

Ursuline College • Sligo



PARENTS' NEWSLETTER - SUMMER 2014

Dear Parents / Guardians,

As the academic year draws to a close, I wish all students - and particularly Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate students – every success in forthcoming examinations. Keep calm and do your best! I thank staff and students for a year of hard work, creative engagement in many activities and Voluntary participation in activities in school and beyond. I thank you, parents, for your support of the school and look forward to ongoing support in the year ahead. The Newsletter gives a snapshot of some of the extra and co-curricular activities that have taken place since Christmas. I hope you enjoy reading about them.

BT Young Scientist and Technology Exhibition

Two teams competed in the BT Young Scientist and Technology exhibition held in the RDS Dublin in January 2014. 5th year students Michaela Healy, Niamh McMorro and Doireann Lawless investigated whether writing with both hands improved brain activity. Their project received Highly Commended in the Senior Social and Behavioural Science section.

Transition year students Kathy Devaney and Laura Joyce were awarded Highly Commended for their project entitled 'Stimulating Adrenaline Production in Athletic Performance'. Their project was mentioned in an Irish Times article by Athletics correspondent Ian O' Riordan. The girls spent five days in Dublin presenting their projects and thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

Junior Choir

On the 28th February, the Junior Choir travelled to Kiltimagh Choral Festival. They entered two competitions. In the foreign language competition they sang Brachen Lom and achieved First place. In the 'Make Me Smile' competition, they sang 'Singing in the Rain' and were placed Second. They were conducted by Ms. Murray and accompanied by Ms. Prendergast. On the 22nd May, the choir sang at the Garda Band concert in the Clarion Hotel in aid of Sligo Social Services. They received a great response. Well done, girls!

Trip to Cern

Twenty four students from 5th and 6th year Physics, Chemistry and Biology classes visited CERN in Geneva Switzerland in February. Cern is where the world's largest particle physics laboratory is located. The group had a guided tour of the Universe of Particles exhibition. They also visited the Red Cross Museum. In the evening, they went ice skating outdoors, visited the Chocolate factory and of course, did a little shopping. They were accompanied by Mr. Carolan, Ms. Murray and Ms. Callaghan. The trip was a great success and future ones are planned.

Student Council Table Quiz

On Friday 21st March, the Student Council organised a table quiz in aid of the school Development Fund in the Harp Tavern. Parents and teachers alike put on their 'thinking caps' as they struggled their way through Dingbats and riddles. An enjoyable evening was had by all and the Student Council raised €970. The Student Council would like to thank all parents and teachers who attended and also the sponsors who generously provided the spot prizes. The Student Council would also especially like to thank Ms. Coyle and Mrs Waters for their help and guidance in organising this successful event.

Health and Wellbeing Week

Fit and Well Week (18th – 24th March) involved the SPHE teachers and the Guidance Counsellor discussing issues around positive mental health with students, as well as senior students exploring the online mental health website ReachOut.com. Cross curricular activities promoting positive youth mental health were carried out by teachers in their subject area.

The Art and Irish Departments organised a poster competition. All entries were displayed on corridor walls. The P. E. Department organised a 'Run a Mile' event for junior students and a senior sports day as well as other 'Fun' activities. All first and second years completed a 3 mile walk. 6C made up and sold healthy smoothies at lunchtime and 6D organised a Healthy Snacking Event for all sixth years which was very successful. Free fruit and dairy products were promoted to students at lunchtime, which proved very popular.

Fifth Year Council members delivered a 'Thought for the Day' each morning and staff and students participated in a 'Drop Everything and Exercise' activity each day. The 4C YSI group set up a stand to raise awareness about skin cancer and the need for adequate screening from UV light. Mr. Karl O' Reilly from Aware gave a talk to all fifth and sixth year students on mental wellbeing and building resilience. Ms. Rachel Reilly from the HSE gave a

talk to all third year students on 'Exam Stress and Anxiety'. Well done to all staff and students for getting involved and supporting this Fit and Well week initiative.

Senior Choir

On Friday 7th March, the Senior Choir travelled to Wesley College in Dublin to participate in the Inter-Schools Choral Competition. They sang 'Catch a Falling Star'. Fourteen schools participated in the highly competitive three part competition and they were awarded 2nd place. They were conducted by Ms. Fiona McQuillan and accompanied by Ms. Emer Prendergast. They were commended on a great performance.

Business Awards.

Six students were honoured by the National Association of Business Teachers in Ireland in conjunction with National University of Ireland Galway as a result of receiving an A in their Junior Certificate Business Examination 2013. These students were Caoimhe Davey, Sorcha Ni Fhuarain, Jennifer Mahon, Laura Joyce, Bláithín Walsh and Ellen Murphy. Well done to the girls and their Business teachers.

Award for Top Junior Certificate student in German

Jennifer Mahon 5th year won a three week scholarship to a German language School this summer. This scholarship is awarded by the Goethe Institute to students with outstanding results in their German Junior Certificate exam. Well done Jennifer and also to her teacher Ms. McKiernan.

Book week

World Book Day is the biggest event in Ireland promoting the enjoyment of books and reading. The main aim is to encourage young people to explore the pleasure of reading. Ursuline College celebrated the 17th world book day having a series of activities over the week of April. The week kicked off on Monday with a quiz for TYs in the Sports

Hall. All questions pertained to reading, books, authors and films. This was followed on Tuesday by a trip to the cinema for a private viewing of *The Book Thief*. The first years had a brilliant day's fun on Wednesday dressing up as their favourite character from novels they enjoyed. Finally there was a poster competition, the aim of which was to promote reading. This competition was open to all students in the school. Overall it was a very successful week of activities. Easter eggs were enjoyed by all the winners of the various competitions.

School Tour to Lake Garda

On the 11th April, sixty two very excited 4th and 5th year students set off on a school trip to Lake Garda, accompanied by their teachers. The tour brought them to Verona, Venice, Bardolina, Gardaland and Sirmione.

In Venice, the girls visited sights such as Piazza San Marco, Ponte de Rialto, Ponte dei Sospiri (Bridge of Sighs) and the Doge's Palace. Many students took a trip on the famous gondolas. The next day, they visited Garda land sampling the exhilarating 'Raptor', 'Blue Tornado' and Magic Mountain roller coaster rides. That evening, they went bowling in Grande Mela centre. The following day, the girls visited Sirmione, a very pretty Italian town on the lake. Many students took a motor boat trip around the lake and viewed sights such as the famous Rocca Scaligera Castle, the house of Maria Callas and the hot springs. In the afternoon, the group set out for Verona where students saw the famous 'Roman Arena' and of course Juliet's House and balcony. On the final day, the girls visited Bardolina, another very pretty lakeside town for some last minute shopping and a last stroll through the cobble stone streets in the warm sun.

Highlights of the trip were sampling Italy's famous pizza, 'gelato' ice cream, Ms. McTiernan's Italian phrases and the double decker bus. The weather was perfect and the Italians friendly particularly Claudio our driver. The tour was immensely enjoyed by all.

Junk Kouture

Junk Kouture is a National competition in which secondary school students are asked to design and make an outfit out of recycled materials. The competition gives young and expressive designers a national platform to think differently about waste and create high end couture outfits. This year, three Transition Year students Katherine Demmel, Sarah Keane and Rebecca Friel entered with an outfit made out of various recycled materials including a Hula-hoop, bubble wrap, a broken record, bottles and card board. The base of the skirt was constructed with chicken wire and a hulla hoop. It was covered with flowers made of plastic bottles that were cut and burned to appear like flowers. They were sprayed, painted and glittered.

The girls qualified for the finals in the O2 in Dublin on Friday 1st May. They displayed their creation to 4,000 people including the judges Rosanna Davison and Darren Kennedy. They would like to thank Ms O' Neill and Mr Gilmartin for all their help.

Transitional year Musical

March saw Transition Year students take to the Hawkeswell stage for their production of the musical 'Godspell'. After weeks of singing, reading lines and practising dance moves, they gave a show-stopping and memorable performance, displaying their talent and creativity throughout. Based on the Gospel of St. Matthew, the biblical-themed musical is set in the 70's and includes international hit 'Day by Day.' Under the direction of Mary Mac Donagh, Niamh Crowley and Steffen Jorgensen, the girls brought audiences on an emotional roller coaster, from the light-hearted first act to the poignant finale. Students from TY co-ordinated lighting, assisted in

promoting the show and in costume design leading up to the opening night. Backstage, staff from the Ursuline were on hand to encourage and assist the girls who were joined on stage by Colin Gilligan and Matthew O' Donnell, playing the roles of Jesus and Judas. The girls took the opportunity to bond and have fun as a year group and this certainly won't be the last time we see many of the cast under those bright lights of the stage.

U-19 All-Ireland Schools League Winners 2014

The Senior Basketball team consisting of Marina Leahy (Captain), Aoife Leahy, Matea Leahy, Emma Kevany, Siofra Kilgallon, Anna Dunikowska and Grace Murray beat Castleknock Community School Dublin by five points to become All - Ireland winners. The final score was 38 -33. Emma Kevany won the MVP for her amazing performance throughout the match. They were trained by Colm McIntyre and Carmel Donelon. They got a tremendous welcome from the school on their return in recognition of their amazing achievement. The team were very appreciative of the supporters and the cheer leaders who travelled to Dublin with them. The senior team had played Castleknock Community School in the All-Ireland Cup semi-final a few months ago and were beaten by one basketball. So this win was particularly good. They have vowed to come back next year and defend their title.

Sci Fest 2014

Eleven groups from the Ursuline College took the part in the 7th annual Sci Fest which was held in the Knocknarea Arena located in the Institute of Technology Sligo on Wednesday 14th May. There were over 100 projects displayed from schools all over the North West region.

Congratulations to all who entered and especially to Aoife Padden and Sarah Lynch TY whose project entitled 'Why does the sky change colour?' won the Discover Space Award. They also came second in the intermediate Physical Science category. The girls received a trophy and vouchers.

Cadette Basketball News

The Cadet Basketball team showed great determination this season. They were drawn against Letterkenny and Ballyshannon in the North-west league. They played these teams both home and away and won all the matches. They went on to win the league. They progressed to the All Ireland playoffs. They had to play teams from Galway, Cork and Kerry. They beat two of the teams and were unfortunate not to qualify for the All Ireland semi final.

The team then travelled to Dublin to meet Loreto in the All Ireland Cup quarter final. They won and went on to challenge Colaiste Oiriall and Monaghan. They defeated both teams and went on to play Mallow in the final. They were narrowly defeated and were unfortunate to miss out on the title.

First year basketball

In a year where the Senior and Cadette teams brought so much glory to the school, the First year team showed that the future is also bright for them. The team won the North West Regional League defeating Ballyshannon, Letterkenny and Mohill teams both home and away.

Winning the League qualified the team for the All - Ireland qualifying tournament which was held in Galway. They played Solerno from Galway and Glanmire from Cork and beat both. Their last game against Cahirciveen would have qualified the team for the All Ireland semi-final. However they were narrowly defeated during extra time. All fourteen members of the team played superbly and vowed they will be back next year for another opportunity to play for the title.

All Ireland Junior Golf Champions

Congratulations to the Junior Golf team who won the Irish Ladies Golf Union Schools Junior Cup for the first time in the history of the school. The team consisted of Niamh Cronin 3rd year, Ella McDermott 2nd year and Maeve Rooney 2nd year. The girls won the Junior Connacht title in March having beaten five other schools in Lough Rea Golf Club Galway. The girls represented the school in the National final which was held on the 28th April in Milltown Golf Club Dublin. They played against St. Mary's High School Lurgan, Loreto Kilkenny, Laurel Hill, and Alexandra College Dublin. They won with a two point lead over their nearest rival St. Mary's High School. Well done girls!

Clár Raidió

Congratulations to this year's TY Clár Raidió group who have scooped two national awards for their Irish language radio programme 'Beezie-Bean an Locha / Beezie, The Lady of the Lake'. They were awarded first place in the national Conradh na Gaeilge competition and third place in the national Gael Linn competition. They travelled with Ms Lee to the BAI headquarters in Dublin and to the Raidió na Gaeltachta studios in Gweedore respectively for the prize-giving ceremonies. Laura Joyce was interviewed live on Raidió na Gaeltachta by Ronan Mac Aodh Bhuí about their programme on Beezie Byron, who lived all her life on Cottage Island in Lough Gill and who was the last resident on any of the islands on the lake. Recorded in the Ocean FM studios with Kevin Blessing, the programme will be broadcast on Ocean FM, Raidió Rí Rá and Raidió na Gaeltachta. It will also go forward as Ocean FM's Irish Language entry to the prestigious PPI competition. Ursuline College TY students have had the honour of winning PPI Gold and Silver in the past two years for Best Irish Language Programme. The students involved are Laura Joyce, Katie Kilgannon, Etáin Sweeney-Keogh, Ellen Murphy, Enya Curley, Jennifer Burke, Orlaith Delahun, Orla Nolan, Taylor Corrigan, Rebecca Conlon, Rebecca Friel, Eva Devaney, Helen McDonagh and Sarah Donnellan.

Gaisce President Award Ceremony

The Gaisce President Award Ceremony was held in the school's Sports Hall on Wednesday 7th May. The Master of Ceremonies was Michael Collins, Regional Co-ordinator. The awards were presented by Eoin McNamee, a well-known author and script writer. Sixty students received Bronze Awards and three students received both Bronze and Silver Awards. Treasa Kilgallon, Aine Martin, Emer Flood and our guest speaker Eoin McNamee addressed the audience. Eoin ended his speech with the poem 'Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening'. It was a very successful night. The event was attended by parents, Sr. Mairead, Mrs Waters, Emer Prendergast and Fiona McQuillan co-ordinators of the Gaisce programme in the school.

Green flag

As part of the Green-Schools Water Programme, Ursuline College have been studying their water use and have made some considerable reductions over the past three years. The Green Council discovered a significant leak in the school's water supply by monitoring their water meter. As a consequence, the school have fixed all leaks and have raised awareness on careful water use in bathrooms and specialist classrooms. Regular monitoring of their water use has shown a reduction of 50%. At the start of the programme the average use was 20 litres per person per day and this is now reduced to 10 litres per person per day. Ursuline College was awarded its third Green Flag by "An Taisce" as a result of these initiatives. When receiving this award, the Green Council discovered they were also in line for a special National award sponsored by "Irish Water".

Ursuline College was originally shortlisted as a Regional winner but was surprised and delighted to receive the National Award of €2000 towards supporting the Green Schools programme in the school, a crystal trophy and the title 'Irish Water Secondary School of the Year' for the innovative and highly successful Green-Schools programme undertaken by the Green Council on the theme of water conservation. The ceremony took place in Croke Park on 6th May and the award was given by the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government, Phil Hogan.

Career Guidance

IT Sligo (26 February and 31 March): All 5th years had an opportunity to attend presentations on IT Sligo courses by schools liaison officer Sandra Lehmann. Sandra was accompanied by past Ursuline students Marsha Trotter (26 February) and Kahna Gilligan (31 March). These students were delighted to return to Ursuline College and share their experiences with the 5th year group.

NUI Galway presentations: Our 5th year students had an opportunity to find out about specific areas of study through the NUI Galway Schools Liaison Programme. The first presentation, by Shane Tuohy, was on Engineering. Shane focused on what exactly Engineering is about and how students might know if they were suited to Engineering. It is suited to those who like Mathematics and Science and also have a curiosity about how and why things happen. He explained the different engineering programmes offered by NUIG and the range of opportunities available in final year and beyond.

On Friday 4 April the presentation was on Science. The visiting speaker was a final year PhD student who shared her own experience of studying at undergraduate level and gave an excellent presentation on Science courses in NUIG. This was a timely presentation for those who were going to the Open Day on 5 April.

The final presentation, on 28 April was on Arts/Humanities. Our guest was Stephen McNena (St Angela's College and NUI Galway). Stephen explained the structure of the Arts Degree programmes in NUIG and the new developments in the Arts faculty which include Performance Points for Creative Arts.

A group of 5th Year students travelled to NUI Galway Open Day on Sat 5th April. The bus was organised by members of the Parents Association who accompanied the students on the day. The Open day was well organised. The students enjoyed the day and found it informative.

Marian Harkin MEP was a guest speaker for all 6th years on 24 March. Marian outlined her own career path and encouraged the students to believe in themselves and to follow their dreams even if they meet obstacles/disappointments along the way. In a brief resumé of the last century of European history she traced the development of European co-operation from the ravages of war, to the original 6 member states (EEC), growing to the 28 countries which make up the European Union today. She explained the importance of European co-operation for peace and stability in Europe as well as for economic reasons. She encouraged the students to take an interest in local and National affairs and to exercise their vote. The talk was interesting and inspiring and enjoyed by all. We thank Marian for this visit at a very busy time.

On Thursday 10th April, a group of 6th year students attended a European Election panel discussion hosted by IT Sligo. The event was co-ordinated by Pauline Brennan, Sligo Libraries and guest speaker was Francis Jacob from the European Parliament Information Office. This was a participative and informative event which gave the students a good understanding of the EU and the role of the European Parliament.

Prize giving

The special guest at this year's prize giving was Micheal O Domhnaill originally from Ring in Waterford but now living in Sligo. He is a sports commentator on TG4 covering Gaelic football and hurling, rugby and horseracing. He talked about how life hasn't been one straight road but one with many twists and turns and he couldn't have imagined he would have the career in television that he has now.

The awards ceremony took place on Thursday 15th May in the Ursuline College Sports Hall. We congratulate the recipients and commend all the hard work and participation of so many students throughout the school in Academia, Sport, Voluntary Activities, Social Justice, Leadership, Music, Arts and Culture and Science and Technology.

Overall Student of the Year Award was presented to Chloe Hutnik 6th year who received the prestigious Sr. St. Paul Trophy. Emma Kevany and Fiona McCormack 5th Year, Rachel Flynn 4th Year, Meadhbh Kenneally 3rd Year, Voga Saini 2nd Year, and Meadhbh Spain 1st Year, were presented with Student of the Year Awards for their respective years. Special Merit Awards were presented to Claudia Hutnik 6th year, Laura Harrison 6th Year, Priscilla Murphy 6th Year, Nicole Munyaradzi 6th Year, Roisin McGovern 5th Year, Dannielle O' Hehir 4th Year, Katie Kilgallon 4th Year and Cara Grimes 1st Year. Junior Scientist of the Year Award sponsored by Stiefel Laboratories was presented to Anna Quinn, and the Senior Scientist of the Year sponsored by Elanco went to Emer Flood. The 5th year Science and Technology Award sponsored by Abbots - a perpetual prize - was presented to Doireann Lawless, Niamh McMorro and Micaela Healy.

Full attendance Presentations were made to 6th years Lisa Jordan, Rachel Mahon, Laoise Muldowney, Elan McCarthy, Marina and Kristina Leahy. 5th years Caoimhe Davey, Dominika Mazurkiewicz, Caoimhe O' Hara, Chantelle Devaney and Doireann Lawless. 4th Year Rebecca Conlon, 3rd Year Kate Anderson, Emma Gallagher, Fiona Kelly, Sarah McLoughlin, Anna Quinn, Caoimhe Sweeney. 2nd Year Lisa Flynn, Stella Marafa, Fatima Arif. 1st Years Cliona Devaney, Andrea Flynn, Cara Grimes, Eimear Kearins, Keala Kerrigan, Ailbhe Morgan, Hannah Scanlon, Amy Dykes and Sadhbh McCarty.

Our sporting success this year is testament to the dedication, motivation and skill of the students who received Awards. This year the title of Sports Star of the Year 2014 Award was presented to Marina Leahy for her outstanding talent, leadership qualities and commitment to sport in the school. Aoife and Matea Leahy received Special Achievement Awards for their commitment and dedication to their chosen sporting discipline of Basketball. Interprovincial representatives were awarded certificates in recognition of their achievements. They included Katie Osborne (Hockey), Shona Keaveney, Lisa Gerrity, Aoife Keaney and Maeve Keaney (Swimming), Ciara Mooney, Cliona Devaney, Andrea Flynn and Rachel Hansbury for Basketball.

Students were acknowledged and commended in the area of voluntary activities. These included the guides for Open night, the Cinniri in the Seomra Cairdeas team and the lunchtime Club Organisers.

In the area of social justice the school recognised the fundraising that was undertaken this year in activities such as Carol singing, coffee mornings, assembling shoe boxes and Nazareth House visits. Money was raised for Trocaire, Sligo Social Services, Ursuline Missions, North West Hospice, St. Vincent De Paul, the Simon Community and Sligo Rotary Club/Christmas Tree Appeal.

With the winning of the third Green Flag for Water Conservation and the Irish Water Award for work in Water Conservation, the Green Council were awarded certificates.

In Music, Arts and Culture section, the Senior Choir under the direction of Ms. McQuillan were finalists in the RTE All Ireland Schools Choir Competition. They were presented with certificates which were accepted by Elise Brennan and Lisa Jordan on behalf of the Choir.

Sponsors

Ursuline College would like to acknowledge and thank Elanco Animal Health Ireland LTD., Abbott Diagnostics, Stiefel Laboratories, Lotus Automation and Compupac for sponsoring Ursuline Young Scientist Exhibitors and Science Awards for our Prize giving Ceremony in May.

John Paul II Awards

Ten students received John Paul II Awards at a ceremony hosted by Summerhill College. These students were Sinead Lynch, Rachel McLoughlin, Fiona McCormack, Caoimhe O' Hara, Sorcha Ni Fhuairain, Emily Acheson, Sarah B Keaney, Anne Kerins, Blaithean Wall and Rachel Flynn. They had to undertake Parish work for their Community Involvement section and give a presentation to complete their Award. They each received a medal and a certificate. The night was very enjoyable. Well done to all who participated.

Irish Schools Inter Provincial Championships

The Irish schools inter Provincial Championships 2014 were held on May 5th in the National Aquatic Centre Dublin. All four provinces competed against each other. Each team member from each province competed in individual events and the total of each team decided their placing at the end of the competition. Shone Keaveney, Lisa Gerrity and Maeve Keaney were selected to represent Connaught based on their placing in their individual events at the Connaught schools championships in January. At the Championships, Shona Keaveney was placed first in the senior 100 metre Butterfly, Lisa Gerrity came fourth and Maeve Keaney came 2nd in the junior 100m backstroke. The Connaught team's total points placed them in first position and ahead of the other provinces. This is the first time secondary students from Connaught have won this title.

Texaco Art Competition Winner

Grace Murray 6th Year came third in the senior section of the Texaco Art Competition out of 18,000 entries. Her entry was a Batik entitled 'Red Pepper'. Grace is the first student in our school to be placed in the top three in the prestigious Texaco Art Competition. Well done, Grace!

Feis Ceoil Art winners.

Congratulations to those students who won prizes in the Sligo Feis Ceoil Art competition. The winner were Shauna Armstrong, Emer McKenna, Meadhbh Spain, Laura Harrison, Eva Murray, Julia Mullaney, Anna Davidson and Grace Murray. Well done, Girls!

St Patrick's Day Parade.

Congratulations to the First Years who took part in the St Patrick's Day Parade, under the guidance and hard work of Ms Milne. The students participated as Sid the Sausage Dog and Friends and were awarded the Schools' Cup for their efforts. Well done!

Exotic Tales of the Arabian Nights

Congratulations to Kate Barlett, Fiona Gallagher, Amber Hughes -Hayes, Aoife McKiernan and Zita McLoughlin who took part in Sligo Youth Theatre's production of the 'Exotic Tales of the Arabian Nights' during the Easter break. It was a very successful and enjoyable production.

Walton's Wonders

In January, 54 musicians and singers from all years in the school entered the Waltons Music for Schools competition. This competition aims to celebrate music in schools around Ireland so the students got to work on creating a myriad of musical delights. One of these pieces was an original composition penned by 2nd year student Alice Purcell. Under the direction of Ms Prendergast, the students performed this medley on video and sent it to Walton's to be judged against 24 other schools. The group were delighted to hear they were one of the 6 schools chosen to perform in the final at the National Concert Hall Dublin on May 12th. Pompoms at the ready, the finalists performed to a packed venue. The audience thoroughly enjoyed their music and dance which was artistically choreographed by 6th year student Holly Higgins. Unfortunately they were not placed but performed fantastically on the day

Feis Ceoil 2014

Congratulations to Katie McGoldrick 2nd year who won 1st prize in the Comhra competition in Feis Ceoil. She won a scholarship to Colaiste Chiarain Connemara. Congratulations too to Caoimhe O' Hara 5th year who was awarded 1st place in the Comhra and Oraid competitions. Caoimhe won a scholarship to Colaiste Gael Linn. Well done to Aideen Gilmartin who won 1st Prize in the Corn Shinead Ni Thorsnaigh competition and to Lisa McLoughlin, Emma Costigan, Cliodhna McGowan, Rachel Mahon who came 2nd and 3rd in the same competition.

Feis Shligigh 2014

Congratulations to Katie McGoldrick 2nd year who won the Sean Carroll scholarship in Feis Shligigh. She won a scholarship to Colaiste Chamuis. Congratulations to Tara Reilly and Isabelle Waters 1st year who won first prize in the Comhra Beirte competition. They won the John Treacy Cup. Finally, congratulations to Caoimhe O' Hara 5th year who won 1st prize in the Oraid competition. Caoimhe had to speak for six minutes on the 'Influence of media on young people as Gaeilge. Well done Caoimhe.

Senior Soccer

This year, the U17 had quite a successful year. They played Ballinarobe in the quarter final. The girls played well keeping possession throughout the game but a disallowed goal put an end to the squad's hope of a Connaught title. However, the team went on to win the Connaught 'B' Shield. Well done!

The U19 team played Roscommon in the semi-final and beat them well so they had high hopes of bringing home the title. However, in the final, luck wasn't on their side against a strong Taylors Hill and they were beaten. The girls were disappointed but are looking forward to next year as their squad remains unchanged.

Young Social Innovators

Young Social Innovators is a programme that challenges Ireland's Young people between 15-18 yrs to choose and explore a social issue they care about. They must then take innovative action and make a real and lasting change. 4D's project entitled "Hold your Horses" It is an awareness campaign aimed at highlighting the dilemma of abandoned horses nationally, regionally and locally. The team's aim is to raise awareness throughout our school community and to the wider community

They visited a local donkey sanctuary where they heard stories of individual donkeys' struggles for survival. They invited Marian Harkin MEP to address the group on the topic. They had to submit

a project of 4,000 words and attend the Regional Connaught Finals Speak Out along with 70 other schools in Galway. Each team had to put on a two minute presentation. Ms. McTiernan's 4C group chose "UV Aware" as their subject. They wanted to warn people about the dangers of exposure to the sun without adequate protection. They also submitted a 4,000 word report and a two minute danced routine.

Transition Year Awards

Transition year Students showcased their work at Parents' night held in the Sports Hall on Monday 19th May. The students were given responsibility for organising the evening and they presented the work completed in each subject area and in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Power point presentations were prepared by the students themselves. Students' work was on display around the sports hall and in the balcony area. Special recognition was given to a number of students. Rachel Flynn was named Student of the Year. Sarah A Keaney and Helen McDonagh were named Sports Stars of 2014. Ailbhe McGauran, Kate Batlett, Dannielle O' Hehir and Blaiithin Wall were awarded the Enterprise and Business Award 2014.

Transition Year Co-ordinator Mr. Shay Monaghan reviewed the year and congratulated the students on getting involved in so many activities and on commitment to seeing their projects through to the end. All those who had provided the opportunity for work experience were acknowledged and thanked. In her closing address, the Principal, Sr. Mairead spoke of the potential of Transition Year to help students to become self-directed in their learning, more aware of others and more mature in their outlook. She encouraged students to take their learning from Transition Year with them and to build on it in 5th Year. She thanked all the staff for their energy and hard work during the year. She thanked Mr. Monaghan in particular for his dedication to the Transition Year students. After her words, refreshments were served and parents inspected the various displays around the Sports Hall.

First year Hockey

The uptake in first year hockey was very high this year with over 50 first years coming to training. Three teams were entered into leagues. The two teams competing in the Cahill trophy did very well. The Blackmore team had a really successful season easily beating teams from Sligo, Athlone and Galway to reach the semi final. They played the Jes from Galway and with two great goals from Eimear McCallion and Eimear Osborne, they reached the final. Despite losing the final, we can expect great things in the future from these players.

Geography Trip

In May, the fifth year Geography students with their teachers Ms. Reilly and Ms. Horan travelled to Marble Arch caves in Fermanagh. The students learnt about the chemical weathering processes present in the caves. A highlight was the underground boating trip.

Graduation Mass

The 6th Year Graduation Mass took place in the Sports Hall on Wednesday 21st May. This event is planned each year by the Leaving Cert. Students, their R.E. and Music teachers and their Year Head. The Graduation Mass is a high point in the school year and it began with a dignified procession of all 6th years, each carrying a light which each one placed before the altar. The girls processed to the sounds of 'Carry your Candle'. The opening hymn Cantate Domino sung by the 6th Years set the tone for the evening. Head Girl Treasa Kilgallon welcomed everyone to the Mass before handing

over to the Celebrant Tom Hevers. The theme of the Mass was 'Journey', and the readings, prayers, reflections and songs sung by the choir reflected this theme. 1st readings and 2nd readings were done by Jean Jordan and Emer Flood. The responsorial psalm was sung by Eimear Mulligan and Aisling Forde. The Offertory instrumental was played by Aine Martin and Megan Duffy. The Memorial Acclamation was sung by Holly Chambers. During Communion, the choir sang 'We know you are the Lamb' with soloists Sinead Keaveney and Chloe O' Malley. This was followed by 'And So it Goes' by Billy Joel with soloist Emma Robinson. An instrumental piece entitled 'I will sing' was then played by Sinead Keaveney, Sorcha Fallon, Marina Leahy, Jean Jordan and Rebecca Tighe. The Communion reflection was given by Chloe Conlon and a liturgical dance was performed by Holly Higgins to 'Christ has no Body but Yours'. Their final song was 'Reach'. After this, each student received a bracelet, a scroll with the names of all 6th years, as well as a bookmark with the words of St. Angela Foundress of the Ursulines. Sr. Mairead wished the 6th years every success in forthcoming examinations and happiness in the future. She exhorted the students to be the best they can be wherever life takes them. After Mass, Head Girl Treasa Kilgallon offered words of appreciation to Sr. Mairead, Mrs Waters, Ms. Milne their Year Head, all the teaching staff, office and maintenance staff for their enthusiasm and commitment and the care shown to them in their school years. The students also thanked their parents and a symbolic 'Balloon' ceremony was held outdoors after the ceremony. This was followed by refreshments for all in the balcony of the Sports Hall where parents had an opportunity to chat and reminisce.

Easter Engagement

Congratulations to Ms. Emer Predergast on her engagement to Shamie Colreavy during the Easter Holidays. We wish her the very best in their future life together.

Message from the Parents' Council

The Parents' Council were busy this year. In autumn, we sponsored a talk for parents by Dr. Maureen Griffin on internet and online safety. In the spring we organised a bag packing fundraising at Tesco and raised almost 900 euro to go toward the improvement of facilities and purchase of equipment for leisure activities at the college.

We are always looking for new members with new ideas and energy! Come join us when we meet again in September. Send an email or text to alicelyons22@gmail.com or 083 4631319 to be added to our mailing list.

Holidays

I wish everyone safe and happy holidays, with time to rest and relax. I strongly encourage students to give some time to others at home, locally and in their parishes. Make a difference!



'Life's most urgent question: what are you doing for others?' - Martin Luther King Junior.

'The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others' - Mahatma Gandhi.

Happy holidays.

Sr. Mairead O'Brien

Sr Mairead