

BLACKROCK COLLEGE NEWSLETTER



December 2023

At our recent Carol Service Fr. Cormac, reminded us to R.O.C.K. to Reach Out with Caring and Kindness to our siblings, our parents, and grandparents. That is an incredibly important message at any time of the year but especially at Christmas. Christmas can be a challenging time for people, particularly those on the margins of our society and maybe we can extend our reaching out and push ourselves a little further than family and friends. In Ireland today, 13,179 people are homeless and 3,991 of those are children. That is a startling figure. It is very easy to become accustomed and desensitised to shocking figures like this, but we shouldn't. If we accept these kinds of figures as the norm in our society, then we accept that there is nothing that we can or should do and, in a season known for hope and action, that is not something we should accept. As Pope Francis said, "Poverty has a face" – behind every statistic is the face of a child, the face of a family, the face of people, young and old.



James Smyth (Third Year) reading at the Carol Service

Every year, in the run up to Christmas we, in the College, raise funds for St. Vincent de Paul and sometimes we can forget the faces in need of these funds. Jim Murphy wrote a small piece for the Newsletter, and I think it is important to share with you a glimpse of the thoughts of those that benefit from our fundraising.

The Blackrock College St. Vincent de Paul Conference is involved in many projects but two of the main ones are:

1. *Scholarships at 3rd level for students mainly living in Tallaght West and for refugees who have arrived in Ireland in the recent past.*
2. *Christmas Hampers – the purchase, packing and delivery of 225 Christmas hampers to the families of Cushlawn and Killinarden in West Tallaght.*

The following is an extract of a letter of application we received last September from a 2nd year business student in TU Tallaght

Last year, I managed to balance the financial difficulties of attending College by working at weekends and some weekdays and I was able to afford books and money for food and travel. I feel this affected my ability to achieve my best when it came to having more time for my studies. I am the only child with a single Mum, and I am the first of my extended family to attend 3rd level. Receiving this scholarship would be such an amazing opportunity as it would be a weight off my shoulders, and I do not have to rely on my mother for extra support for books, food and travel.

The SVP recently received a thank you letter from a scholarship student who obtained her degree in Psychiatric Nursing in which she says:

Please do not stop helping anyone who needs help---you were a great help to me.

A huge thank you to the boys and their parents for all the support in the quizzes, the Christmas tree project, the hamper delivery, the mince pie morning, the soccer marathon, the cycle-a-thon and the 24 hour fast.

If you have had the opportunity to read 'Poor' by Katriona O'Sullivan, you will know that she talks about her life growing up in poverty and the fact that education empowered her, "I have been able to change my life, my children's lives. I'm not costly any more to the state. I'm not doing all of the things that happen when you live in poverty". Changing society by investing in the education of those less fortunate is a powerfully positive step for the betterment of all and that is why we focus on St. Vincent de Paul, why we continue to R.O.C.K. for St. Vincent de Paul. As Pope Francis said, "None of us can think we are exempt from concern for the poor and for social justice".

May you and your families experience the blessings of the season and may we all continue to R.O.C.K. this Christmas and throughout the New Year.

Yvonne Markey

Yvonne Markey, Principal

Message from the Deans....



The half term here in Blackrock in the lead up to the Christmas Break is a term full of highlights and special moments that truly shows the very best of the Blackrock community. Undoubtedly a huge number of activities are planned for this term but without the students they remain just that – plans – and it is incredibly energising as Deans to see the students thriving and so happy in such a variety of settings bringing all these wonderful plans to life!

Rock-Ed was a magnificent beginning to the term with a fantastic evening's entertainment had by the large crowd in attendance. The Music, Art, and Drama Department's production of 'Footloose' was spectacular. From the daring set design, to the choreography, to the singing and acting; this production would not have been out of place in any professional theatre anywhere in the country. Blackrock College Radio (BCR) was a fantastic achievement for this Transition Year group. 47.5 hours of content, with a mix of live and prerecorded programming, was broadcast over the course of the week. We congratulate all involved in these wonderful events.

At the core of this half term is the Blackrock College SVP Christmas Appeal. From quizzes in 2nd and 3rd Year, to football marathons in TY, to the 5th Year Cyclothon, to the 24 hour fast in 6th Year, to the Christmas Tree being sold; this is a term that places those in need and our individual and collective capacity to make a difference firmly in the centre of all of our hearts and minds. It is particularly heartening to see the students through the various initiative living out our Spiritan and Blackrock values. We are hugely grateful also to the parents and Blackrock College Conference of SVP for their support for the various initiatives, without whom they would not be possible.

In such a busy term with all of the above and more happening, spirits are always raised when we gather together. The Third- and Fourth-Year Family Masses were two such wonderful occasions this term and the Christmas Carol service was an uplifting celebration of our community here in Blackrock.

On Wednesday 8th November Fr.Paddy Dundon's funeral mass took place here in the College chapel. The reverence and respect shown by the boys in the guard of honour as Fr.Paddy arrived and left the college was a fitting tribute to a much beloved member of our community.

We have to mention the Christmas exams! The New Year brings with it a great opportunity for reflection always and when the results are released in the New Year it is important for students to reflect on the good practice and achievements of the term and identify opportunities for development and new targets to be set going forward. However we urge all students to remember, as Fr.Paddy Moran said at the 6th Year family mass, "exams are a measure of your work, not of your worth".

The theme of our Mental Health Action Day earlier in the term was 'Connect'. We hope that you will see throughout the newsletter that connection, community and care was at the heart of College life this term. We hope that the Christmas break offers students and their families an opportunity to 'connect' with each other, their extended families and loved ones and we wish all of you a very happy and peaceful Christmas.

*Mr J. Fitzsimmons (Dean of Second Year), Mr O. Brennan (Dean of Third Year) ,
Dr J. Brunswick (Dean of Transition Year), Ms C. Dobbryn (Dean of Fifth Year) and
Mr P. O' Neill (Dean of Sixth Year)*

Continue to follow our TY Motto 'Respect, Engage, Challenge and Enjoy!

On Thursday 9th November, the **Class of 2024** marked Mental Health Action Day by wearing orange clothing to school and in wearing this colour to school, were committing themselves to make Blackrock a school where positive mental health thrives.

A number of **Fifth Years** travelled to Jamaica during mid-term break to work with the **Mustard Seed Charity**. Following their successful cake sale fundraiser, the group were delighted to share their life changing experiences working with some of the world's most vulnerable children.

Message from the Deans....



Studio Manager Ian Duane switching BCR 2023 on!

BCR 2023 was an amazing success thanks to all **TYS** who participated contributing in ways large and small!. Running a radio station takes commitment, determination, resilience, and a lot of hard work. A superb effort by all the various teams of teachers and students who worked tirelessly to run a truly professional operation with an eclectic mix of high-quality shows with a wide range of interesting guests. Thanks to our Studio Managers and Editing team many of the shows are available to play back again on Spotify.

The leadership and example of the **6th Years** at the **Christmas Carol Service** through their reading and contribution to the singing was very impressive. In particular we thank Daniel Flannery, Luke McDermott and Alex James for their magnificent rendition of 'O Holy Night' which certainly uplifted the entire College community!

The **Second Year** A and B rugby team have been in good form over the last few weeks beating Belvedere, St. Michael's, Clongowes and Newbridge. The C's had some good performances. The highlight of these was a come-from-behind win against Terenure. Meanwhile, the D's battled hard against CUS B's and Belvedere C's.

Congratulations to all **TYS** involved in our **Senior Musical 'Footloose'**. TY students continue to rehearse for the Cluny Musical in January and Rathdown Musical in March and for the Leman Concert. Dates for the first round of auditions are being eagerly awaited for the Sion Hill & Blackrock College Talent show.

Date for your Diary: The 6th Year Parent-Teacher meeting is planned for Thursday 11th January from 4.15pm to 6.45pm.

Fifth Year students greatly appreciated the second round of the **Career Seminars** provided by the Career Guidance Department and the Past Pupils' Union. In January the Career's Department will be inviting all students to complete a Career Plan based on their Christmas exam results. All are strongly encouraged to complete this to offer direction and motivation.

The **Second-Year** boys have been hard at work since their October return. CBA's and Christmas exams have focussed the minds of many. There is plenty of learning going on in the classrooms with a blended approach of listening, active learning and students feeding back on their new knowledge.

The **Third Year Family Mass** was a very nice evening in the College with the liturgy wonderfully enhanced by the 3rd Year Corless Choir, our talented cantors and musicians. Thank you to all who joined us on this special occasion for 3rd Year, in particular those who volunteered to serve, read and welcome.

On Tuesday 7th November, Ms. Drew gave a hugely informative presentation on the **CAO** process to the **6th Year Parents**. Information presented on this night has been made available online via the parent's section of the College website. The **6th Year Careers' Fair** took place the following week on November 14th in conjunction with Sion Hill College and we thank Ms Drew for her organisation of the event.



Mr Brennan and 3rd Years in their Christmas jumpers

Message from the Deans....



An attentive and engaged audience listened to Conall Bird from the Oddballs foundation give an excellent talk on **Testicular Cancer Awareness**, reminding the **TY students** to look after themselves with regular checks.

The **College Musical Footloose** ran for four nights from 21st – 24th November to a packed Jubilee Hall each night! Whether on stage or in the crew we congratulate all **6th Years** involved.

December is a time when the various year groups organise charity events for the St. Vincent De Paul Christmas Appeal. The **Second Years** organised a **charity table quiz** last Tuesday in the jubilee hall. Mr Lambe acted as host. Congratulations to Morocco (Tristan Elmes, Harry Malone, Dylan McKeown, Sean P. Mooney, Robert O'Connor) who narrowly defeated Bolivia and Thailand. We thank the boys and their families and friends for raising over €4,000 for a worthy cause.

Tours for TYs went to Jumpzone and Awesome Walls. For those looking for a gentler morning activity, a trip to Rainforest Golf was also provided.

Congratulations to **Sixth Years** Philip Guinan, Simon Considine and Sam Grennell who won the Dublin round of ISTA Senior Science quiz on the 16th November. They went onto finish 3rd in National Finals, a superb achievement. Well done also to Will Quinlan, Robert MacHale and Diarmaid Byrne who placed 11th in the Dublin round.



Patrick Martin, Zach Costello, Daniel Li, Tommy Hayes, Hugh Lynch and Will Hegarty (Second Year) representing Sri Lanka at their quiz.

3rd Years general knowledge was put to the test during the annual SVP quiz held on Tuesday 5th. There was a fantastic atmosphere in the Jubilee Hall as 42 teams competed for the 2023 title. Well done to Team USA –Ilya Ishchenko, Eoin Moore, Conor O'Neill, Harry Rapley and Binghong Wang who came out on top. As we go to print over €3000 has been raised, with more donations on the way. Great work 3rd Years!



Isaac Moss, Michael O'Sullivan, and Ross McManus – Fifth Year SVP Cyclothon

We congratulate **Sixth Year** Daniel Cheung and the **Senior Soccer Squad** on their progress in the Dublin Metropolitan League. A 2-0 victory v Templeogue, 3-2 victory v Marian College and a 4-2 victory v Benildus saw a home semi-final secured for after Christmas. In the Leinster Senior Cup a 7-2 victory over Portlaoise CBS saw us through to the next round.

Eight hours, six bikes, over 2000 kilometres and over €6700 later the **Fifth Years** were delighted with such a highly charged day of good spirit, energy and drive in aid of such a worthwhile cause. As always, we are so grateful to MCSPORT.IE for their sponsorship of the bikes and a special thanks this year to VIT.HIT for their sponsorship and keeping the students hydrated throughout! A close and fast-paced race saw DUFF crowned champions of this year's **Cyclothon** in aid of SVP.

Message from the Deans....



Archie Quinn (Second Year) with his top scorer award with his teammate Ciaran Daly who was awarded player of the competition.

Well done to *Archie Quinn (Second Year)* who was top scorer for **Shamrock Rovers U14 Team** in a recent European competition held in Portugal. He scored goals against Crystal Palace (2), LA Galaxy (1), Parma (1), Bromby (2), English Selection U15's (2).

Congratulations to **6th Year Speakers** Senan McCloskey, Patrick Hayden and MC Aran O'Flaherty on another top-class edition of Rock Ed on Thursday 9th November.

Fifth Years represented the College remarkably well at this year's DLR Comhairle na N'Óige and more still look forward to taking part in training workshops to become LIFT (Leading Ireland's Future Together) Facilitators.

We congratulate **Sixth Years** Jack Angulo (Captain), Charlie Molony, Derry Moloney and Mark Walsh (Vice-Captains) on their appointment to these **SCT Leadership roles**. The narrow defeat to St. Michaels in the Noel Turley Cup and the 51-22 victory over Clifton on the front lawn, though both contrasting results, showed the undoubted potential of the squad in the season ahead.

On the pitches, on the courts, in the pool and on the lakes, on the stages of MUN, RockEd, Public Speaking, Debating and the Musical, in Art Club, Chess Club and the CADLC and in the domains of Environmental Awareness, Wellbeing, Commerce and Economics the involvement of **Fifth Years in College life** and their leadership at gatherings such as the Carol Service is outstanding, welcomed and encouraged.

There was great success for the **Third-Year cross country team** at the recent meet held in the College which saw 35 different schools compete. Blackrock won gold in the 3rd Year race with James Foot and Cameron Fallon also part of the victorious relay team.

We commiserate with Cormac Morris and his fellow **Sixth Year** members of the **Senior Basketball Team** whose wonderful run in the U19A Basketball Cup came to an end with a narrow 4 point defeat at the hands of All-Ireland Champions Malahide Community School. They also lost out to Coláiste Éanna 75-66 in the regional quarter final. To push the All-Ireland Champions at A so close in the cup, having previously beaten them in the league, is a huge achievement for the squad.

TY students offered their services to help our local Booterstown Branch of SVP to deliver their Christmas envelopes. Many hands make light work! From their efforts we hope there will be a great response to the SVP fundraising drive in our local neighbourhood.

TY were blessed with fantastic weather on the 1st of December, as over 160 students played Soccer in chilly but thankfully bright and dry conditions as part of the **TYs soccer marathon** the main TY fundraising event for the SVP. Mr Grant extended the day playing the semifinals on the 4G pitches under the lights for the first time, before heading into the Jubilee Hall. While the winners on the day were the talented 'Boarders and Friends' Team, everyone was a winner for being there and contributing to a memorable day.



Winning Team at the 2023 Soccer Marathon 'Boarders and Friends'

Message from the Deans....



On Mental Health Action Day we looked at 5 ways to wellbeing. The focus of the day was 'connect, it's good to talk'. 3rd Year members of the **Wellbeing Committee** were on hand to serve free hot chocolate to the Junior Years in the CADLC. A great initiative which proved very popular with the year group.

The fences arrived first, followed by the huts and then finally the trees! After a slow start unpacking and unpacking a seemingly endless supply trees, **TY students** are now working through the cold and rain happily helping customers load up and drive away with this year's magical tree, all the while contributing to the SVP.

The Castle Rugby squad responded excellently to a loss in their first league game to St.Gerard's SCT with two excellent wins v St.Mary's and Belvedere College. We wish Mr Mealiffe and the **Sixth Year Castle squad** well for the remainder of the campaign in the New Year.

We congratulate the large **Fifth Year** cast, band and crew members on a wonderful spectacle of such a toe-tapping musical, **Footloose**. Such brilliant talent, energy, enthusiasm, and passion on display echoed shortly after by the joyful **Carol service**. Both are a fabulous example of the commitment and drive of the Class of 2025, and we look forward to the Leman concert for a further showcasing of talent.

The **Second Year Gaelic Football** team had an exciting Dublin schools section C quarter final victory against Gaelcholáiste Reachrann, Donaghmede. Hugo Glynn controlled things in defence while Archie Quinn ensured our goal count remained high. We wish Mr. Grant and Pat's boys well in the semi-final.



Fifth Year Rugby 10s Winners – DeValera.

An incredible 165 **Sixth Year** students (plus Ms Crimmons and one very hungry Dean!) completed a **24-Hour Fast on behalf of the SVP Society** between Thursday 30th and Friday 1st December. A phenomenal total of €12,000 was raised! My thanks to the many parents who contributed a prize towards the raffle held for the students after the fast was completed. Between this, Christmas Jumpers and decorating the 6th year Christmas tree in the rec, the Christmas spirit was strong in the class of 2024!

Activities on the pitch and off the pitch, **TYs** are always there. Pastoral Placements, Gaisce Community Service, Tuck Shop, Modules and Evening Courses are all ongoing. If there is an event in the school, TY students are always on hand to help out and be of service; Science Week in Willow Park, 3rd Yr SVP fundraising Quiz, Beach cleaning, supporting Marathons, SOAR Mental Health Awareness Workshops, Soup Run, Past Pupils' Union Business Lunch, Christmas Jumper Sale, assisting with Dun Laoghaire Rotary Club Remembrance Trees, TY students can Be There for our community.



TY students attending the SAOR Workshop for Mental Health Awareness Day

Message from the Deans....



Celebrating Mental Health Awareness Day Dean of TY Dr Brunswick, Luc O h'Aonghusa and Oliver Pluincead



BCR Guests Liam Turner (Class of 2018), TY students Adam Kennedy, Dominic Clarkson and his brother Thomas Clarkson (Class of 2018)



TY students Mark Connolly, Darragh Eyre, BCR Guest Karl O,Neil , Darragh McCarthy and Lorcan Lawless



BCR Guest Senator Barry Ward and Harry O'Sullivan



Winners of Science Week TY Poster competition Alex Aschenbrenner (1st) and Callum Dee (3rd)



TY students Jack O'Connell, Hugh Barry and Rory Kilroy visiting Willow Park with their Art work



TY students Callum Dee and Dominic Clarkson helped count the monies raised from Jersey Day to donate 2000 euro to IMNDA



TY students Jack Tuite and John O'Callaghan serving refreshments at the Senior Musical



Welcoming former Irish International Gordon Darcy to the BCR Studio. Dean of TY, Dr. Brunswick, Jack Droney, Gordon Darcy, Hugh Barry, Gavin Patrick McGrath, Jack Tuite and Finn Hamilton.



TY students Bobby Carroll and Hugo Carroll practicing compression at First Aid evening course.



Stradbroke Super Six and Friends last trip before Christmas Leo Kearney, Max Stafford, Tom Keavney, Cian Murphy, Sam Long, Harry Weir, Cillian Murphy and Luke Coffee. (TY Students)



David Cullen, Gonzalo Gil, Daire Moran and Luke O'Connell (2nd Year) representing Ecuador.



The Second Year SVP Table Quiz in full swing.



Jack Gorman, Hugo Glynn, Gavin O'Brien, Morgan McGrail, and Dylan Costello (Second Year) representing the Swiss.



Hugo Sellors, James Sharkey, Clyde Corbantes, Adam O'Connor and Ryan Duffy of Team Uruguay at the Third Year SVP Quiz



Sam Kyrychenko, Cian O'Flannagáin, Sean Traynor, Daniel English and James McLoughlin of Team Ecuador at the Third Year SVP Quiz.



Paddy Shanahan, Sam Hickey, Hugo Cullen, Daniel McCarthy and John Donnelly of Team Japan at the Third Year SVP Quiz



3rd Years at the SVP Quiz



3rd Years at the SVP Quiz



Saint Vincent de Paul Third Year Quiz winners - Harry Rapley, Eoin Moore, Conor O'Neill, Binghong Wang and Ilya Ishchenko

Message from the Deans....



Ruairí Houlihan, James Forde, James Neary – Fifth Year Christmas Spirit



Sam Mooney and Jeremy Carroll – Fifth Year



Tom Bennett, Aaron Connolly, Ronan Ffrench – Fifth Year



Shane Hamilton, Leo Wright, Darra-gh O'Kane – Fifth Year



Toby Facer, Jamie Hudson and Charlie Clifton – Fifth Year



Daniel Spencer and Alex Parsons – Fifth Year



Rudy O'Reilly, Charlie Clifton, Max Rigney, Jack Buckley – Fifth Year SVP Cyclothon



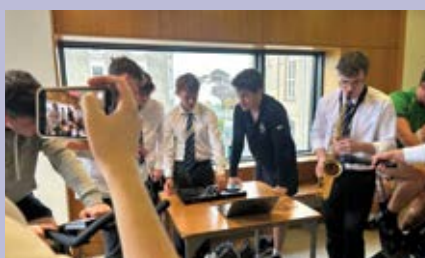
Edward Wilson and Rees Dowling with VIT-HIT reps sponsors of the Fifth Year SVP Cyclothon



Aryn Kelly – Fifth Year SVP Cyclothon



Seaan Carty and Jack Luff – Fifth Year SVP Cyclothon



Music at the Fifth Year SVP Cyclothon



Fifth Years TP Hogan and Ben Francis Crowley wearing Orange for Well-being.



Fifth Year House Captains at LIFT Roundtable



Fifth Years Ben McElligott, Leo Fowler, Jeremy Carrol ??????????



Fifth Year Cake Sale in aid of Mustard Seed Charity



Some very hungry 6th Years awaiting lunch at the end of the 24 hour fast!



Jack Sheridan, Oscar Mannion, Hugh Andrews, Dónal Robson and Patrick Hayden enjoying their lunch!



6th Years on 6th Year Christmas Jumper Day



6th Year House Captains decorating the 6th Year Christmas Tree



Our ever supportive College Chaplain Mr Madden supporting the students as they entered the 20th hour of their fast!

The **TY Family Mass** took place on December 2nd, celebrating as it always does, the start of Advent. We were delighted to welcome so many family members, siblings and grandparents to celebrate mass in the Chapel at a special time of year. Celebrant Fr. Brendan Carr reminding the TY students about the importance of this special year of growth for them as they transition into adulthood.

THE ART CLUB IN COLLABORATION WITH
THE BLACKROCK COLLEGE ARCHIVE
PRESENT

THEN AND NOW

INSPIRED BY MATERIAL FROM THE COLLEGE ARCHIVE MEMBERS OF THE ART CLUB RECENTLY CREATED A NUMBER OF ENERGETIC STUDIES IN CHALK AND INK.

A BOOK OF LITHOGRAPHS FROM 1870 THOUGHT TO HAVE BEEN USED AS AN INSTRUCTION AID IN DRAWING CLASS IN THE EARLY DAYS OF THE COLLEGE SPARKED GREAT INTEREST IN THE STUDENTS OF TODAY.

USING ARCHIVE MATERIAL AS A SOURCE FOR CREATIVE WORK CAN BE TRULY INSPIRATIONAL.



Leo Fowler (Fifth Year)



Grigori Karabov (Fifth Year) Art Club



Grigori Karabov (Fifth Year)
Art Club



From the College Archives



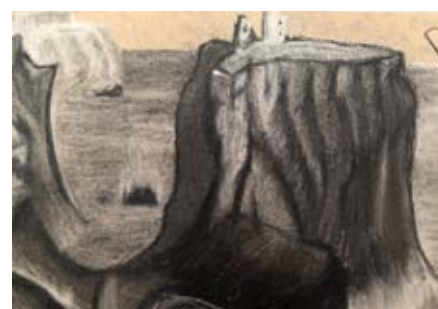
From the College Archives



From the College Archives



Fintan Ballard (Fifth Year)



Darren Stephens (Fifth Year)



Aryn Kelley (Fifth Year)



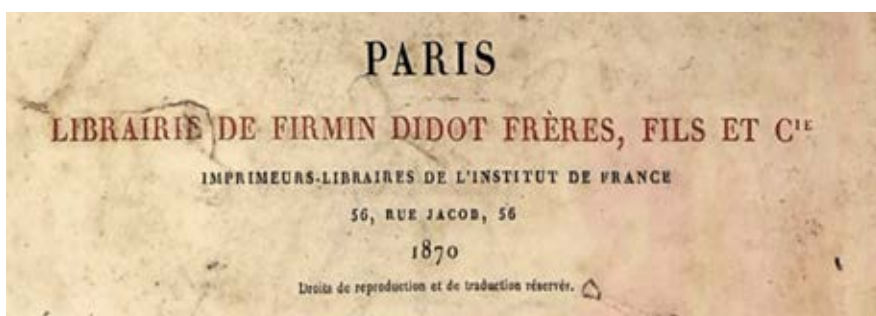
Alex Parsons ((Fifth Year)



Thomas Magee (Fifth Year)



Seamus Saul Rotne (Third Year)





BLACKROCK COLLEGE C.S.Sp. MUSIC & DRAMA

This year's production of 'Footloose', written by Dean Pitchford and Walter Robbie, was an incredible success! I played Willard Hewitt on the Wednesday and Friday nights and it was a tremendous experience.

From the very beginning of September there was a great buzz among the Senior Blackrock boys and Fifth Year Mount Anville girls to see what this year's production would be. Before long it was announced that the musical would be Footloose! With the audition process approaching fast there was gossip and predictions on roles and how the brilliance of Mr. Brian Savage (the director) would stage this one, following the impressive Sweeney Todd, last year's Senior Musical. By late September vocal auditions were complete and then we moved onto the fantastic Alan McGrath (the choreographer) to put us through our paces for the dance audition. With all that done roles were announced and we got cracking straight away on rehearsals with Mr. Killian Grumley Traynor, the musical director who 'trayned' our vocals and harmonies very well!

Suddenly, we were 3 weeks out! The crew worked tirelessly to construct and design the stage guided by Mr. Chris O' Sullivan. The excitement grew among the cast and lifelong friendships were being made through weekly Wednesday dance rehearsals with Alan. On the Sunday two weeks before the show the cast and band rehearsed for the first time together! This is known as the 'Sitzprobe' and this really helped everyone in the cast a) get even more excited! b) make sure we put on a super show for our paying audience and c) help us really appreciate every moment and be grateful for the opportunity we had been given to do this magnificent show! A memory will all never forget.

And then within no time, it was our tech run, where lights, sound and stage movements are honed to perfection. Then the final Sunday before opening night we ran our dress show. A time of nerves but pure exhilaration! We opened on Tuesday the 22nd of November to a packed Jubilee Hall, with Wednesday, Thursday and Friday all being sold out for the first time since before Covid-19!!! On Friday 24th November we had our closing night; it was sad but again a super time to be grateful as a cast and crew for this lifelong memory! We thank Mr. Brian Savage, Mr. Killian Grumley Traynor, Alan McGrath, Mr. Chris O'Sullivan, Ms. Aoife Ryan, Ms. Una O'Kane, Mr. Simon Orrock and Ms. Eimear McKenna for their fantastic support and endless work to make the show what it was for the audience on the night! Also, huge thanks to the Hayden and Neary families for kindly sponsoring the show.

As a group we now look forward to Leman Concert on the 22nd of January 2024, the One Act Play, the Junior Musical, and our Summer Concert in May. Plenty of more unforgettable experiences to be had by all!

Edward Wilson (Fifth Year)



The Choir at the Carol Service



Blackrock College
Creative Arts and Digital Learning Centre

Cuppa Club

Our first Cuppa club for 23/24 started off with 2nd and 3rd Years. Approximately 160 students came along. Cuppa club is organised by the Student Wellbeing committee. The idea of cuppa club is to encourage students to take time to sit down and chat. It's becoming a lovely tradition here and we look forward to the next one for TY and 5th Years. A big thank you to the students in the wellbeing and the library committees who helped out on the day.

CHRISTMAS LIBRARY NEWSLETTER

INTO CLIMATE CAFÉ, CHRISTMAS JUMPER PRE-SALE

The Arts....

'On The Outside' Author Event

Blackrock College were the proud hosts of a Great Reads Award author event. Approximately 150 Students from Blackrock College and various other schools attended. The event involved a live panel discussion with MC Chandrika Narayanan-Mohan and author Erik J Brown and featured authors Triona Campbell, Jenny Ireland and Clara Kumagai. The general theme of the discussion was about writing material in books about people who may feel a little 'on the outside'. The great reads awards is an initiative of the School Libraries Group of the Library Association of Ireland. Books are shortlisted by school librarians and voted for by students. For more information go to <https://greatreadsaward.com/>



International Men's Day Reading Promotion

To link in with our school values, students were encouraged to borrow a book that had a male character that could inspire positive values. The book could be anything from non-fiction to a graphic novel like *Spider Man*. Any students who reviewed the book via the library catalogue got a treat. This promotion is now extended for all books for the rest of the year. So, any student who borrows a book and submits a book review will get a treat. Students who wish to review a book can do so via the library catalogue which can be found on the website <https://library.blackrockcollege.com/>.



Rate this...

View review(s)

Create review

Reserve

Submit a Book Review

Find Time To Read

Most of us are probably aware of the importance of setting time aside for physical exercise each week be it by training, going for a run or a walk etc; but how many of us think of setting time aside to exercise the mind? Reading is a great way to do this, it can: improve focus, reduce stress, be relaxing and it is an ideal way to unwind after a busy day. Finding time is one of the major obstacles to reading. If you haven't started the habit of reading, then just start small by reading for 5 – 10 minutes a day, then add on 5 minutes each week. As James Clear in *Atomic* points out, tiny improvements over time can make a huge difference. Since Christmas can be the perfect time to re-ignite or start a new habit, the library committee created a poster to add a little encouragement to students to borrow a book for Christmas.



Mr D. O'Hegarty with his TY class in the CADLC where they borrowed books to read over Christmas.



Parent Recommended Book Corner

From this edition onwards, I am hoping to recommend books to parents, some will be what I have read, some will be from you the parents, others will be from staff. If you have a book to recommend, please scan the QR code below. Reading at home can set a good example and could encourage your boy(s) to pick up a book. To start things off, below are the list of my five favourite reads for this year so far.



1. **Leonard and Hungry Paul by Rónán Hession:** This is a wonderful, witty and poignant book about friendship and the ordinary lives of two unremarkable men.
2. **Work Song by Ivan Doig:** I read this book by chance while I was on a trip to Colorado in the summer. Set in a Copper Mining Town called Butte in 1919 it follows the story of Morrie Morgan. The New York Times noted an observation made by Morrie could just as easily be describing the novel. "It was distinctly old-fashioned, it was not particularly profound, but most of all, it was infectious."
3. **Before the Coffee Gets Cold by Toshikazu Kawaguchi:** A staff book club read, this is a beautiful

moving story about a small Japanese café that offers its visitors a chance to travel back in time.

4. **The Bee Sting by Paul Murray:** Shortlisted for the Man-Booker prize, a portrayal of an Irish family in crisis, it's funny, sad, sharp-witted and well worth the read
5. **My Father's House by Joseph O'Connor:** This is an intriguing fictional book that is based on the true story of Monsignor Hugh O'Flaherty who set up a choir to help rescue resistance fighters, PoWs and Jews from Nazi occupied Rome.

Recommended by Andrea Dillon, Librarian.

Book Bites 30 Second Interview With Mr Somerville, Irish And Maths Teacher

What book(s) are you reading right now?

Going through an existential crisis having just finished the *Bee Sting* by Paul Murphy. Have started into the *Priory of the Orange Tree* by Samantha Shannon.

What was your favourite book as a Teenager?

As a child, I loved *Harry Potter* (still do), the Darren Shan series of books and also *Lemony Snickett's Series of Unfortunate Events*. Even further back, I loved *Mr Frumble* by Richard Scarry.

Books or movies?

All things equal, I prefer the books but like switching off with a movie also.

What three books would you take with you on a desert island?

I would take *I Am Pilgrim* by Terry

Hayes, the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy (it's available as a single book!) and a book on Meditation.

When I say book what's the first word that comes into your head?

Cosy - on the couch, with a cup of tea and a fire.



Book
Bite
Book

PE Mindset Class

5th Year PE students picked a book or a podcast of someone who has been highly successful in any field such as sport or business and gave a presentation to the class on what they learned from the values these people adopted and how they can apply that in their everyday lives. The purpose was that students would learn the value of growth versus a fixed mindset.

Senior English Debating

It was another productive term for the Senior English Debating Society.

The annual Teacher vs Student Debate took place as part of Science Week on Thursday 16th November. This year's motion celebrated the rise of ChatGPT in the world of education. The teachers proposed the motion and were represented by Mr Orrock, Mr O'Sullivan and Mr Maher. Speaking on behalf of the students, who opposed, were Ishaan Pandey, Peter O'Connor (both 5th year) and Aran O'Flaherty (6th Year). Both sides presented engaging and insightful arguments, but it was the teachers who emerged triumphant in the end, with Ishaan Pandey awarded the prize for Best Speaker. Many thanks to Ms Wyse for help in organising the event and to Ms Kelleher and Ms Shevlin for adjudicating. A word of appreciation, too, goes to Pearse Woods our Debating Coach, who

ably chaired the debate, and to Darragh O'Neill (5th Year) for timekeeping.

The National Senior Competition took place in UCD on Saturday 25th November. Well done to Jamie Browne Lynch, Josh Murphy (both 4th Year), Ishaan Pandey and Darragh O'Neill (both 5th Year) who took part in the competition. All students represented the College very well, with Ishaan and Darragh being awarded 2nd and 3rd Best Speakers respectively. We have also run several practice debates as part of our weekly meetings, which have been enjoyed by all. Many thanks to our student coaches, Pearse Woods and Michael White for their help in facilitating these.

As we draw towards the end of term, we thank our Senior Debaters for their work and commitment this term. We look forward to starting again with gusto in January, which will see the return of the much-anticipated Past vs Present Debate.



Junior Debating

Rounds 1 and 2 of the Junior Schools Debating Competition, hosted by the UCD Law Society and the UCD Literary and Historical Society, took place in UCD in October and November.

Blackrock College have five teams competing in this competition:

- Rock A: Thomas Murray & Daniel Burns (both 3rd Year)
- Rock B: Simon Quinn & Tate Tomkin Beddy (both 2nd Year)
- Rock C: Dan Hayden & Daniel Goss (both 2nd Year)
- Rock D: Ross Murphy & Paddy English (both 2nd Year)
- Rock E: Calum Burke & Marc Hooper (both in 3rd Year)

In other news, Blackrock College had three teams compete in the Junior Debating MACE in Loreto on The Green in November:

Round 1: This House Would require all schools to be mixed gender.

Round 2: (IR round) This House Would cut all ties with the US if Donald Trump was elected again.

Round 3:

This House Requires all political parties to have a 50/50 gender split for election candidates.

We congratulate the following 2nd and 3rd Year students for stepping up and representing Blackrock College:

Rock A: Daniel Goss (2nd Year) & Marc Hooper (3rd Year)

Team B: Tate Tomkin Beddy & Simon Quinn (both 2nd Year)

Team C: James Kelly & Arlo Liddy (both 2nd Year)

Our next MACE debate is in Belvedere College in January, 2024. We also have a friendly debate in January with Holy Child Killiney.



Irish Debating

This term, we were delighted to host the first round of the Gael Linn *Comórtas an Phiarsaigh* competition. We welcomed junior and senior students from St Michael's College, Our Lady's Grove, and Muckross Park College to compete in this annual Irish language debating competition.

Conor McCarron, Peter O'Connor (both 5th Year) and Eoin Healy (6th Year) spoke on behalf of the Seniors. They proposed the motion that, 'Parents should have Control of their Childrens' Social Media while they are Under 18'. The boys put a lot of preparation into their debate, and spoke very well, but the competition was very stiff and unfortunately, they did not get through to the next round. Despite this, all enjoyed the experience of taking part and will make use of the skills they have developed in their Irish classes.

Congratulations to our Junior Team, comprised of Calum Burke, Cian Ó Flannagáin, Seán Mullane and John Healy (all 3rd Year), who were successful in opposing the motion that, 'Reality TV is Nonsense'. They will go through to the next round of the competition which will take place after the Christmas break.



Eoin Healy (6th Year), Conor McCarron and Peter O'Connor (both 5th Year)



Cian Ó Flannagáin, Seán Mullane, Calum Burke and John Healy (all 3rd Year)

Past Parents' Carol Service.....



The annual Past Parents' Carol Service, organised by the Past Parents' Association (PPA), took place in the College Chapel on Sunday 10th December. More than 80 members of the PPA attended the event, which has become a tradition in the December calendar for many past parents.

The Adult Choir, led by Killian Grumley-Trainor, ran through a festive set with plenty of Christmas favourites to please the congregation. Fr Cormac O'Brolchain CSSp delivered a Christmas message at the end of the service, which was followed by a mulled wine and mince pies reception in the Lecture Hall.



Green Schools' Newsletter

Throughout the first term, the Green Schools' committee has worked hard in sharing knowledge through our Climate Café's. A Climate Café is held every month where we present topics that are relevant to student life and the goals we have for the upcoming school year. We invite students in to the CADLC to listen to a short presentation by the committee and offer a free takeaway hot chocolate in students' own keep cups. We held our second Climate Café on Thursday 30th of November. In this Climate Café we wanted to highlight our next flag 'Global Citizenship Energy' and ask students how they can help us in working towards this. Again, we had an extremely successful turnout and look forward to continuing them into next year.



Edward Wilson (Fifth Year), Leo Fowler (Fifth Year) and Cian O' Flannagáin (Third Year) presenting at our Climate Café

We also partnered with the Global Citizenship committee to encourage students to think twice about throwing out old clothes and live a more sustainable life by holding a 'Christmas Jumper Swap Shop' where students could bring in old or small Christmas jumpers and pay 3 euro to trade them with jumpers brought in by other students. All money raised was donated to Focus Ireland. The 'Christmas Jumper Swap Shop' was a great success. We hope to keep up our partnership with the Global Citizenship committee to host events like this again in the new year!



This academic year social media has played a pivotal role in keeping in line with our 'Triple A Approach'. We help to spread awareness through our new Instagram account (@brc_greenschools) to our over 110 followers through posts and stories. We would strongly encourage anybody interested in the environment and who have an interest in our work as a committee to give us a follow! It is coordinated and ran by the Patrick Cody (Fifth Year) and John Ding (Third Year). Their work so far this year has been greatly appreciated!

Global Citizenship....

The Media Corner

This term we have undertaken an exciting project, our new media corner. Students are working on a series of long and short reads which will be found on our website in the new year.



John Ding, Callum Burke, John McCallig, Daniel Burns, Mr. Maher and Richard Boyd Barret at Leinster House.



John McCallig, Daniel Burns, Jennifer Carroll MacNeill, Callum Burke and John Ding.

The Media Corner *(continued)*

3rd Year students John McCallig and Daniel Burns have had the opportunity to visit Leinster House this term to interview TD's on their long read, 'The Two Tiered Refugee System in Ireland'. They met with Richard Boyd Barrett (People Before Profit), Ossian Smyth (Green Party) and Jennifer Carrol MacNeill (Fine Gael), all of whom provided great insight into the system and government policies. Students also interviewed Cormac Devlin (Fianna Fail), Amnesty and Masi for the same long read

Website link:

[Blackrock College GCC \(black-rock-college-gcc.com\)](https://black-rock-college-gcc.com)

Instagram link: blackrock_gcc_2k21



Ms. McGuire, Callum Burke, John Ding, Richard Boyd Barrett, Daniel Burns, John McCallig and Ms. Byrne.



Ossian Smyth, Callum Burke, Daniel Burns, John Ding and John McCallig.

Wellbeing....



The Blackrock Student Wellbeing Committee has had a very sociable first term of the 2023/24 Academic Year. We are building a new relationship with the Open Minds Group in Temple Carrig Greystones and further strengthening our relationship with Sion Hill's Mind Body and Soul Committee. We have had some initial, very welcome, meetings and have more planned.

One of our aims for the current academic year is to continue raising awareness of the Committee and to further our student's understanding of Mental Health and overall Wellbeing.

Since Mid-term we have organised a very successful Mental Health Awareness Day where our focus was on the Five Ways to Wellbeing and we encouraged everyone to connect and have a chat. 6th Years were treated to their morning break of

sausage rolls and tea or coffee, while junior years were invited to our first Cuppa Club of the year. We invited everyone to wear an orange item for the day and there were various activities in each year group. We all enjoyed some mindful colouring and the morning meditation was a very positive way to start the day.

We are now looking forward to Wellbeing Week and we have begun planning for it. We are also looking at Senior Cuppa Club (5th and 6th Years), following the success of the Junior Cuppa Club. Remember the *Wellbeing Anonymous Tool* is always there for you – on your Year Teams and in the links section of EduLink.

Enjoy your Christmas. Safe travels and see you all next term. We meet every week at lunchtime on Tuesday upstairs in the CADLC. Everyone is welcome.

The Blackrock Student Wellbeing Committee.



This year, Science Week, ran from Monday 13th of November until Friday the 17th. Along St. Patrick's Corridor there was a display of posters including STEM careers, 'SciFlix' (Science documentaries and movies which are available on Netflix), Science Fun Facts and Nobel Prize winners. A new addition to St. Patrick's Corridor this year was 'Chemistry Fun Facts' which replaced Chemistry of Covid. We had a display of 'Women in Science' in the CADLC. There were also poster of celebrities, sports stars and actors stating their Science Degree and where they graduated from. These were displayed on the Senior Science and Junior Science corridors. The top ten 'Ologies' was displayed on the Senior Science corridor. Along Junior Science corridor we also displayed 'Career in Chemistry' posters, made by TY Chemistry.

We photographed each event and a schedule for the week was put up on the TV screens on Monday to generate lots of buzz for Science Week. The boys were very responsive and enthusiastic throughout the week.



First Place: Alex Aschmbrenner: 'Ornithology'

All 4th Year biology students picked an area of biology which interested them and did a research project on that topic. The top posters were selected by their teachers and displayed outside the senior science labs. The winners were picked by Ms Jennifer Groves:



Second Place: David Healy: 'Marine Biology'



Third Place: Callum Dee: 'Evolution'

Jungle Dave

On Tuesday 14th, Dave's Jungle visited the school with a menagerie of animals in tow. He delighted our students with pythons, tarantulas, scorpions to name a few. Dave highlighted the unique adaptive features the animals displayed to make them so successful in the wild. The students got up close to the animals bringing biology alive in the classroom. It is both an engaging and educational experience for the boys – and we have booked this event again for Science Week 2024.



Science Debate

On Thursday 16th we hosted the *Teachers' Science Quiz* in the staff room. This was particularly useful to encourage younger staff members to speak out and compete and served as a lively social event for all teachers.

On Thursday 17th the Science Department were invited to be part of the Teacher V's Student debate. The motion was '*The house celebrates the rise of chat GPT in the world of education*' which the teachers proposed and the students defended. The teacher team comprised Simon Orrock, Cathal Maher and William O'Sullivan. The students were Ishaan Pandey, Aaron O'Flaherty and Peter O'Connor. While the teachers argued that chat GPT was not perfect they made the point that there is a place for it in education acting as a springboard for students' imaginations and that with guidance it could prove a very useful tool. The students argued that this technology could replace teacher and that the soft skills learnt in the classroom could become a thing of the past. The judges voted in favour of the teachers with the best speaker being announced as Ishaan Pandey.

Thank you to Mr S. Orrock for organising this very exciting debate, to Ms S. Shevlin and Ms C. Kelleher for adjudicating, to Pearse Woods for chairing the debate and to Darragh O' Neill (Fifth Year) for timekeeping.



Student Debate Team: Peter O' Connor, Ishaan Pandey and Aran O' Flaherty



Teacher Debate Team: Cathal Maher, William O'Sullivan and Simon Orrock

ISTA Science Quiz

Two teams took part in the Dublin regional round of the *ISTA Science Quiz* on November 16th in TBSI. There was a total of forty-nine teams taking part in Dublin. The internal Senior Science Quiz to pick the teams took place back in October. Team A: Sam Grennell, Philip Guinan and Simon Considine Team B: William Quinlan, Robert MacHale and Diarmaid Byrne. In total, 320 teams were competing in the regionals in various venues around the country. There were 8 rounds of 6 questions taken from across the Leaving Certificate Science course and some general knowledge. Our B team finished in a very respectful 11th place while our A team scored an impressive 40 out of 48 and took home the first-place trophy.

Team A took part in the national *ISTA Science Quiz* on December 2nd. There was a total of forty-one schools taking part in the final. In TSBI. Overall we placed joint 4th with a score of 38 points. The winners were Colaiste Murie Máthair from Galway with 40 points. This was an extremely tight final but an incredible achievement to have score so high. Congratulations to Sam, Philip and Simon.



Sam Grennell, Simon Considine and Philip Guinan



Sam Grennell, Simon Considine and Philip Guinan

Professor Farrar Visit

On Friday 17th November, the 6th Year biology students were lucky enough to have a visit from Professor Jane Farrar. Professor Farrar is the Head of School of Genetics and Microbiology at Trinity Institute of Neuroscience in Trinity College Dublin. Her work investigates the DNA of people affected by inherited Retinal disease and tries to find the genetic cause for their condition and the development of gene based medicines to treat such conditions. Professor Farrar held the students captivated for an hour and really brought the world of genetics alive for them.



Professor Farrar (Head of School of Genetics and Microbiology at Trinity Institute of Neuroscience in Trinity College Dublin)



3rd Year Science Quiz

On Friday we hosted our 3rd Year Science Quiz during period 5 and period 6. With teams of 4 and 5 it was an exciting afternoon with students working together and delving deep into their scientific knowledge.

There was a wonderful atmosphere amongst the students. It was great to see their enthusiasm and competitiveness. Congratulations to T: Oliver Tuthill, Evan Vajda, Cameron Hickey, Marc Hooper and Cillian Hall who placed first from our period 5 quiz and Donnacha Murray, Sam McCann, Sam Hickey and Daniel Noonan who placed first from our period 6 quiz.



Cillian Hall, Oliver Tuthill, Evan Vajda, Cameron Hickey and Marc Hooper (Third Year)

Photographic Competition



First place: Sam Lynch with his amazing photo of the Aurora Borealis

All students and staff were invited to enter this year's science photography competition. The theme this year was 'Science All Around Us'. We had a fantastic response with over 160 entries. Congratulations to the following students.



Second place: Andrew Clancy with his photo of the goat herd grazing Dalkey Island.

Chemistry Magic Show'

On Thursday 16th and Friday 16th, 5th Year Chemistry students preformed a 'Chemistry Magic Show' for 2nd Year students. Well done to the Transition-Year chemistry students who created such a fun, exciting learning environment for the 2nd Years. Some of the demonstrations shown were: imploding soda cans, a cold lava lamp, methane bubbles and a lycopodium bomb. Thank you to 4th Year Chemistry students Owen Flowers, Anton Lindner, Pearce Doorly-McErlean, Josh Murphy, Conall Byrne, and Bobby Carroll performed the show for all 9 classes in the Senior Science lab.



TY Students demonstrating the lycopodium bomb

Kahoot Science Quiz

On Friday 17th Andrea Dillon held a very exciting science Kahoot quiz in the DLC at lunchtime. These questions were based on the science displays that were up around the school this week. The winners were all from Third Year. First place went to Sean Mullane (Third Second place was Connor Byrne and Third was Sam McCann.



Science Use Play-doh to build a scale model of the solar system

Science Club

Step into the magical world of our Science Club where innovation meets holiday cheer! Over the past few weeks, our club has been on an exhilarating journey exploring the incredible universe of LEGO robots and catapult creation. We've engineered some sensational catapults and crafted whimsical Christmas balloon characters, racing them with absolute glee!

But that's not all! We've embraced the festive spirit by using the enchanting techniques of chromatography to create vibrant and unique Christmas cards that truly sparkle! Although not all our brilliant participants are pictured, the remarkable contributions of James O'Brien, Daniel Burns, Calum Burke, Sam Kyrychenko, all Third Year, and Daniel Goss, Second Year, have made this term in Science Club truly extraordinary!

As we approach the holiday season, the Science Club wishes everyone a Merry Christmas! Join us for an adventure filled with scientific wonders.



Sam Kyrychenko, Sean Mullane and Daniel Goss - Christmas Balloon Race



Sean Mullane with his Chromatography Christmas Cards



LEGO robots and catapult creation 1

RockEd '23 was a night of terrific entertainment! Master of Ceremonies, *Aran O'Flaherty* (6th Year) held court as *Patrick Hayden* (6th Year), *Senan McCloskey* (6th Year), *Ishaan Pandey* (5th Year), *Peter O'Connor* (5th Year), *Zack Egan Ruane* (5th Year), and *Calum Burke* (3rd Year) wowed the audience with talks on a wide range of topics such as *Murder Mystery Novels*, *the Art of Lying* – and everything in between!

Former pupil and current *wearehumancollective* founder, *Conor Buckley* (class of 2000) fascinated as a guest speaker – delivering a message of diversity and compassion in an ever polarised world.

Of course – no show would be complete without a

formidable production team: *Diarmaid Byrne* (6th Year), *Ben McElligott* (5th Year), *Connor Grennan* (5th Year), *Matthew Leamy* (3rd Year), *Dan Hayden* (2nd Year), *Ross Murphy* (2nd Year), and *Tate Tomkin Beddy* (2nd Year) ensured the staging, recording and audience experience was nothing short of exceptional.



A big thank you to the College Maintenance Department who facilitated, once again, a very special event on the school calendar!

For videos of all speaker scan the QR code



Patrick Hayden



Senan McCloskey



Ishaan Pandey



MC Aran O'Flaherty and guest speaker Conor Buckley



Peter O'Connor



Zack Egan-Ruane



Calum Burke

Pastoral Programme

Blackrock is a busy place – a community of faith that never sleeps – a school fortunate to have students that, in the words of Fr Cormac O'Brolcháin CSSp, **R**each **O**ut with **C**aring and **K**indness – R.O.C.K. It has been a busy half term between Halloween and Christmas with many liturgical events as highlights, the 3rd Year Family Mass and Transition Year Family Mass being celebrated in our College Chapel along with Eucharistic Adoration on a number of occasions.



Louis Magee and his family at the TY Family Mass



Evan Hanley and his Mother at the TY Family Mass



Geoffrey Wall and Family at the TY Family Mass



Rian O'Connell and Family at the TY Family Mass



Hugo Carroll and his family at the TY Family Mass



Harry Forde and Hugo Cullen at the Third Year Family Mass

Remembrance

On the last Wednesday of November we gathered together to remember all that have died in the past year. For us in the College we remember Fr Paddy Dundon CSSp who died last month after a long illness. We believe that Fr Paddy is gone to his eternal reward to where he referred to as his "everlasting home" – it is our belief that he has risen to share in His Eternal Glory. To his family and his Spiritan Confreres we extend our sympathy. Fr Paddy was special, he was everyone's friend in the College – a sacramental presence which we were all fortunate to encounter – Fr Paddy's work is now done; may he rest in peace – he deserves a rich reward.

And of course, as we journey through Advent towards Christmas, many preparations are underway especially for those less fortunate than ourselves. The boys are just fantastic – so much fundraising for the College's St Vincent de Paul Conference, from 2nd Year & 3rd Year Table Quizzes, to a Transition Year Soccer Marathon, 5th Year Cyclathon, 6th Year 24-hour Fast, Mince Pie mornings to Christmas Trees – just some examples of **Reaching Out** with **Caring** and **Kindness** – R.O.C.K.

And while much is happening within the College with a Whole School Carol Service, Past Parents' Carol Service, Boarders' Carol Service and Staff Eucharist, much also happens outside the College. Matthew 25, a Pastoral Placement Programme for Transition Year Boys that take part in 2-week off campus placement. Feedback from the centres really summarises it all...



Daniel Flannery, Luke McDermott and Alex James singing 'Oh Holy Night' at the Carol Service.

"Thank you for all of the TY student placements sent to us during this term - we have really enjoyed having the students in the Centre. Without exception, all the students have been exemplary - they are a credit to Blackrock College and to their parents. They engaged with every task assigned to them and contributed greatly to the general upkeep and high standard that the Centre strives to maintain. They were popular amongst the staff team and clients alike, and they were an absolute pleasure to work with."

A local community facility.

"Well, yet again, it has been a pleasure to have boys with us over the past two weeks. They are great young lads and I observed lovely interactions with our students and also great enthusiasm to get involved in different activities."

Special Needs School

"I just wanted to email to say how brilliant this student was for the two weeks he was here. He was incredibly friendly to all the staff and so patient with the members of the Day Care Club. I don't think we could sing his praises enough! A shining representative for your school and his family."

Dementia Care Unit.

Blackrock is indeed a busy place... a place where we R.O.C.K, a place where we all grow in faith.

Dungeons and Dragons Club



The Blackrock Dungeons and Dragons club has seen great excitement this term – much playing and practice has paid off for new DMs John Ding (Third Year) and Sam McCann (Third Year), who have made the graduation from player to Dungeon Master, running their own solo adventures for the first time! John's game features a classic high fantasy style adventure, with monsters and discovery galore, while Sam has chosen to explore a thriller style game, which pits players against each other to try and determine trust and betrayal in close quarter enemy combat. Meanwhile first time DM Robert McKimm (Second Year) has also launched off his first game – a mostly improvisational style game that allows for quick drop-in sessions to accommodate players both new and old.

Before Hallowe'en, the club had a fantastic day with the visiting Loreto on the Green Dungeons and Dragons Club, getting more than 5 tables running. The boys stepped up to the standard the girls set on their last visit, and entertained with thrills and DM skills to provide a fun-filled afternoon for all players. Another blitz will hopefully be organised soon between the schools to help develop the budding relationship of table-top role playing games in schools that are steadily growing in popularity on the back of pop culture icons like Stranger Things and Critical Role!



Mark Ahearne (Transition Year), Fionn Whelan (Fifth Year), Sebastian MacManus (Transition Year), Henry Browne (Fifth Year), and Theo Galligan ((Transition Year) preparing character sheets and dice for all players



Sam McCann (Third Year) hosting BingHong Wang (Third Year), Calum Burke (Third Year), Sebastian MacManus (Transition Year) and Theo Galligan (Transition Year)



Dice rolling with DM Daniel Goss (Second Year)



All tables rolling!



Dungeons and Dragons Blitz Loreto on the Green and Blackrock College

Snapshot of TY Soccer Marathon in aid of St Vincent de Paul





Jack McKinney (Fifth Year) Blackrock Senior Soccer v St Benildus



Harry Weir (TY) Blackrock Senior Soccer v St Benildus



House 4ths v Castleknock



Tom Curtin (Fifth Year) 4ths v Castleknock



Blackrock V St Michael's Noel Turley Cup



TY Students Oscar Samsoen, Max Sheridan, Don Banks, Conall Byrne, Jack Mulsow and Tom Cunningham selling the Christmas Trees for SVP



Max Sheridan and Tom Cunningham assisting a customer at the Christmas Trees in aid of SVP



Blackrock V St Michael's Noel Turley Cup



James Kearns and his father at the TY Family Mass



Charlie O'Connor and his Parents at the TY Family Mass



Ted Taylor with his parents at the TY family Mass



Blackrock V St Michael's Noel Turley Cup



Conall Byrne and Family at the TY Family Mass.



The Choir at the Christmas Carol Service .



Harry Pierce (Sixth Year) reading at the Christmas Carol Service



The Choir at the Christmas Carol Service



Mr J. Kelly and Mr R Kearney at the Christmas Carol Service



Mr Killian Grumley Traynor at the Christmas Carol Service



A few moments of Silent Reflection at the Christmas Carol Service led by Father Cormac O' Brolchain



The Choir at the Christmas Carol Service



Ms Y Markey (Principal) and Fr Cormac O' Brolchain at the Christmas Carol Service



Patrick Hayden and Senan McCloskey at the Christmas Carol Service



Second Round of Fifth Year Career Talks



Second Round of Fifth Year Career Talks'



Hugh Murphy (TY) packaging the Christmas Trees in aid of SVP



Oisín Daly and David Healy at the Christmas Trees in aid of SVP



Johnny O'Donoghue with his father and grandfather at the TY Family Mass



Tom Curtin, Andrew McCarthy, Rudy O'Reilly H3rds v Wallace High School's 1st 15



Luke Fitzpatrick (Fifth Year) H3rds v Wallace High School's 1st 15



Mark O'Meara with his family at the Third Year Family Mass



Adam O'Connor with his parents at the Third Year Family Mass



Daniel Rogan and his father Alan Rogan at the Third Year Family Mass



Tom Dunne with his family at the Third Year Family Mass



Peter Byrne with his Dad and Grandmother at the Third Year Family Mass



Christian Murphy with his Godmother, Ruth Barry, at the Third Year Family Mass



H3rds v Wallace High School's 1st 15



Joseph Norris with his family at the Third Year Family Mass

Footloose





Message from the Director of Boarding

As we approach the joyous holiday season, it's with great pleasure that we share the remarkable achievements and heartwarming activities that have unfolded within the Castle community. The spirit of dedication, camaraderie, and charitable efforts have shone brightly among our boys during this festive season.

Congratulations to our 1st-Year students for successfully completing their first set of Christmas exams! Their hard work and commitment have truly paid off, setting a positive tone for the rest of the academic year. Meanwhile, our 2nd to 6th-Year students are diligently preparing for their exams, showcasing resilience and determination.

Our Fourth Year students have gone above and beyond by actively participating in charitable activities. They have been instrumental in the Soup Run, the Soccer marathon, SVP Christmas Trees and the Matthew 25 program, demonstrating a strong commitment to making a positive impact on the lives of others. Not to be left out the 5th Year boarders did their part for charity by raising funds through their cyclathon efforts and the Class of 2024 broke records when 165 boys took part in the 24 hour fast for SVP.

The Boarders' program on Blackrock College Radio was a resounding success, providing an avenue for creativity and self-expression. Additionally, our Boarders showcased their athletic prowess by emerging victorious in the football marathon, highlighting teamwork and sportsmanship.

On December 6th, the Castle community came together to celebrate Christmas with a festive dinner. The joy of the season was palpable as students and staff shared laughter, delicious food, and the warmth of companionship. The Secret Santa exchange across the year group further fostered a sense of unity and goodwill.

As we reflect on these achievements and festive moments, let's continue to support and uplift one another in the true spirit of the season. Wishing everyone a joyful holiday and a well-deserved break.

Warm regards, Mr. Tiernan Mealiffe



(5th Year Castle Boarders enjoying their Christmas dinner)



(6th Year Castle Boarders enjoying their Christmas dinner)



(1st Year Castle Boarders)



(2nd Year Castle Boarders)



(3rd Year Castle Boarders)



(4th Year Castle Boarders)



(5th Year Castle Boarders)



(6th Year Castle Boarders)



(1st and 2nd Year Castle Boarders enjoying their Christmas dinner)



(3rd Year Castle Boarders enjoying their Christmas dinner)



(4th Year Castle Boarders enjoying their Christmas dinner)

Badminton

Badminton training sessions have been progressing exceptionally well. The boys have shown great enthusiasm during their training sessions and continue to improve their skills.

It has been an incredibly busy term as we managed to complete all 35 group games against other strong Dublin Schools within a few weeks. The dedication and commitment shown by our players and coaches have been exceptional. Completing this significant number of group games in such a short span of time underscores the passion and dedication our students have for badminton. As we reflect on this term's achievements, we eagerly anticipate the overall results and look forward to potential qualifications for the upcoming semi-finals in January. Thank you to our coaches Michael Parran, Robert Byrne, Mr E O'Brien and Ms C Robinson for their help during this term.



U16 Seif Bari (Transition Year)



U16 B Martin Penamaria Cancelo (Transition Year), Scott Zhu (Third Year), Alonso Lopez Reina (Transition Year)



U16 A Left to Right: Adrian Ho (Third Year) Mark Connolly (Transition Year), Jack Casey (Transition Year) and Aidan Ho (Third Year)



U19 Isaac Moss (Fifth Year) Sergii Ishchenko (Fifth Year) Davide Canettoli (Transition Year) and Matthew Leahy (Fifth)



U19 Sergii Ishchenko, Matthew Leahy, Dominic Kilbride, Isaac Moss (All Fifth Year) and Michael Paran (Coach)



U19 Sergii Ishchenko (Fifth Year) and his double partner Matthew Leahy (Fifth Year)



U16 Double Pairing Scott Zhu (Third Year) and Alonso Lopez Reina (Transition Year)

Junior Basketball

The U16 Basketball Team have been focusing the past few weeks on developing skills and match play in training. Despite having a tough run in the highly competitive A-League, the team came back each match improving each time to close the gap in score. The squad grew together as a team over the term and displayed great dedication and determination. Captain Peter Lee (3rd Year) and Vice-Captain Clyde Corbantes (3rd Year) led the team well in spite of challenging opponents. The U-16 team have been a great group of players to train and to see improve from second year. They can look forward to more games in the new year.

Senior Basketball

Blackrock's Senior Basketball Team have enjoyed a fantastic season this year. Though we are disappointed to have been knocked out of both the National Cup and League at the Quarter-Final stage, captain Cormac Morris (Sixth Year) and his squad have developed massively over the course of the season. Close losses to both Malahide CS (40-36) and Coláiste Éanna (75-66) were the final results of the season. They will continue to train over the course of the year, looking forward to the Past vs Present Game in 2024.



Callum Downes (4th Year)

Chess

Chess club has been busying practicing and organising for our chess tournament in the New Year that we will hold in Blackrock College. We are planning to hold a tournament with eight schools with a maximum of two teams of four. We hope to invite local schools from the area. A big thank you to our coach Hector for helping us with this. We are looking forward to competing in the New Year.

Chess club is every Tuesday and Thursday 4-5pm in JS2. New members always welcome



Cross Country

Approximately 1100 students from 35 different schools entered the Blackrock Cross-Country Relay races in 2023. The event was well attended despite having been postponed from October 25th to November 8th due to bad weather and surface conditions.

The Intermediate Cross-Country team took home gold in the Blackrock Cross Country relays. The relay team ran in the order of James Foot (3rd Year), Cameron Fallon (3rd Year), Callum Downes (4th Year), and Charlie White (4th Year). James opened up a 30m lead over the first 1000m leg which never looked like closing. Cameron and Callum maintained this lead in their 500m legs of the race. Finally, Charlie White brought home the gold on the last 1000m leg, finishing over 50m ahead of 2nd place. The Minor team in Willow Park also brought home gold.

Schools from outside the East Leinster region participated too, providing students with an opportunity to face competition that they would not normally face unless they were in a Leinster Final. In the gold medal tally for the day, St.Peters's, Dunboyne came away from the event with 3 gold medals and Blackrock College won two gold medals. Mount Anville, St. Mary's Arklow, and St. Aidan's CBS all brought home one gold medal each.



James Foot (Third Year)



Charlie White (4th Year)



Charlie White (4th Year)

Blackrock College Rowing Club

A large number of dedicated and committed rowers continue to train, despite the cold weather conditions at times, each weekend on the River Liffey. This is in preparation for the upcoming Regatta season, which will begin in Spring 2024.



JJ Finlay, Fifth Year



Jack Buckley (Fifth Year), Matthew Neary (Fifth Year), Lorenzo Elias (Fourth Year) and Louis Kelly (Fifth Year)



Harry Pierce, Sixth Year



J15/J16 Crew on the River Liffey

JCT Rugby

The Junior Squad continues to gather steam ahead of the Cup Campaign. The Juniors have had fine wins over Clongowes and St. Mary's. Patrick Agnew (3rd Year) was elected Captain of the JCT with Paddy Scally (3rd Year) Vice-Captain. The countdown to the 1st round of the Cup Campaign has commenced and further matches against Castleknock, Pres Cork, CBC Cork and Methody will take place prior to the cup fixture. A strenuous two months await the squad with preparations on-going throughout the Christmas break.

SCT Rugby

As we move towards the Cup Draw and Christmas break, the senior team have played only two matches in the month of November. A tight defeat to St Michael's in the Noel Turley Trophy match in the Belfield Bowl, was followed up with a strong victory against our travelling guests from Bristol, Clifton College. At the same time, the seconds had two excellent wins against the same opposition. It has been particularly impressive to see players step up from the Seconds to replace injured players ahead of them and do so well. Likewise, the House squad have been a constant support to the senior squad with players moving up for training and playing time, alike.

Before we break at the end of a long term, the senior team still have three tough 'local' fixtures to end this month - St Mary's, Belvedere and Clongowes. We wish newly appointed captain, Jack Angulo, the other members of the leadership team - Charlie Molony, Derry Moloney, Mark Walsh (all Sixth Year) - and the entire squad the best of luck in those matches and with their ongoing preparation for the Cup ahead.



Mark Walsh (6th Year)



Blackrock V St Michael's Noel Turley Cup

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

The Irish Indoor Rowing Championships will take place on 20th January 2024 in University of Limerick Sports Arena. A flock of rowers will gather to test themselves against the machines.

School Rugby

The U14 rugby squads have shown very good commitment throughout the season. There has been visible improvement to their fitness, skill levels and tactical awareness of the game. They have had strong performances and wins against St Michaels, Clongowes and Belvedere. We look forward to watching them continually progress on their rugby journey.

The Junior Thirds, Fourth's and Fifth's have had a very good season to date. The Junior Thirds began their league in late November with a strong win away in Clongowes. The Junior Fourth's and Fifth's have recorded good wins against, Clongowes, St Mary's and Drimnagh Castle.

The House squad have had a good season to date. The House Thirds performed very well against Wallace High School's 1st XV. Coming from behind, they managed to draw the game. The House 4ths have had good performances and wins against Clongowes and St Michaels and are improving each week.

The Colts and the House Fifth's continue to grow from strength to strength each week. We commend all boys involved for their commitment and dedication. These teams are very important to our school, and we hope to see them continue to prosper this year.

The Castle have had a good start to their league campaign. They lost their first match of the campaign to St Gerrards but recently have claimed the points against, Pres Bray, St Marys and Belvedere. We look forward to watching them in the remainder of their fixtures post-Christmas.



Rudy O' Reilly (Fifth Year) House 4ths versus Castleknock



Mr J. Donnelly and Mr B. Manion, 4ths versus Castleknock



Ruairi Houlihan (House 3rds V Wallace High School 's 1st 15



House 3rds V Wallace High School 's 1st 15

Soccer

The senior soccer team have had a very strong start to competitive action this term. Three wins from three (2-0 V. Templeogue College, 3-2 V. Marian College, 4-2 V. St. Benildus) saw the team qualify top of their group to a home semi-final after Christmas. All the more impressive is that the same starting 11 did not play in each league game – showing the strength in depth the squad has.

In the FAIS Leinster Cup, the squad have qualified to the last 16 of the competition. Recently an impressive 7-2 win against St. Marys CBS, Portlaoise, gained qualification to face Terenure College.



Daniel Cheung (Sixth Year) Captain Blackrock Senior Soccer Team V St Benildus



Patrick Collins (Sixth Year) Blackrock Senior Soccer Team V St Benildus

2nd Year Gaelic Football Dublin Schools' Quarter Final

Blackrock College... 12-6 Gaelcholaiste Reachrann 6-2

Congratulations to the Second Year boys who had a convincing win in Donaghmede before the Christmas break. This was a goal filled game that would have entertained any neutral spectator. The team impressed with their sharp eye for goal throughout the game. Archie Quinn finished with six goals, while captain Charles Coffey scored two as well as Paddy Whelan, Andrew Buckley, David Cullen and David Ffrench scored the others. Gaelcholáiste Reachrann never gave up and only for several wonderful saves by Sam O'Donoghue throughout the second half, this game would have been a lot closer. We now qualify for the semi final which will be played after the Christmas break.

Senior Dublin Schools' Gaelic Football Championship

Blackrock College 2-9 Oatlands College 1-8

Congratulations to captain Gavin Donohue (6th Year) and his senior football team after they overcame an attritional battle against Oatlands College in the preliminary quarter final before the Christmas break. After qualifying from the group stage with one win and one draw, the team anticipated a challenging affair in Silverpark facing their club mates as school team opponents. This was to prove correct as Oatlands defence was very hard to break down in the first half. However, Tom McGrath McGrath (6th Year) found himself in space at the end of the first half, slotting his effort to the corner of the net, putting Blackrock two points up at half time.

The game continued to be a tight affair throughout the second half with points continuously exchanged between the sides. With three minutes left on the clock Oatlands College were awarded a penalty which they luckily converted, as Blackrock goalkeeper Alex Kenny (6th Year) was unfortunate not to get a strong enough hand to save it. This goal put Oatlands up by a point. This team's character was truly tested in the last two minutes and thanks to the heroics of Jay Courtney (5th Year) in the last two minutes scoring 1-2 without reply, we escaped from the jaws of defeat to qualify for a quarter final clash with Coláiste Cois Life after the Christmas.

Swimming

The Blackrock Swimming Team has been making great developments in the water, with swimmers putting in the hard work to stay on top for the competition season starting after the Christmas break.

Promising stroke work development has lead to strong potential for medley relays going into this year's Leinster Schools' Gala – Last year more than 10 swimmers qualify for the National Schools competitions, and we are hoping to do even better this year.

Pacing work has been pushing the team to push for faster and faster times, with a spring-focussed team moving forward to take on fierce competitors.

With varsity partners Fordham College coming to visit after Easter, the team is hoping to put down a strong performance against who are already a powerful team and friend.

The team has also seen a big size increase this year, with more than 15 new swimmers coming in from Willow Park swim team, as well some seasoned club swimmers joining us from strong local clubs ESB, Trojan, and Otter.

With galas organised with CBS Naas, Terenure, Clongowes, and of course the Leinster and National schools competitions, it will be all work in the water for the team!



The boys fine tuning their skills!

REFLECTION

The following reflection, with its powerful message, was read by Paul Baviera (Fifth Year) at our Christmas Carol Service.

"At a time when the Holy Land and many other parts of planet Earth is being destroyed by conflict and war, we pray Lord that this Christmas all nations will turn to the Crib once more and like the Magi, who Matthew tells us went home by a different way, focus on a 'different', more truthful, way to approach Global conflicts and the Climate crisis, to the one being travelled at present."



"Home by Another Way"

Matthew 2: 1-12