunately, although Blackrock, again captained

by Adam Allabbachani, competed very well they were not victors on the day. We look forward to next year.

Senior Golf

Alex Bolger (5th Year) Matthew O'Brien (4th Year) and Captain on the day Robert Galligan (6th Year) were the runners up with the same score as the leading qualifiers in the Irish Schools' Senior Championship held in Greystones Golf Club on 23/9/19. The team had a fantastic team score despite the dreadful weather conditions.

Our next round was in held in Castlewarden Golf Club v St Fintan's Sutton. Unfortunately, after playing 10 holes the teams were called in due to unplayable course conditions. Our senior golf team on the day were ...



Robert Galligan, Ronan Cowhey and Thomas Harte (all 6th Year), Matthew O'Brien and Adam Allabbachani (4th Years) and Captain Alex Bolger (5th Year).



Tom Kelly (6th Year), Matthew O'Brien (4th Year), Thomas Harte (Sub), Robert Galligan (both 6th year) Alex Bolger (Captain – 5th Year) and Jake Foley (3rd Year).

The match was replayed again in Castlewarden Golf Club v St Fintan's Sutton with a slight change to our team. Tom Kelly (6th Year) coming in for Ronan Cowhey and sub Paul White (5th Year) coming in for Adam Allabbachani. We had a great win bringing us into the Leinster semifinals.

The Irish Schools' Senior Leinster semifinals were played in Kileen Golf Club on 29th November with Blackrock coming up against a very strong Naas team. However, even the freezing conditions didn't put our team off winning 4:1 with our last match called in on the 19th hole! On to the Leinster finals post-Christmas v Benildus.

Soccer

The senior soccer team had a busy 8 days in late November/early December. Game 1 saw the team coming back from 3-0 down to force extra time against Clonkeen College. Unfortunately an extra time winner for Clonkeen saw the soccer team knocked out of the FAIS Leinster cup. 2 days later another defeat, against Coláiste Éanna, saw the soccer team facing elimination from the metropolitan league. It left the team needing 2 wins from their final 2 games. 3 days after the defeat to Clonkeen we travelled to Ballyfermot to face a strong St. John's team. 1-0 up with 8 minutes to go, St. John's equalised which would have knocked us out of the league. However, a Darragh Dempsey (5th Year) goal 2 minutes later and a Jamie Dowling (6th Year) goal in the final moments of the game saw us win 3-1 and gave us a winner takes all game at home against Old Bawn. Trailing Old Bawn 1-0 with 25 minutes to go, once again, we were on the verge of being knocked out. However, goals from Jamie Dowling, Ronan Cowhey, Tom McNulty (all 6th Year) and an own goal saw us qualify through to the knock out stages of the competition.

We look forward to taking on St. Benildus after Christmas.

Water Polo

Water polo training has continued with both junior and senior teams going from strength to strength. Matches are beginning in the new year. If anybody is interested in joining training is from 4-5pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The only requirements are togs and an ability to float.

Swimming

The swim team welcomed 27 swimmers from Fordham Preparatory School in New York for the inaugural Blackrock Invitational. Welcoming the American swimmers into our homes provided the perfect environment for international friendships to be made.

The competition from both Clongowes and Fordham was strong right from the beginning with the 100 free as the starting event. Blackrock rose to the occasion posting several personal best times before the halfway point of the gala. The



The Blackrock Invitational Swimming Gala

tremendous cheering from all the teams heightened the intensity of the events and really provided for a fantastic atmosphere.

Thanks to Cristina Mei, Fiona Breen and Niamh McAdam for all their work to make this gala happen. Evan O'Brien provided continual support and hospitality throughout the weekend and was a major part of the positive outcome of this gala. Thanks also to the following families who were kind enough to open their homes up to the American swimmers: Breen Family, Blackburn Family, Conway Family, Curley Family, MacHale Family, McAdam Family, Moyna Family, Mei Family, Morris Family, O'Connor Family, O'Neill Family, O'Riordan Family, and the Walsh Family. Special thanks to Father Cormac, Ciaran Conway and Rory Sheil for taking the time to give a brilliant tour of Blackrock's campus. I would also like to mention the parents who volunteered during the gala to ensure that everything ran smoothly and efficiently. Assistant coaches Robbie Condon and Davide Mei played major roles in the gala as stroke judge and swimmers' lineup official.

Although the final score was not in Blackrock's favor, I do feel that the Invitational was a great victory for Blackrock. The team both swam and represented the school tremendously well.

The Blackrock swim team now looks forward to competing in the College Cup hosted by Clongowes Wood College in February 2020.

Table Tennis

All the teams are now up and running in their various Leinster League and Leinster Cup campaigns, with all the teams still unbeaten – a good start!

Junior 2B recorded 6-0 results in the League against Marian College and St. Colmcille's CS, and will in January have their first Cup match, against St. Tiernan's CS.

Junior 2A also had a 6-0 victor over St. Colmcille's, as well as a 6-0 over St. Josephs SS, and have also got their Cup campaign off to a start, with a 4-0 win over Marian College.

Junior B is off to a good start in the League with a 6-0 win over Ballymakenny College, and in January will have their first Cup match, versus Terenure College.

Junior A has yet to get a league match under their belts, but got the defense of their Junior Cup title off to a good start with a 4-0 win over St. Colmcille's.

Finally, Senior A is also off to a good start in the defense of their Leinster titles, with a 6-0 League victory over Deansrath CC.

Sailing

For the last few months, the Blackrock sailing team has been training down in the Royal Saint George Yacht Club, on Wednesdays, every second week. They have been training with Gonzaga, St Andrew's, St Michael's and other schools. They are training for the Leinster school team racing Championships. Hopefully they will qualify to compete in the 2020 team racing nationals. They finished 4th place overall in the 2019 nationals. Next year, they hope to better 2019's result! The team would love to see new faces getting involved in the new year!

Photos courtesy Rock Photography
www.rockphotography.ie

REFLECTION

*"It is Christmas
every time you let
God love others
through you...yes,
it is Christmas
every time you
smile at your
brother and offer
him your hand."*

—MOTHER TERESA

