

BLACKROCK COLLEGE NEWSLETTER



Summer 2020

Dear Parents,

“Champions aren’t made in the gym; champions are made from something deep inside them – a drive, a dream, a vision”.

Muhammad Ali.

I have been thinking about Muhammad Ali recently. He was, in the words of the celebrated journalist *James Lawton* **“a fighter, an icon, a legend”**. He stood for what he believed was right and despite the cost to his boxing career, profile, and reputation he was willing to step out of the crowd. That is what made him a champion. Champions do not need medals, may not even stand on podiums. Champions not only know right from wrong, which is the easy bit, but act upon it.

Our goal, as parents and educators, is to produce champions. We want our boys to understand that life can be tough, but we should persevere. It is tough when we are denied what we are accustomed to – going to school or work, socializing with friends, embracing grandparents, gathering as faith communities, visiting the sick in hospital, being there for the bereaved. These are the acts of champions, but equally so is accepting that sacrifices must be made in the interest of the common good. Life is tough.

At our final TY Assembly last month, I reminded the boys of the importance of **wanting what you have rather than necessarily having what you want**. Champions have that capacity to accept, appreciate and adapt. We have seen so much of this over the past three months. The Champions of Blackrock participated in the **Lockdown Relay Marathon**, our **Virtual Sports and Family Day** and the **Rock 5K**. The Champions of Blackrock were on the **Student Wellbeing, Green Schools and Development Education committees**; were at the weekly **House Captains** and **fortnightly Student Council** meetings. The Champions of Blackrock were at the **Art, Rock-Ed and Chess clubs**; competed in the **Gold Medal Debates, MasterChef** and **Dragons’ Den competitions**, completed the **Auxilium**.

The Champions of Blackrock were at the coalface of **Teaching and Learning** – our **Teachers** who, from a standing start, grew our online programme through Moodle and MS Teams and also **our boys** who showed up, stepped up, adapted and made the most of it, wanting what they had. The champions of Blackrock were our **Deans** and **Parents’ Committees** who shared understanding and steered the course. The Champions of Blackrock were on our **Pastoral team** who ensured that our ethos, our Christian understanding, was to the fore at all times providing messages of comfort and encouragement via Moodle, Twitter, LinkedIn and our website and who also organised a memorable **Morning of Reflection** attended by over 180 TY boys. The Champions of Blackrock were in **the homes** of our boys who despite the many challenges of this difficult period encouraged and persuaded their sons to do their best. The Champions of Blackrock were in our **Spiritans Community** whose prayerful presence never wavered.

Finally, the Champions of Blackrock are our **6th Years, the class of 2020**. They have been magnificent. They have endured much uncertainty yet have kept positive and committed to each other and to the College. They have kept the faith, lived the tradition, and have left a strong legacy. Whenever this year is talked about, and it will be frequently, the dignity, character and loyalty of our 6th Years will be acknowledged. I am very proud of them.

And so to next year as the class of 2021 assume the mantle. They have much to offer and although there is a degree of uncertainty around the shape of the opening of the new school year what is certain is that the whole school community will work in harmony to deliver the best possible Blackrock education for our boys.

Enjoy the summer at home together. My prayer is that each one of us makes the most of this time. May we continue to grow in love, understanding, faith and gratitude for what we have.

God Bless

ALAN MacGINTY
Principal



Ronin O'Halloran (TY) and his younger brother Aaron who raised €2500 for Pieta House and €500 for the WHO by organising a Basketball Dribbling Fundraiser during lockdown. Champions in their own back garden! Well done to you both!

Second Year



This has been a final term with a difference for everyone. It has been a time of unprecedented change and new challenges. But with challenges have come opportunities and we commend the Second Years for adapting so well. They should be very proud of what they achieved in these circumstances and be assured that the skills they have learned will stand to them in life.

The **House Competitions** moved online with the key contributory events being the online FIFA competition and Virtual Sports & Family Day. It was great to see so much participation in these events which helped us all to stay connected as a community. In addition, it was great to see so many participate in the recent Rock Run. Our House Captains played a key role in organising this event with Transition Years and we thank everyone for creating such a great opportunity.



Cormac Morris on the Rock 5K Run

We will hold **Prize Day** when possible. In the interim we want to congratulate AJ Adoghe who won the **Student Leadership Award** for Second Year, Gavin McNabb who won the Brother Thaddeus Judge Medal for **Religion** and Gregory Quinn who is the winner of the Gold Medal for **Second Year Debating**.

Congratulations to Robert MacHale, Jack Murphy and Diarmaid Byrne; this year's recipients of the **Academic Excellence Awards** for Second Year. Congratulations also to our **Book Prize winners** for individual subjects: Sam Grennell, Mark Walsh, Patrick Collins, Hugh Galligan, Luke McDermott, Senan McCloskey, Robert MacHale, Luke Murphy, Tom O Connor, Philip Guinan, Jack Murphy, Diarmaid Byrne, Robert Byrne, Donie Grehan, David Ortiz and Patrick Hayden.

Six Second Year students who each demonstrated an excellent contribution to the life of the College received Honours List Awards: they are Tommy Butler, Oisín Daly, Patrick Hayden, Cormac Morris, Charlie O Riordan and Harry Pierce. Lenny Kuzmin was awarded the Second Year Honours List Award for



Patrick Hayden (2nd Year)



Luca Kenny (2nd Year)

the Halls of Residence. Special Awards for debating go to Patrick Hayden and Luca Kenny who qualified to compete in **The Final International Competition for Young Debaters (ICYD)** in Oxford, which was held online in May.



Harry Pierce with his Dad, Martin, On the Rock 5K Run

In sport, we congratulate Seán Ó Nualláin who wins a special award for Tennis.

After an online vote amongst their peers and consultation with Staff, the following have been nominated as **House Captains for Third Year**: Harry Pierce and Donnacha McGuire for **de Valera**; Donie Grehan and Max Vidal for **Duff**; Daniel Begley and Brian O Flaherty for **Ebenrecht**; Robert MacHale and Oisín Daly for **Leman**; Jack Angulo and Charlie Woodcock for **McQuaid**; and James Clancy and Harry Sheridan for **Shanahan**. We thank the outgoing House Captains for their excellent service and wish the incoming group well in their new responsibilities.



Robert MacHale (2nd Year)

One of the great opportunities the boys have is to serve others. Our Programme of Service, **Auxilium**, was well under way when the schools closed but the boys adapted their service and it was a genuine privilege to read their reflections and to hear what they learned about themselves and others. Their engagement with this programme has been excellent and we particularly congratulate Daniel Begley who is the recipient of this year's **Auxilium Award**.

So, after a busy term of distance learning, CBAs, online FIFA challenges, Virtual Sports and Family Day, the Rock Run and Auxilium Service, the Second Years can enjoy a well-earned summer break. The advice shared with the boys at their final assembly was to stay connected with each other, in person, when possible and to choose wisely how they spend their time. We look forward to seeing them back in school in September ready to take on Third Year in the College.

Third Year



Certainly not the way we expected to end the year and though the cancelling of the Junior Certificate was a cause for celebration for many I know also there were students who were looking forward to giving an account of themselves in the exams. Instead the 3rd Years faced a different kind of challenge, that of online schooling. I commend the Third Years for all the work they did in the final term in very challenging circumstances. As the school closed and we adjusted to a different school experience, Mr MacGinty spoke of the need for intrinsic motivation and I must say the response from the year group was incredible. You stuck with it, with positivity, worked with your teachers and maintained the high standard we would expect from this year group. I really feel you made a fantastic effort – well done to all!



It was great to see the Jazz Band back together to keep us entertained during lockdown with Rock@home. Well done to Gavin Bowen O' Connor, David Doyle, Harry Fitzpatrick and Rúairí Stephens on a performance that I'm sure took some serious coordination. In debating congratulations to Ben Kieran Glennon who won the Third Year Gold Medal Debate. Good work by all who took part. Model United Nations also continued in lockdown with Claregalway College hosting 50 delegates. Among these were Third Years Conor Casey, Frazer McGinn and Jamie Starr Bourke, with Conor Casey winning a distinguished delegate award – fantastic!



Jamie Starr Bourke (Gold Medal Competitor)



Gavin Bowen-O'Connor (Gold Medal Competitor)



Frazer McGinn (Gold Medal Competitor)



Daniel Keeley (Gold Medal Competitor)

Third Year Cont'd



This positive attitude and esprit de corps within this group was evident in the huge numbers who got involved in the College Sports Day by submitting videos of push ups, rugby relay and 'keepy uppies' with Shanahan the winning House on the day. I was delighted to note that Third Year had the highest number of submissions. Again, a terrific turnout from the Third Year group for the Rock Run on Saturday 23rd. Some very impressive times posted, I was relieved that you are keeping fit during lock down! If the group carry this level of engagement and community into TY you all will have a fantastic year. I must in particular thank the House Captains: Conor Ennis and Eoghan Walsh for DeValera, Tom Brigg and Jack McGlone for Duff, James O' Sullivan and Mikey Yarr for Ebenrecht, Louis

Dignam and Phillippe Le Roux for Leman, Ethan Leon Ryan and Jamie Rogan for McQuaid and Oliver Coffey and David Doyle for Shanahan, who played a blinder in encouraging the group, keeping everyone informed and keeping me up to date with our weekly meetings during lockdown – fantastic work.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your support over the course of the year, in particular the 3rd Year parents' committee chaired by Karen Browne. I wish the students all the best for the summer and in Transition Year. I look forward to seeing them all again in person in September.

Transition Year



What a difference a couple of months makes. It is an entirely different world that we are all living in now and one that came upon us suddenly. It seems beyond strange to think it is over two months since I was in my office or in the grounds of the College. However, when I look back on this Summer Term it is not with a heavy heart or any feeling of negativity. I couldn't be anymore proud of this group of Transition Year students and how they have responded during this term, in many ways it has never been more apparent why Transition Year and indeed Blackrock College is a very special place. It has been hugely reaffirming to know that the spirit of Blackrock sustains no matter what.

TY Fundraising

The spirit of service was alive and well in our TY students during this term and I have three fantastic initiatives which took place to tell you about. On Saturday 2nd May fourteen Transition Year students undertook a Lockdown Relay Marathon in aid of Good Grub and Blackrock Hospice. An amazing €18,120 was raised. Congratulations to all TY students involved: Fergal O'Sullivan, Andrew Harvey, Freddie Mullin, Colm Cowhey, Paddy van Zuydam, Joseph Tansey, Max Brophy, Matthew Galligan, Shane O'Sullivan, Sam Green, Danny Clarke, Max Caskey, Shane O'Sullivan and Will Fitzgerald.



Congratulations also to Ronin O' Halloran and his brother Aaron on their Basketball Dribbling Fundraiser. They raised €2,500 for Pieta House and €500 for the WHO. As Ronin's basketball coach as well as his Dean I'm doubly proud here!

Another phenomenal fundraising effort from the following TY students; Matthew O'Brien, Max Holmes, Charlie O'Brien, Andrew McCarthy, Jack Moloney, Alex Yarr, Billy Kelly, Mark Mannion, Max Simons, Will Fitzgerald, Chris Buckley, Oscar Landers, Max Caskey, Jake Smyth, Kevin Jackson, Max Brophy and Sam Green who, as part of the Old Belvedere U-17 team fundraiser, raised over €5,500 for Aware.

5k Rock Run 2020

Inspired by the fantastic efforts of the boys mentioned above it was decided to put together a Rock Run with a difference on Saturday May 23rd. We called on Rock families wherever they were in the world to walk, jog or run 5km in aid of Aidlink and Cystic Fibrosis Ireland. Aidlink has a long history and connection with the school and each year bring 28 students to Kenya around the February midterm. They do incredible work in the areas of education, sanitation and agriculture with some of the most vulnerable people in Kenya, Ghana and Uganda. Ireland has the highest incidence of Cystic Fibrosis (CF) in the world and of course in the current Covid-19 context those with CF are among the most vulnerable groups having had to cocoon from 3 weeks before the national lockdown came into effect. The work of CF Ireland is of course invaluable to people living with CF. Now more than ever fundraisers like the 'Rock Run' are the lifeblood of organisations like Aidlink and CF Ireland.



It was a short, sharp campaign taking place over a 10-12-day period. The students involved in the Rock Run committee were incredible. Of course, Transition Year was heavily represented but the House Captains of 2nd, 3rd, 5th and 6th Years were an invaluable addition to the team with a regular meeting attendance of 50-70 students. The GoFundMe page was set up and there was huge social media promotion by the boys who shared the link amongst their houses, in WhatsApp groups, tagging on

Instagram amongst many other ways. The Past Pupils' Union was as ever right behind the event and incredibly supportive; my sincere thanks to President Stephen Mullin and his team for everything.

The days leading up to Saturday May 23rd and in particular the day itself were very exciting. I am absolutely blown away by the support and generosity of the entire Blackrock community all around the world. Seeing the pictures and videos come in from the States, Bahamas and of course Wexford (which is really the Bahamas of the South-East) created the most fantastic sense of community around the day. As I write this an incredible total of €32,400 has been raised. Outstanding! Thank you all so much for the support and I hope you enjoyed the day.

Dragons' Den

The annual Dragons' Den competition, now in its 12th year, was launched prior to the school closure in March. All Transition Year students attended an Idea Generation Workshop in the College and post school closure there were online mentoring sessions with the Dragons where the business plans of the students of the boys came under the microscope and guidance and advice issued. The boys submitted their finalized Business plans to Mr. Fitzsimons, Head of Business, who then passed them onto the Dragons. I was so impressed by the standard produced by the boys and the effort that clearly went into them. I sat in on the Dragons online meeting where it proved to be a very difficult task to select the five businesses going through to the final. The five finalists selected were: 1) Alex Maguire with his business 'Subhub' (an app that allows you to monitor subscription payments) 2) Matthew Collins with his business centering on Vertical Wind Turbines – a domestic source of renewable energy 3) Adam Tunney, Sean Purcell, Michael English and Kai Murtagh with a Digital Marketing Service 4) Conn O'Byrne with his business 'Eldertree' – a senior citizen digital support service and 5) Alex McGowan and James Harvey with the 'Find a Personal Trainer' app. It was a superb final with excellent presentations made online by all on Tuesday 26th May. The Dragons were left with an extremely tough choice but eventually awarded Alex Maguire third place, Adam Tunney/Sean Purcell/Kai Murtagh/Michael English second place and Conn O'Byrne first place. Congratulations to Conn! A huge thank you to Mr. Paul McGowan, Chairperson of the Dragons' Den Initiative, his team of Dragons and of course Mr. Fitzsimons who all put a huge effort into ensuring this wonderful competition remained a highlight of the final term in TY.



MasterChef

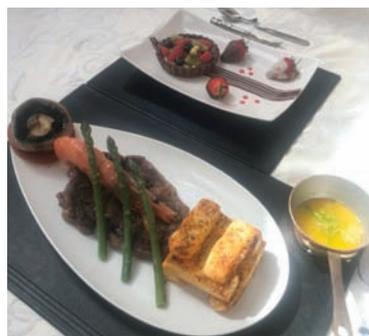


The MasterChef heats took place on Wednesday 20th May. Naturally it was a MasterChef with a difference as it took place virtually but the students competing more than stood up to the challenge with an incredible variety and standard of food being produced. Ms. Marren and Mr. Toolan had a very difficult task to narrow down the field to the six students who would proceed to the final. Well done to all six finalists who made it through: David O'Riordan, Cian Ryan, Conn O'Byrne, Michael Paran, Alex Brophy and Sean Patterson. Congratulations to Alex Brophy who was the winner of MasterChef 2020. However, as Mr. MacGinty said at the time, the value assigned to Alex's first place is by the standard of competition in both the heats and the final itself which was outstanding. Well done to everybody who took part.



Meal prepared by Conn O'Byrne, Finalist MasterChef

Transition Year Cont'd



Meal prepared by Cian Ryan,
MasterChef Finalist



Vegetable Soup prepared by David O' Riordan,
MasterChef Finalist

Transition Year Retreat

On May 7th the Transition Year Retreat took place for the first time ever online. What a superb reflection on this year group it was to have more than 180 students online and taking part in the retreat. It was a real high point of the final term as I believe it was a very powerful demonstration of the sense of community that exists with this Transition Year group and the value they place in it. The theme of the retreat was "Be not afraid, for I am with you. This was one of the days where I felt particularly proud of this group of students for their cooperation, engagement, their respect and for being the very embodiment of the 'be there' value of the College. My sincere thanks to Mr. Madden who was the inspiration and driving force behind this wonderful event and also my thanks to his team and my colleagues who contributed to the retreat over the course of the morning – Ms. McGlynn, Fr. O'Brolchain, Mr. O'Farrell, Mr. Orrock, Ms. Crimmins, Mr. Puszczewicz-Cuddihy, Mr. O'Reilly, Mr. O'Shea and Mr. MacGinty.



Meal prepared by Michael Parah,
MasterChef Finalist

Sports and Family Day

Another exceptional highlight of the final term. I was delighted with the fantastic level of participation amongst the Transition Year students and well done to everyone involved. The video produced by Transition Year students Alex Brophy, Robert McNabb and Matthew Kane was top class, and could easily have been the work of a professional company. It captured the spirit of the day and the sense of community incredibly well and I found it hugely uplifting to watch. My thanks to Mr. Evan O'Brien and his team for the encouragement of boys and the creation of a memorable event for all.

TY Reporters' Team

The Team did a great job reporting on events throughout the year illustrating just some of the activities the boys were engaged in. Ranging from school outings,

visitors to the school, events in school and competitions they sure had a busy year albeit cut short. Super contributions were received from Robert McNabb, Conn O'Byrne, Harry Ballard, Alex Brophy, John McDermott, Alex Maguire, and Tim Jordan. All submissions can be viewed in the Parents' Area of the school website.

House Captains

I'd like to thank the superb bunch of House Captains I had in Transition Year this year. They were excellent throughout the year but since the school closure the role of the House Captain has never been so important. The level of attendance at the TY Retreat mentioned above along with the participation in Sports and Family Day is a ringing endorsement of the leadership they provided amongst the year group. They also set up a FIFA tournament which had 56 students taking part across all the houses. Congratulations to all House Captains on a job extremely well done.

Miscellaneous

The night before school closure I had the pleasure of attending the Rathdown School Musical production of *The Adams Family*. Thirteen Transition Year students were involved. It was a thoroughly enjoyable night of entertainment and the lads were fantastic. Our six students involved in the AIB Build a Bank Initiative (Alex Finlay, Odhran O'Connor, Eoin Power, Mark McCabe, Sean Purcell and Michael White) presented at the National Finals of the competition which took place online due to the restrictions. The Gold Medal Debate in Transition Year was won by Michael White who narrowly defeated James Carroll. We congratulate Sean Purcell, Michael English and Adam Tunney who finished 2nd in the Senior Category of the Dublin Enterprise Awards organised by Enterprise Ireland with their Digital Marketing Company 'DTEP Social Media Marketing'. Groups worked on articles for the annual, the end of year Transition Year Video including pictures of how the TY students were using their quarantine time, the Archives group, AIB Future Sparks Festival, STEPS Engineering your Future programme, amongst other projects. Finally as I write 214 students are presenting their Transition Year ePortfolio's as part of their end of year assessment and I am hugely encouraged by the positive feedback received from my colleagues so far. I congratulate all of our Prize Day Award winners - Book Prize Winners, Academic Excellence Award Winners, Honours List Award Winners and Special Award winners. There are too many to mention here by name, but I look forward to congratulating you all in person!

And Finally.....

I would like to thank my colleagues in Transition Year: Brian Grant, Brian Savage, Garry Sullivan and Flor Madden (Director of the Pastoral Care Programme) for their tireless work on behalf of the boys. I also want to thank the Transition Year Parents' Committee chaired by Lynda Coleman. It was a pleasure working with such a positive, encouraging and supportive group. I was very lucky and the programme would not have been the same without them. Finally, I thank every single one of the students for being such a fantastic group to work with day in day out over the course of the year. I am extremely proud of everything they have achieved as a year group and their legacy as a Transition Year group will not be forgotten.

I wish you all a safe, healthy and happy summer and I look forward to seeing everyone again in September please God!

Fifth Year



The final term has been one we could never have envisaged. Blackrock College with its strong sense of community, worked hard to connect with our students. Thanks to the high levels of energy and effort by staff and students alike, we quickly upskilled using both Moodle and Teams. There was continued commitment and focus by all, as evidenced in the final two application cards. Well done 5th Years for being so resilient and for keeping focused on your academic work.

The 5th Year class of 2019-2020 had a very successful year; there is a wealth of enthusiasm and talent in the year in all fields, and they conducted themselves to the highest standard throughout. Their good nature and strong community spirit were evident in communication with the school and participation in Sports and Family Day, the Rock 5k Run and the Interhouse FIFA challenge. Great videos were submitted, memories made, and valuable House Points earned as well! Thanks to the House Captains who played a truly magnificent role in connecting with their classmates.

These House Captains inspired many of this year group to apply for the coveted role in 6th Year. We wish next year's House Captains all the best in their final year in the College.

Congratulations to all those who were recognized for academic, sporting and other personal achievements on the Prize Day List. We wish them every success as they continue their journey to the Leaving Certificate and beyond. In these challenging times remember take it one day at a time and make each day a good day.

Green Schools



The Green Schools' Committee promoted both World Earth Day and International Day for Biodiversity. April 22nd was the 50th Annual celebration of Annual World Earth Day. Our Committee promoted the use of Climate Science app, encouraged the design of climate signs, and promoted spontaneous litter collections while also increasing awareness of the local impact of Covid-19 on our surroundings.



Conor Slattery celebrating 50th Anniversary of World Earth Day

ECO-UNESCO Senior Energy Young Environmentalist Award

On Thursday 21st May, Blackrock College, represented by Conor Slattery and John

Fifth Year



Daly (both 5th Year), won the ECO-UNESCO Senior Energy Young Environmentalist Award. Their project on Data Centres was selected for the award out of more than 700 projects entered. Data centres will soon become the single greatest consumer of Irish energy, predicted to account for just under a third of all consumption by 2028.

They conducted extensive research and corresponded with members of the Irish cloud-computing industry, academic experts and companies involved in data-centre design and construction to discuss important environmental and, specifically, energy-efficiency issues. Working to raise awareness, they spoke at climate action events and protests in Dublin, were selected for the RTE Youth Assembly on Climate's Power Committee and designed and distributed an informative digital leaflet to politicians, industry, our school community and the general public. The General Election in February allowed them to engage directly with politicians after delivering the closing statement at the Climate Hustings in the Mansion House.

This year, the Awards event was held online with an opening address by former President Mary Robinson. Congratulations to Conor and John for their continued drive and energy to keep working towards their goal of instituting policies and making a real change for our environment.



John Daly and Conor Slattery.
Winners of the ECO UNESCO
Senior Energy Young Environmentalist
Award 2020

Gold Medal Debate

4th and 5th Years took part in the Annual Gold Medal Debate on the 19th of May, organized by Mr Sheil via Microsoft Teams. The Motion was 'This House believes that human beings are essentially selfish creatures'. James Turley and Conor Slattery opposed the motion. After a lengthy deliberation, the adjudicators Mr Maher, Ms Pierce and Chair, Mr Sheil, awarded James Turley the 5th Year Debating Gold Medal.



James Turley (winner of the 5th
Year Gold Medal Debate)

COMUN

Blackrock College entered six students to the online MUN conference held in April by Claregalway College. Blackrock's delegation were Michael Lucey representing Nigeria, Joey Haughton and Alex Kirrane representing Israel. 50 participants attended and we thank Claregalway for their work hosting the conference on Teams. A range

of issues were discussed including The Falkland Islands, Moderating Nuclear Weapons and Women's Rights in the workplace. Congratulations to Joey Haughton and Alex Kirrane for being nominated as Distinguished Delegates.

Virtual 2000km Cyclathon Fundraising for the RNLI

Nathan Van Steenberg (5th Year) and his fellow dingy sailors virtually circumnavigated the Irish coastline on stationary bikes to raise funds for the RNLI lifeboat service. The sailors are thankful for the bravery of the lifeboat volunteers risking their lives to save others. They completed their 2000km journey with over €9,500 raised. They were joined by Olympic silver medallist Annalise Murphy for one of their legs. The media attention for their endeavour was fantastic; an article in the Irish Times, a special mention on the Ryan Tubridy show and an inclusion in an RTE video called "5 Positive Things". Well done to Nathan and all your team, who by thinking of others and giving of your time and effort, exemplify the spirit of Outreach in Blackrock.



Nathan Van Steenberg Virtual
Cyclathon Fundraising for the
RNLI

Economics and Commerce Society

The Blackrock Economics and Commerce Society was reformed in March with Alex Cronnelly and Matthew O'Meara elected as Auditor and Secretary respectively. The society's plans to visit Intel in Leixlip and travel to London, were postponed, though the society continued to engage through Microsoft Teams. They organised an online talk from Rossa White, Chief Economist in the NTMA and the production of the society's own Economics and Commerce Newsletter. The society plans to continue meeting in 6th Year and participate in events that were postponed this year.

Football – FIFA Interhouse Tournament

This year's House Soccer Leagues went online contested by thirty 5th Years. Rory Barry (Duff) won on the X-Box section and Max Murphy (McQuaid) won on the PlayStation. Congratulations to House Captains Charlie Mullin and Robert Byrne for organising the tournament.

Sir James Galway Summer Flute Festival

Congratulations to Evan Walsh (5th Year) on his selection for the Sir James Galway Summer Flute Festival in Weggis, Switzerland in July. Evan was selected to study in a group masterclass with Sir James and individually with Lady Jeanne.

The Arts



Music & Drama

While circumstances have certainly been different and rehearsals and performances have taken a new online shape, there is nothing like the current times to see how creativity and the arts always find a way to continue and adapt while providing entertainment, comfort and fun! The sense of coming together and community is sometimes at its strongest when we are together in spirit as opposed to physically.

It seems like an age ago, but we were so lucky so squeeze in the Wesley Interschools Music Festival at the start of March, especially after it's cancellation 2 years ago due to the weather. It is worth remembering the amazing achievements this year: 29 awards! 4 First Prizes, 6 Second Prizes, 7 First Class Honours and 12 Highly Commended. What seems like even longer ago is the [Leman Festival Concert XXXIV](#). All the videos from this night are now on the [Blackrock College TV](#) YouTube Channel and we'd encourage you to take a look if you haven't done so already.

Our Vocal and Instrumental Music Lessons have all gone live online on Teams. We currently have just over 100 students and 18 music teachers all specialising in different instruments and the time at home has provided time for lots of practice too! Our choirs, bands and ensembles continue to rehearse and learn music remotely. I am sure lots of you have heard singing and playing in the house. I will take the blame as I have reminded both our student and adult choirs that if you're being asked to stop by other members of your household, you're doing it right! I can still remember my sister's flute warmups backwards!!

Out of all these lessons and rehearsals, **Rock@Home** was born. These videos are a sample of some of the magnificent music our students have collaborated on. The amount of work that has gone into this is phenomenal and we now have a whole body of recording artists who have embraced this fully – well done all! We must also

acknowledge the amazing work of Robert McNabb (TY) in all his video editing, thank you. These videos are available on the [Blackrock College TV](#) YouTube channel and there are also some links below. As I write this, our Adult Choir have submitted over 100 recordings between them which are being put together in an exciting project – keep an eye on YouTube. Also, one of our 5th Year students has fully arranged a piece for our singers and instrumentalists – a brilliant feat! We look forward to launching this. Therefore, be it virtually or in person, I will use the same sentence to conclude this newsletter as I did the last time:

We hope to see you at our next performance!

Rock@Home Videos

[Jazz Band – Theme from Shaft](#)

[Jazz Band – And All That Jazz](#)

[Jazz Band – Puttin' On the Ritz](#)

[Adam Harvey – 9 Crimes/Delicate](#)

[Barry Whelan – Underwater](#)

[Rebound \(TY Band\) – Go Your Own Way](#)

[Daniel Welch – Never Be Afraid Anymore](#)

Art Club on Teams

During the close down the College Art Club was very much open and continued live on TEAMS. Members from various year groups continued to meet up on Wednesday afternoons to chat and explore the virtual world of visual art. A wealth of on line and interactive tours of National and international galleries provided a platform for discussion. Perhaps have a look at <https://www.nationalgallery.ie/virtual-tour> or <https://www.salvador-dali.org/en/museums/dali-theatre-museum-in-figueres/visita-virtual/>.

The Arts Cont'd



Any fans of the work of Rembrandt should click the link to view a hyper resolution image of the Night Watch .

http://hyperresolution.org/view.html?fbclid=IwAR3kyNOBmjnh_SjfVWIdFWi2SI_qY_rMBb80im5FWK6jiTMAOzCedVsD6UM&utm_campaign=uitnodiging&utm_medium=email&utm_source=20200515_alert_Nachtwacht_ENG&pointer=0.700,0.000&r=0.009,0.000,1.000,0.8378&i=Rijksmuseum/SK-C-5/SK-C-5_VIS_20-um_2019-12-21

Working from home with available materials preparations were made to enter the Zurich Young Portrait Competition 2020.

Further chat focussed on *FINDING HOPE* the cover illustration of Time magazine from the 27th April 2020 . <https://time.com/collection-post/5820593/jr-finding-hope-time-cover/>

The stop motion animation *STAY APART TO STAY TOGETHER* by Irish artist Ultan Courtney (class of 1999) showed the importance of visual communication .

An Art Club manifesto is under construction. By popular vote members decided to adopt *ACT*. That is Art Club Time. Which is ahead of *GMT*. Perhaps have a look at this article .

<https://www.irishtimes.com/news/politics/dublin-lost-its-time-zone-and-25-minutes-after-1916-rising-1.1977411>

With such creative individuals constantly thinking outside the box the future is bright.

Art Club meets again on the first Wednesday in September. All are welcome.



Fionn Graham (3rd Year)



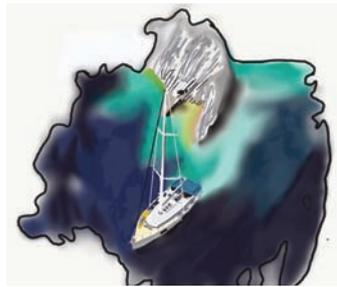
Ned Fitter (Fifth Year)



Jacob Antonio (Fifth Year)



June Lee (Fifth Year)



John Daly (Fifth Year)



Matthew Canacott (Fifth Year)



Donal De Buitléir (Fifth Year)

Creative Arts and Digital Learning Centre Ireland from Maps

In early March, The National Library of Ireland gave one of their travelling exhibitions, 'Ireland from Maps' on loan. This exhibition comprised of 8 pull up stands that showed the different stages of how maps were created, from clay tablets to using satellite technology. The exhibition was on display in the Creative Arts and Digital Learning Centre from 24th February to 6th March.



Ciaran McCann (Fifth Year)

International Women's Day

To commemorate International Women's Day, Ms Mahon's TY class did an exhibition in French on women who have made a significant impact in the world but who may not all have received the recognition they deserved. The students showcased a range of different women such as sports personalities, soldiers, politicians, and artists.

Literacy and Numeracy Quiz

In February and early March students could enter a Literacy and Numeracy quiz where they had to solve a problem with the potential of winning a One4All voucher. Mr Costello selected the questions which students could access via a QR code or Moodle. There was a great response to the quiz and well done to all who took part.

CADLC on Moodle

Numerous different activities were added to the [CADLC section](#) on Moodle that students can access during lockdown. A special [stay@home](#) activity folder has been created that gives access to wide range of virtual extra-curricular activities such as live operas, virtual museums, meditation, eBooks and audio books, learning to play a virtual music instrument, online puzzles and more. Students and teachers were invited to enter a [Digital Escape Room](#) competition to win a book voucher. Entrants had to navigate through Microsoft OneNote and solve a literacy or numeracy clue in one section before they could proceed to the next. The concept was the world was taken over by a laughing virus and Ms Nolan and Ms Ritchie had developed a vaccine. Students had to break into the school to get the vaccine and escape. Well done to Mr Niall Byrne, teacher and Aaron Murtagh, 3rd Year for winning a book voucher each. The escape room is still available on Moodle for anyone who would like to try. In the [reading zone](#), students can find recommendations on what to read, see what others are reading and share what they are reading too. There is also a [research skills](#) and a [subject resources](#) section to help students with their study.



Ben Kieran-Glennon
3rd Year



What are you reading right now?
A Short History of Nearly Everything by Bill Bryson



Could you describe it in 3 words?
Informative, Interesting, Funny

Would you recommend it and why/why not?
Yes, it combines humour with interesting knowledge and is enjoyable to read

Generally, what type of books do you like to read?
Fiction of all types

If you were only allowed to have 3 books during lockdown what would they be?
Scythe, by Neal Shusterman; Eragon by Christopher Paolini; Six of Crows by Leigh Bardugo

If you could make a zoom call to any author or book character during lockdown who would it be and what question would you ask them?
J.R.R. Tolkien, How he came up with such detailed ideas for the Hobbit characters and settings



The Arts Cont'd



Library Committee

Since lockdown, the CADLC committee have been meeting each week on MS Teams to discuss ways to promote reading at home. For instance we discussed distributing a **reading questionnaire** where students can share their reading habits during lockdown. Several students have taken part in the questionnaire and have recommended many great books. The questionnaire and student responses are available in the **reading zone** on Moodle. Responses are also being posted on social media sites like LinkedIn and Twitter. We also discussed ways to promote articles from newspapers or magazines to students who may not enjoy reading books. Students can **submit** any interesting articles they have read and these will be also shared in the reading zone on Moodle.



Conor Hughes (3rd Year)
Leinster Finalist



Amlan Parida (2nd Year)
Leinster Finalist and Gold
Medal Competitor



A.J. Adoghe (2nd Year) Leinster
Finalist & National Finalist, Gold
Medal Competitor



Harry Pierce (2nd Year) Leinster Finalist and
Gold Medal Competitor



Jack Leyden (2nd Year) Gold Medal
Competitor

Junior Debating

We have enjoyed a super exciting term of debating in Blackrock College. We have continued to debate over Teams every Monday at lunchtime with motions being selected by both 2nd and 3rd Year students.

Patrick Hayden and Luca Kenny (both in 2nd Year) qualified to represent Blackrock College in the International Competition for Young Debaters in Oxford University in May, 2020. They spoke on a virtual platform at two practice rounds in April and then competed against students represented from all over the globe in three rounds of gruelling competition.

We had 12 students compete in this year's Gold Medal Debate held on Monday, May 18th. With careful and considered judging of proceedings overseen by Mr. Sheil and Mr. Maher, this year's winners were Gregory Quinn (2nd Year) & Ben Kieran-Glennon (3rd Year).

The 2020 Junior Gold Medal Debate Motion:

"This House believes that human beings are essentially selfish creatures."

We look forward to another year of debating with 2nd and 3rd Year students.

Senior Debating

This last term's debating activities were severely (and unfortunately) curtailed due to Covid-19 shutdown. Our seniors were all eliminated in the quarters of the Leinsters but there was always going to be the Gold Medals to look forward to. Except this year these did not take place in the normal way. They say that 'necessity sharpens industry' and like with so much of school life we endeavoured that life at 'Rock should continue apace.

The 4th and 5th Year Gold Medal Debates were held virtually via TEAMS. James Carroll and Michael White battled for the TY Gold Medal while Conor Slattery and James Turley contested the 5th Year prize. Thank you to Ms. Caroline Pierce and Mr. Cathal Maher who joined Mr. John Sheil in adjudicating. The motion 'That this house believes that mankind is essentially selfish' was proposed and opposed in a lively contest. By the evening's end Michael White (TY) and James Turley (5TH) emerged as winners. Congratulations to them, and commiserations to their two worthy opponents.

The 6th Year Gold Medal has been put on hold for now (our commiserations to this wonderfully resilient group who have had so many important events postponed/put on hold/cancelled). Two qualifiers were held on May 26th for the Class of 2020 Gold Medal Debate. After debating the motion that 'This house believes that mankind is inherently selfish', the following eight students Oliver Bosworth, Aidan Canavan, Tom Dooley, John Huggard, Mark Landers, Luke O'Brien, Tom O'Connor and Jack Tiernan qualified to contest the final which is planned to take place before Graduation.. It will happen. Where and when to be decided.

Thanks to all our senior debaters. Have a great summer.

Green Schools



At the start of the term the committee transitioned online and has remained fully active through the term. The term started with the launch of a biweekly publication which is shared through the Deans and has seen great interest throughout the year groups. To mark Earth Day, we released a document highlighting different actions everyone could do to make a difference. We also took part in the WeThePlanet Earth Day campaign as the only secondary school in Europe joining renowned institutions such as MIT, Duke and Columbia University.

Before the school closure, a group of Transition Year students went on a walkability audit around the College and surrounding areas, to identify issues faced by those commuting to the school. The purpose of the audit was to identify issues like cycling access or the lack of traffic lights on the Rock Road and to bring these to the attention of the County Council. We would like to thank 'An Taisce' for their help with this, particularly our Travel Officer, Ms Allison Philips. Conor Slattery and John Daly, two 5th Year members of the Green Schools Committee, took part in the ECO-UNESCO young environmentalist and won the senior energy award. They received their award in an online ceremony in May during which Mary Robinson delivered a speech. This year has seen great interactions from students, parents and teachers and we look forward to continuing next year.



TY students on the walkability audit with Green Schools and An Taisce. (L to R) M O'Brien, P. Hennigan, J. Flannery, D. Duffy, B. Casey, P. White, S. Patterson, M O'Donnell, M Teasdale, A Phillips (An Taisce)

Sixth Year



There is no doubt that the final term of 6th Year will live long in the memory of all associated with the Class of 2020. When Easter exams came to a sudden conclusion on March 12th, the focus of students and teachers switched to online learning and getting to grips with Moodle and Microsoft Teams. A sense of focus had returned after the Easter break as the Class of 2020 knuckled down to prepare for a summer Leaving Certificate starting on July 29th. Then on May 12th, in the adapted words of WB Yeats, 'All changed, changed utterly' as the Calculated Grades process was born! As Mr MacGinty noted, who would have thought that TY students would be working harder than the 6th Years in the middle of May!

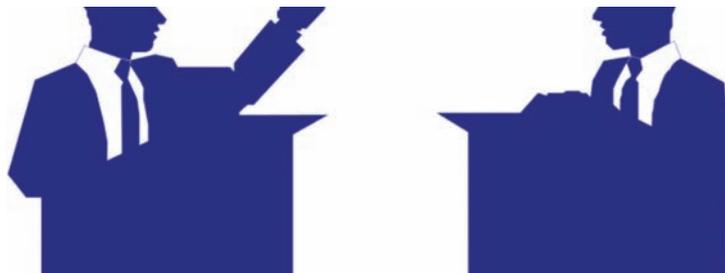
However, the term did continue and I would like to pay particular tribute to both the 6th Year House Representatives comprising of John Francis Campbell & Michael Gadaloff (DeValera); Oliver Bosworth & Jeff Kenny (Duff); Matthew Cullen & David Ryan (Ebenrecht); Patrick O'Connor & Luke Reynolds (Leman); Stephen Kilduff & Tom O'Connor (McQuaid); Gerard Jones & Jack Tiernan (Shanahan) and the 6th Year Parents' Committee under the leadership of David Kennedy (Chair) and Mary Jones (Secretary), who met online regularly to ensure that the Class of 2020 remained engaged with the College and to support each other through challenging times. In keeping with the request of College management – the work of both groups will not be concluded until the Class of 2020 have graduated from Blackrock College.

While social distancing rules meant that we could not have our 'normal' Term 3 events such as the Soccer Leagues, Sports Day or the Gold Medal Debate, the ingenuity of the students and staff ensured that 'online' events were arranged instead...

- **SPORTSDAY:** Over the weekend of May 9/10th Mr Evan O'Brien and a team of TY Volunteers arranged Sports and Family Day events for all. 6th Year engagement was at a very high level and when home videos submitted were added up, the winning 6th Year House was **Duff**, their first Sports Day victory since 2013. Congratulations to all!



- **SOCCER LEAGUE:** While an 'outdoor' inter-house 6th Year soccer league is planned for a future date, the 6th Year House Reps decided to organise an inter-house FIFA 2020 Tournament online. After a series of qualifying rounds featuring best of 5 matches, Shanahan and Ebenrecht Houses qualified for the final on Wednesday 27th May. In a hotly contested final streamed via Instagram, Ebenrecht emerged victorious on a 3-2 score line with Jamie Sood overcoming Neil McNally 2-1 in the final game. This marks the first victory for Ebenrecht in the Soccer Leagues since 2015. Many thanks to all who participated and who put together the wonderful promotional videos that will no doubt feature in the end of year DVD collection.



- **GOLD MEDAL DEBATE:** Two qualifiers were held on May 26th for the Class of 2020 Gold Medal Debate. After debating the motion that 'This house believes that mankind is inherently selfish', the following eight students Oliver Bosworth, Aidan Canavan, Tom Dooley, John Huggard, Mark Landers, Luke O'Brien, Tom O'Connor and Jack Tiernan qualified to contest the final which is planned to take place before Graduation. The winner of this debate will be the Valedictorian for the Class of 2020. Many thanks to Mr. Sheil for his organisation

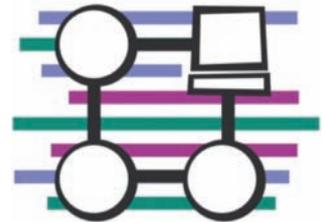
of this important 6th Year event and to fellow adjudicators Ms. Kelleher and Ms. Pierce.

On Thursday May 21st, Mr Stephen Mullin president of the Blackrock College PPU addressed the 6th Year House Representatives. He outlined the 'Bridge' that the Union forms between the school, individual year groups and other past pupils. At present the PPU has over 8,000 members based in 65 countries around the world. Membership forms to join the PPU were emailed to all members of the Class of 2020 and further information is available from unionoffice@rock.ie.



Stephen Mullin (Class of 1983)
President of the PPU

Our annual Prize Day was another casualty of Covid-19 but we offer our congratulations to all Sixth-Year prize-winners and their families. These students will be acknowledged in due course. At this time, we congratulate in particular, Michael Gadaloff, winner of the General Excellence Award, Aaron Ryan who was the top Academic based on Christmas and Easter in-house examinations and Tom O'Connor, winner of the Student Leadership Award for 2020.



Congratulations to Michael Gadaloff who received a Bronze Medal in the Irish Chemistry Olympiad at TCD this Spring. Michael is now part of the Round 2 training for the International competition which would have taken place in Turkey in July but now will be run remotely. Four students will represent Ireland. We wish him well.

One final group of Prize-winners that need to be highlighted are the members of **EBENRECHT** House who are overall 6th Year House winners for 2020. We thank each member of the House for their engagement in the variety of extra-curricular events run this year and in particular we note the contribution of Matthew Cullen & David Ryan, the Ebenrecht House captains to this victory. It all began last September with victory in the House 10s (with a little help from some friends!) ...



The Class of 2020 has now registered for Calculated Grades and hopefully they will be happy with the CAO offers that will come their way at the end of this process. As a year group they have made a most significant contribution to Blackrock College and as 6th Year students they have displayed enthusiasm, good humour, commitment, and a caring disposition in their leadership of the student body. They have upheld the traditions of 'Fides et Robur' in style and have left their own imprint on the history of Blackrock. Hopefully, all will find happiness and fulfilment in their future lives, and we assure them that Mr Madden and the Pastoral Team will have a Graduation event post-pandemic when we will gather to say 'Farewell and Bon Voyage' in style!

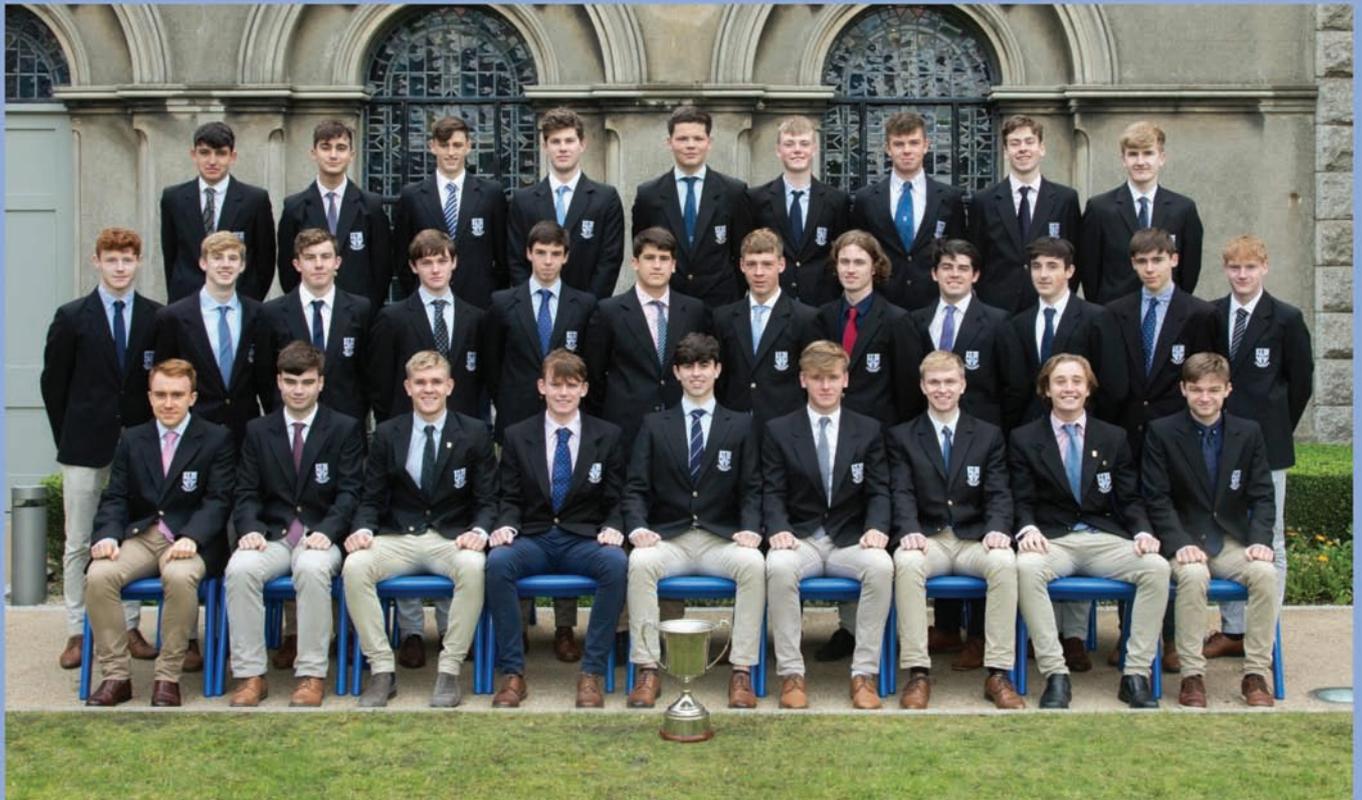


To the Class of 2020

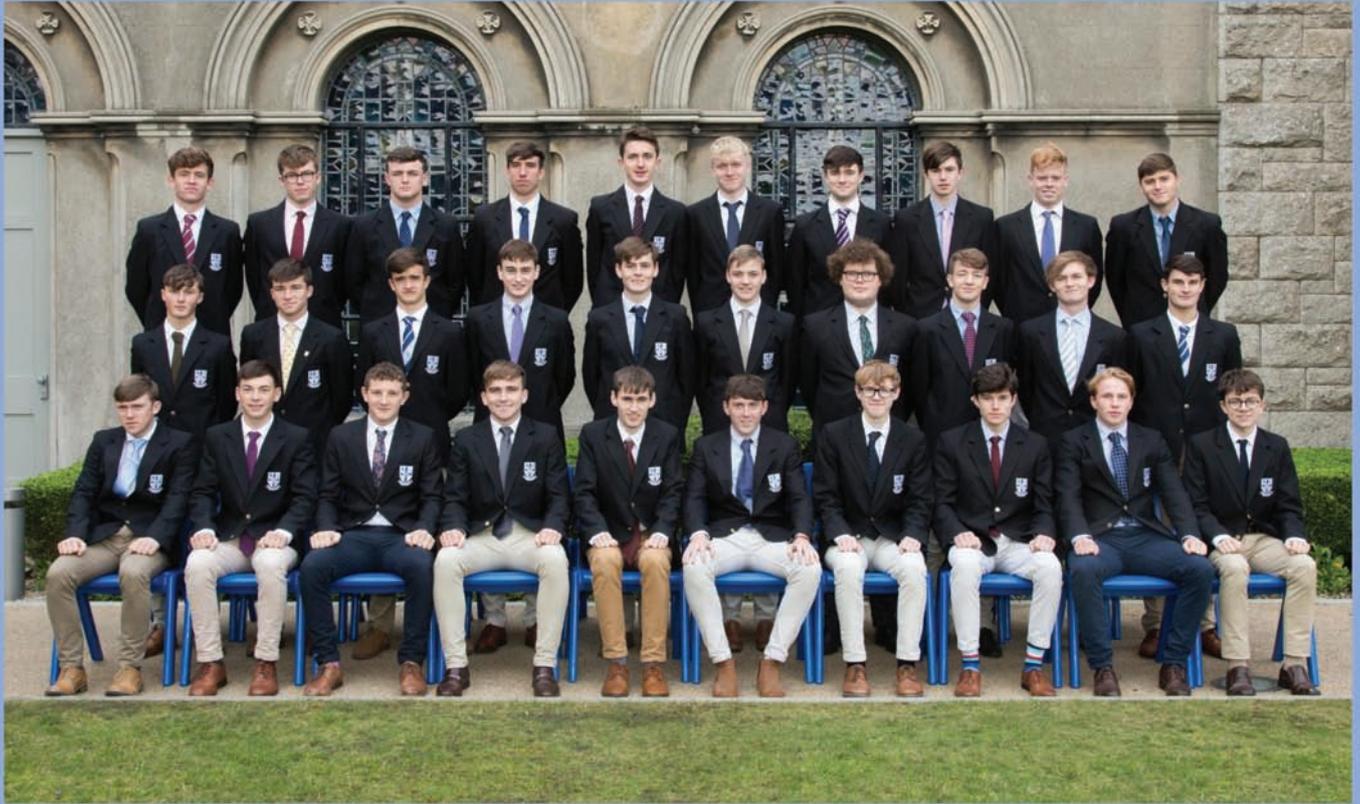
This academic year has ended in a less than satisfactory way for all of us, but of course it has been harder for you, the class of 2020.

We pay tribute to the resilience you displayed in the face of uncertainty and to the manner in which you embraced the College values of 'Fides et Robur'. We are confident that you will look back on this time as a period of growth and will see it as we do: a challenge to which you rose with impressive maturity.

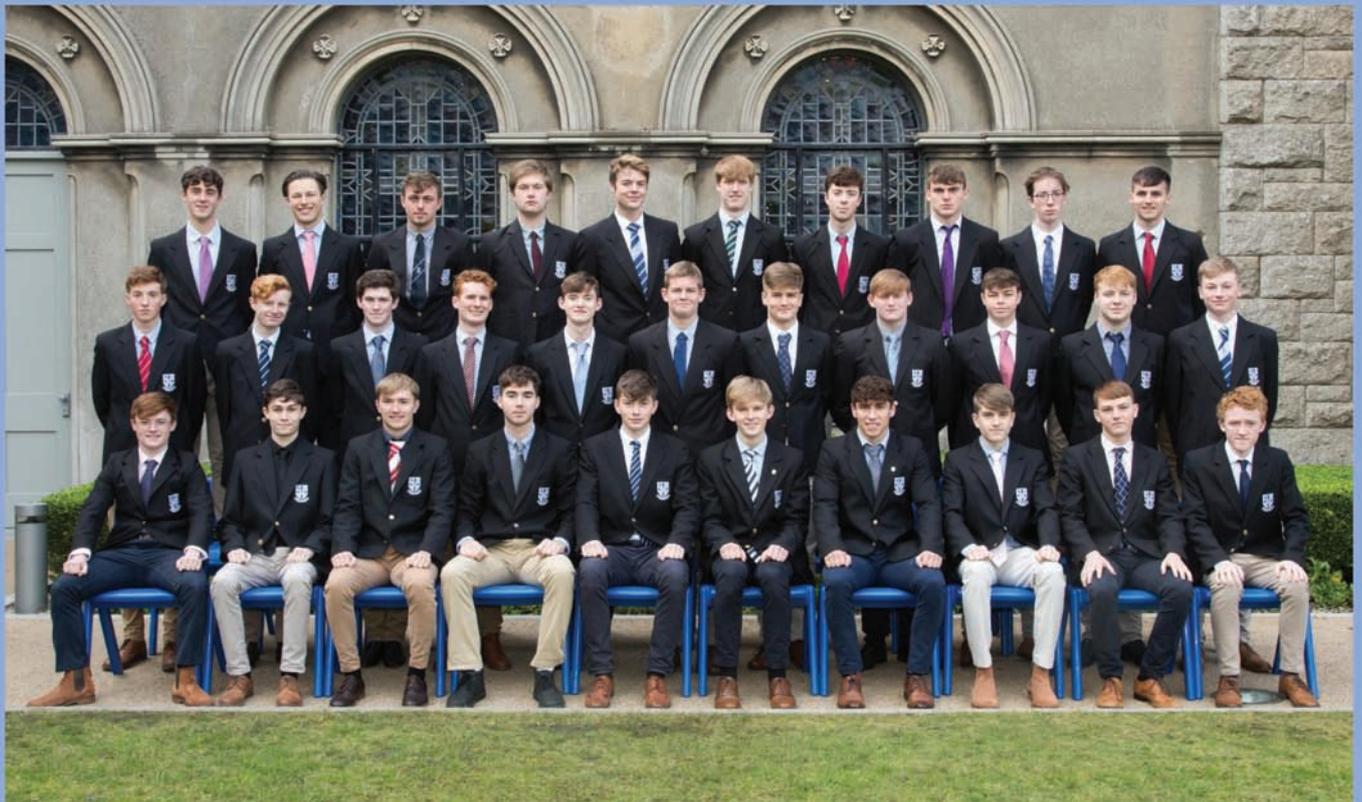
We look forward to seeing you in real life to pay proper tribute to your outstanding contribution to the College when the time is right. In the meantime, we hope you enjoy this sneak preview of your House photos from the annual.



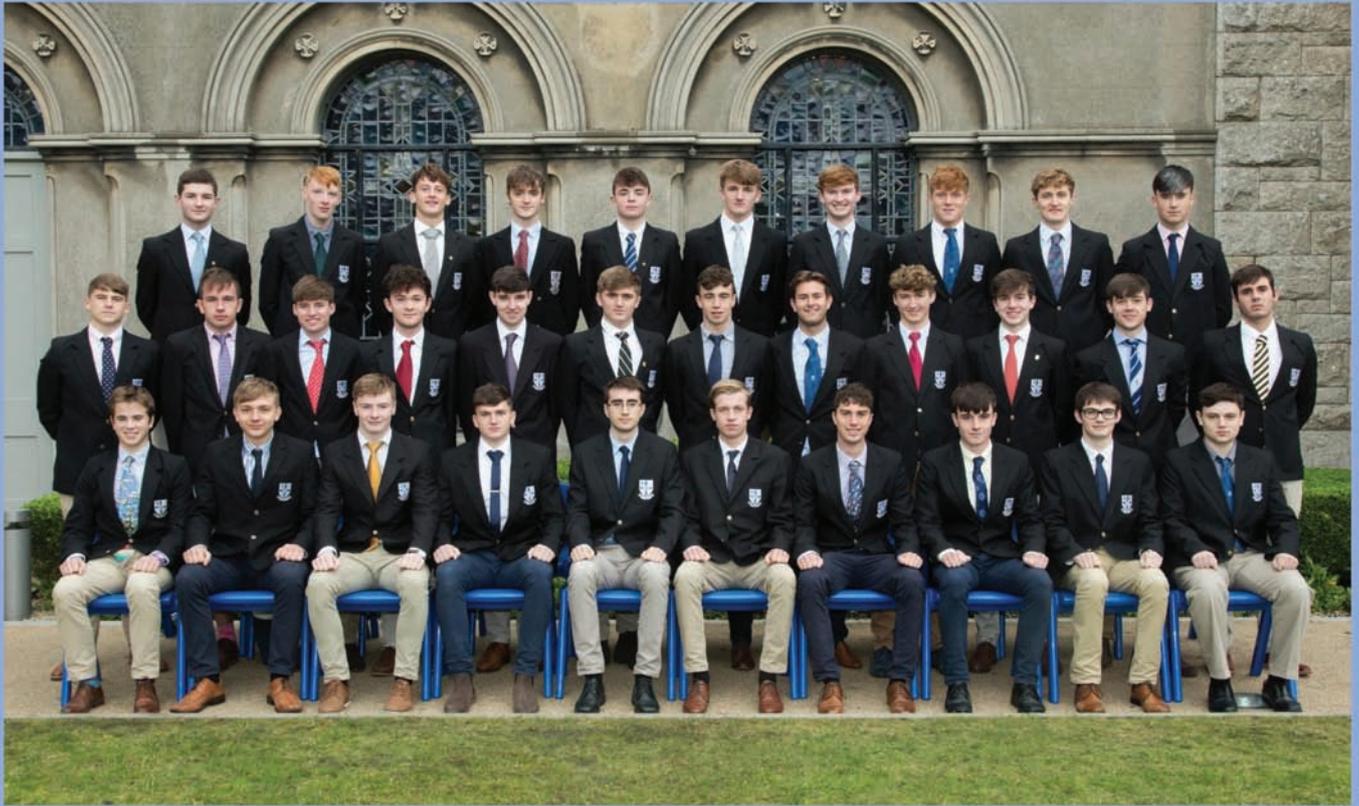
Class of 2020 Ebenrecht House



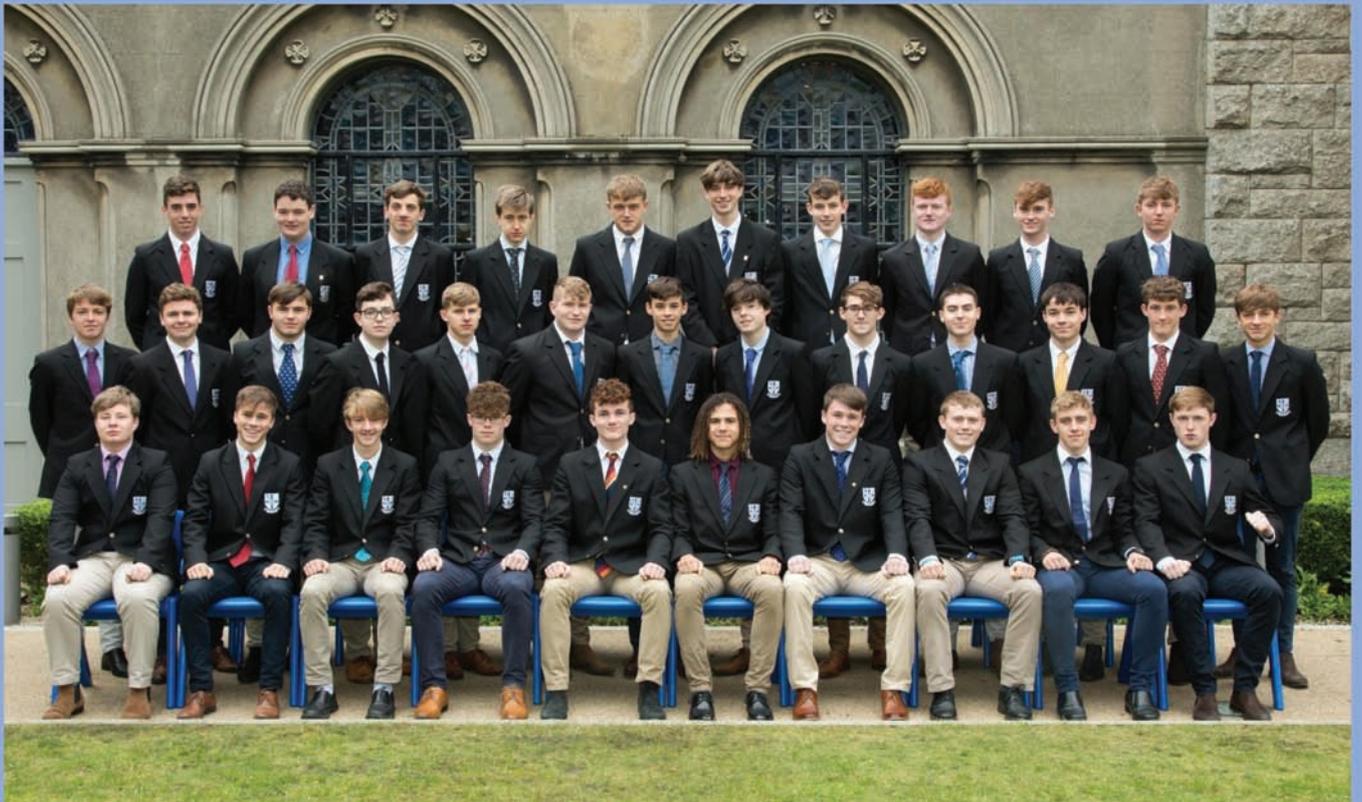
Class of 2020 Duff House



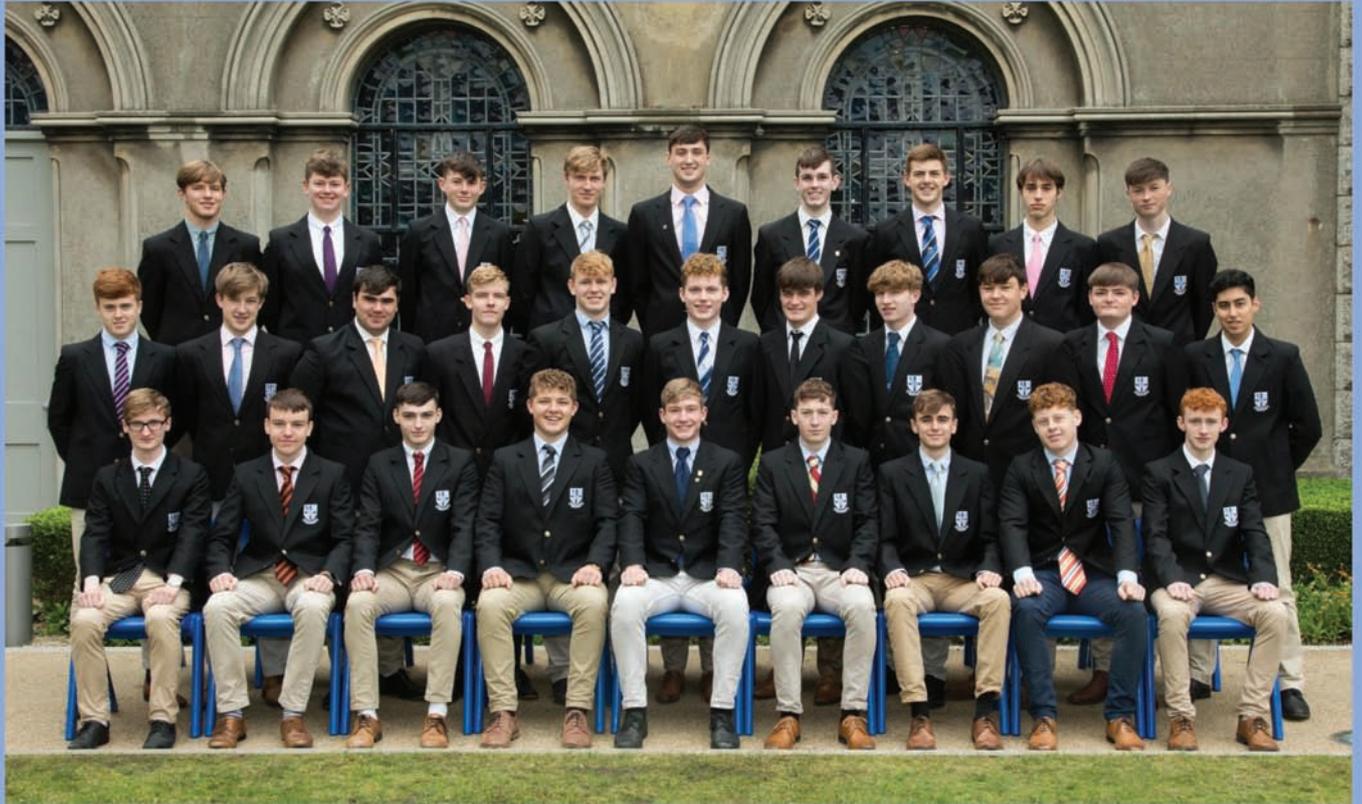
Class of 2020 DeValera House



Class of 2020 Shanahan House



Class of 2020 McQuaid House



Class of 2020 Lemman House



House Captains Class of 2020

Guidance and Counselling



What a year it has been. My heartfelt sympathies to all the 6th Years. So much uncertainty has dominated 2020. The toughest year to date, the class of 2020 will emerge stronger than they ever thought possible.

As the school year draws to a close, the Guidance and Counselling department continue to work hard to see the boys online, to offer continued support through these difficult and challenging times. Please reach out to any of us if you would like some support.

- ndrew@blackrockcollege.com Guidance Counsellor 6th Year
- donuallain@blackrockcollege.com Guidance Counsellor 5th Year
- lcrimmins@blackrockcollege.com Mentor 5th Year/ Chaplain 6th Year
- gsullivan@blackrockcollege.com Guidance Counsellor 3/4th Year
- dbrennan@blackrockcollege.com Mentor 2nd Year
- fmadden@blackrockcollege.com Head of Pastoral Care

CAO

The CAO is open now and this will remain open until the 1st of July. Students should receive a statement of application in May. This is an emailed document detailing your application details. Please check that personal details are correct, course choices are all listed and if you have a NUI check that it is listed. If you have any concerns, please contact the CAO through the query/email option in your CAO account. This ensures a record of your communication with them.



In these uncertain times it has never been more important to put as many courses down as possible and not to neglect the level 7 list. Anything can happen; please ensure you have a good back-up plan. Research PLC courses, private courses, and apprenticeships.

PLC's are an alternative route entry that allows students to progress onto degree level after one year of study. It is a popular option for students as both a

back-up course and also as an option for those struggling to get the points for their dream course. PLC courses are not on the CAO and should be applied to through the individual college websites now. It is important to be aware that places in level 7/8 courses have limited availability for students coming from PLC courses.

5th Years

Each 5th Year has been sent a link and instructions to access an online Interest Assessment. Please use the results of this assessment to discuss your future career plans with friends and family and use the time to do some career research. I will meet each of you individually next year and we will be discussing the results of this assessment and the research you have done to date.

3rd Years

The Subject Choice Conference for parents took place in the format of an online video. Ms. Natasha Drew, Mr. Martin Dunne, Mr. MacGinty and Mr. Owen Brennan all addressed the parents of 3rd Year on subject choice and the TY program structure. Students are reminded that subjects should be selected on interest, strengths and openness to 3rd level opportunities. We are all available for discussion if need be, please feel free to contact us.



Finally, I wish all the 6th Years the very best. I am here throughout the summer so please email me at ndrew@blackrockcollege.com if you have any concerns about your college offers. If it doesn't work out this year, I will still be here next year to offer support so do come back if you plan to change course next year. I look forward to seeing you all at your graduation. Wishing you all the success you deserve.

Science



The SciFest Regionals are still going ahead this year but behind closed door. Students had to submit their projects online and a short video less than two minutes. We have 3 entrants from Second Year:

Investigating the effect of concentration on temperature in an exothermic reaction.

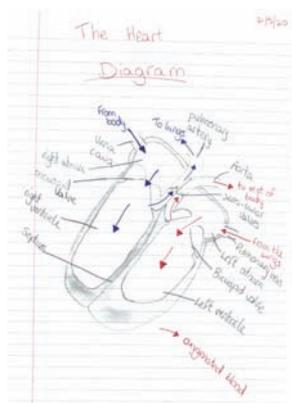
Simon Considine and Diarmuid Byrne

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

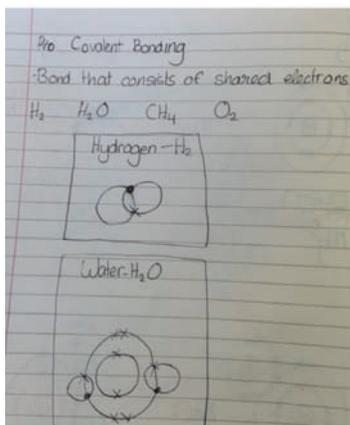
Is grey water great for plants. Patrick Hayden, Senan McCloskey and Philip O'Neill

We wish the boys the best of luck!

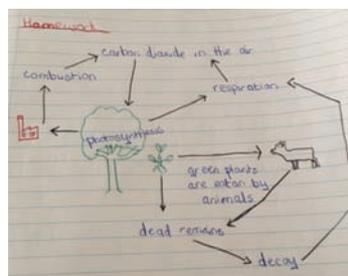
Some Science homework handed in over this Term



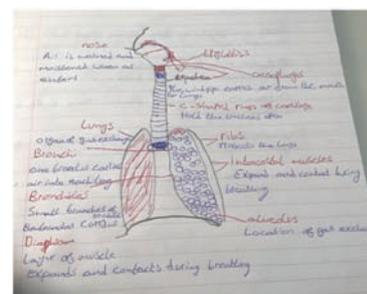
Jack McGlone
38 Science



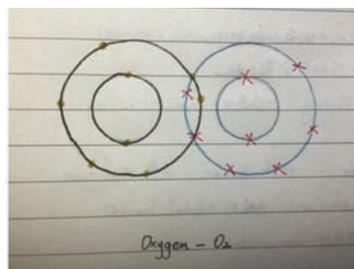
Ronan Fahy
36C Science



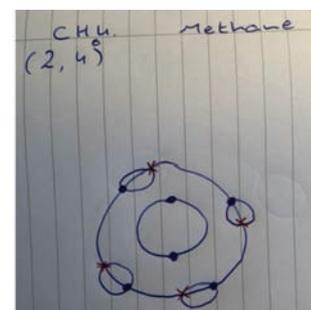
Conor Moloney
26E Science



Sean O'Nuallain
26E Science



Joe Li
36C Science



Finn Tyrrell
36C Science

Congratulations to Michael Gadaloff who received a Bronze Medal in the Irish Chemistry Olympiad at TCD this Spring. Michael is now part of the Round 2 training for the International competition which would have taken place in Turkey in July but now will be run remotely. Four students will represent Ireland. We wish him well.

Snapshot of Final Term 2020



Ben Kieran-Glennon (3rd Year) Leinster Finalist & National Finalist and winner of the Third Year Gold Medal Debate



Gregory Quinn (2nd Year) Leinster Finalist, Winner of The Gold Medal Debate



Alex Brophy (TY) winner of MasterChef; Alex cooked Butter Chicken with Brown Rice, Homemade Naan Bread and Key Lime Pie as Dessert.



Meal prepared by Eoin Power (TY) MasterChef Finalist



Meal prepared by Harry Ballard (TY) for MasterChef



Meal prepared by Sean Patterson (TY) MasterChef Finalist

A highly talented production team Robert McNabb, Matthew Kane and Alex Brophy (all TY) and Seán Hannon (Class of 2019) put together a video of our virtual **Sports and Family Day** edited from the 1400 submissions. The following is a selection of photos of this wonderful day which epitomise our school spirit.



Snapshot of Final Term 2020



Snapshot of Final Term 2020



Inspired by the fantastic efforts of the TY boys it was decided to put together a Rock 5k Run with a difference on Saturday May 23rd. Rock families wherever they were in the world walked, jogged or ran 5km in aid of Aidlink and Cystic Fibrosis Ireland raising in excess of €32,400.





“Fearless and bold ...”, we are an Easter People on a journey of Faith, Hope and Love, journeying towards Pentecost Sunday, which we celebrate this year on Sunday 31st May, the weekend when the school year ends – 50 days after the Resurrection of Jesus. Pentecost Sunday is recognised by many Christians as the birth of the Church with the coming of the Holy Spirit in the form of flames on the Apostles and gave them the strength of their beliefs to preach the word of Jesus – the birth of the Missionary Church. As a Spiritan School, we are all called to preach the word of Jesus through action – our Faith is alive. The title Pentecost Sunday is from the Greek word “pentekoste” which means fiftieth as Pentecost Sunday takes place 50 days after Easter.

“... whatever the danger be”, this past school term, from Easter to the end of the school year is unique in the 160-year history of Blackrock College. The school may have been closed due to the pandemic but the spirit of Blackrock, the Holy Spirit was probably never more active. From a virtual Sports Day, to a 5K run to an online Morning of Reflection which involved over 180 boys from the four corners of the globe logging in live and joining with ten members of the Pastoral Team, each of whom had an input – the involvement of the boys was inspirational, special word of thanks to all the House Captains.

“Onward we go ...” with Eucharistic Ministers receiving training in the final term of the school year. All 5th Year are invited to apply and this year a group of 14 boys have been selected and following their online Eucharistic education and training, they will be commissioned at the beginning of September in a Ceremony in the College.

The Matthew 25 / Pastoral Programme unfortunately could not continue in the traditional form with the boys

taking part in a two week placement in various schools, nursing homes and care facilities, but this did not stop the boys from coming up with innovative ways of taking part in the Matthew 25 Programme. Many boys who had already completed placements earlier in the year reached out by writing letters to the residents. Another group of Transition Year boys wrote to the Spiritan Community in the College and to retired members of the Community that have retired to Kimmage Manor and Nazareth House.



THE SPIRITANS
It's a Spirit Thing!

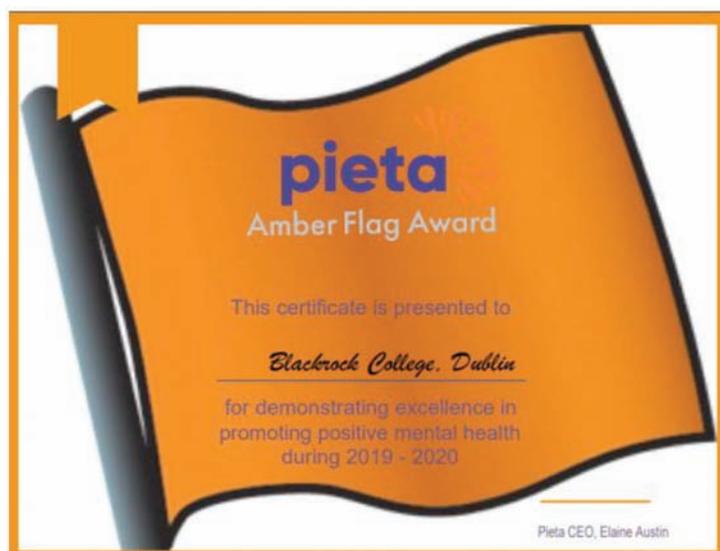
The Congregation of the
Holy Spirit C.S.Sp

It is with sadness that the Graduation Mass has had to be postponed from the 17th May, 2020. Graduation Mass has been postponed and not cancelled – the Graduation Mass and Celebrations for the Class of 2020 are yet to take place and this will happen as soon as it is safe to do so – the wonderful Class of 2020 will have “their” Graduation Mass ... and that is a promise. The Class of 2020 may have finished their school days, but they will never leave Rock – there will always be a welcome for them in the College.

“Fearless and bold, whatever the danger be, onward we go.”

Watch,
stand fast in
the FAITH,
be BRAVE, be
STRONG.
Let all that you
do be done ✝
with LOVE.
1Corinthians 16:13-14

Despite a computer screen coming between us, the Wellbeing Committee has not downed tools, quite the contrary. This term they reintroduced the 'Wellbeing Anonymous Tool', enabling students to confide about issues with the confidence of complete anonymity. This tool links directly with Ms Natasha Drew, Head of Guidance Counselling. The committee was awarded its third consecutive amber flag recognising Blackrock's efforts to promote and foster positive mental health in school and the extended community. Well done to Shane Redahan and Andrew Ryan for their work. Having linked with House Captains including Alex Cronnelly (McQuaid), the committee has focused on the wellbeing themed days for the next year guided by feedback from students over the last year.



Sport

Chess

The chess team has been lucky enough to continue their training online with help from our coach Lukasz. The boys have been competing against one another on 'lichess.org' on Monday's and Thursday's. On Saturday 23rd May, we



held our first ever on-line tournament. We randomly selected two teams: **Team A:** Liam Norton, Ronan Prior, Conor Hughes, Evan McCourt, Andrew Welch and Philip O'Neil, and **Team B:** Matthew Collins, Sean O'Connor, John Duffy, Charlie Parsons, Harry Pierce and George Francis. Each player was matched with an opponent and each match was decided by means of a 3-game series. Congratulations to Team A for the win! Commiserations to Team B. Excellent effort made from everyone.

JCT

Unfortunately, due to the unforeseen circumstances that arose surrounding Covid-19, the Junior Cup final was postponed.

Although this was highly disappointing for the team, in the typical fashion of the squad, they prevailed. Together they focused on maintaining a positive mindset and rose to the opportunity of turning this time out into a chance to further develop as young rugby players.

The team's competitive spirit was kept alive, as they took part in weekly challenges set to improve their core skills, whilst enhancing their condition. Both the coaches and the squad look forward to the future when the day comes that it is safe to train together.

Golf

The 2019/20 season was yet again a very successful year for Golf in Blackrock College but sadly, like most sports there was no conclusion to the season. We started our Irish Schools' Senior Matchplay Championship with the qualifying round for Leinster schools teeing off in Greystones Golf Club in September 2019. We had a strong team, led out by Robert Galligan (6th

Year), Alex Bolger (5th Year), Matthew O'Brien (4th Year) and sub Jake Foley (3rd Year) and we qualified in 2nd place, narrowly beaten by St Gerard's on the same score.

The Irish Schools' Senior Championship Leinster quarter finals was held in Castlewarden GC on the 25th October and we defeated St. Fintan's High School Sutton to qualify for the Semi-Final against Naas in Killeen GC on 29/11/2019. Our team, ably led by Alex Bolger, stuck at it until the end demonstrating great resilience and winning out with the last match called in on the 19th hole-what a fantastic team effort this was!

The Leinster Finals were held on the 16/1/2020 at Delgany GC in dreadful conditions with howling wind and driving rain. At the last minute, we had an enforced team change as Captain Alex Bolger was unable to play due to illness. We are very lucky with the strength and depth of our squad, Adam Allabbachani stepped up to fill Alex's shoes. The lads dug deep as Benildus had an equally strong team and the game came down to the second last hole in the last match, a very tight nail-biting finish. We were now through again to the All-Ireland finals for the third time in the last four years. The finals were scheduled to be held in Macroom GC on the 21/4/2020. Alas, it was not to be and Covid-19 put paid to our hopes of avenging last year's defeat and taking home the All-Ireland title.

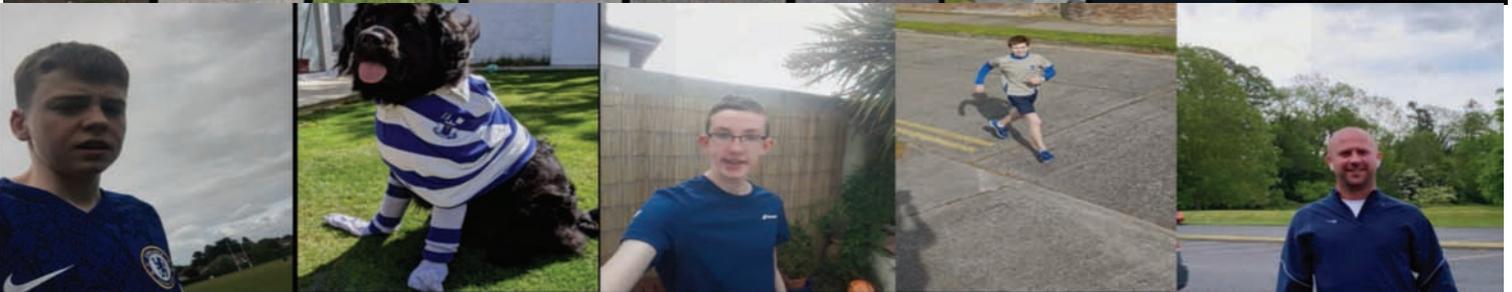
In the Leinster Inter Schools' League Matchplay, we again defeated our local rivals St. Benildus College. Next up was St. Michael's and having defeated them we were drawn against St. Fintan's in the quarter finals in the Castle GC. The match was played on the 5/3/2020 in fantastic weather which was duly matched by the standard of the golf from our team. Having secured our passage into the last four play offs we were again thwarted by the Covid-19 virus and the uncertainty that goes with that.



Sport Cont'd



Images from our Virtual Sports and Family Day



Reflection for Summer 2020

When the acclaimed American poet Robert Frost was asked as an octogenarian what he had learned about life, he succinctly replied: "It goes on." This is what the events of this term have taught us. We can see from this selection of photographs taken in the College grounds in May, that nature mirrors Frost's philosophy. Though our life in the College, as we knew it, ended abruptly on March 12th due to Covid 19, life did and does go on. Sure, there was confusion, fear, and anxiety but we regrouped, learned to do things differently and just like the plants and flowers in the College grounds, we flourished and blossomed because as Frost said:

"But life - it goes on. It always has. It always will. Don't forget that."

