

Ursuline College • Sligo



PARENTS' NEWSLETTER - SUMMER 2015

Dear Parents / Guardians,

With another a school year drawing to a close, I thank you for your support throughout the year. The newsletter gives you a snapshot of events and activities that have taken place in the school since Christmas. I hope you will enjoy reading about them.

Goal visit

John O' Shea founder of 'GOAL' visited Ursuline College on the 19th January and spoke to the entire 5th year group. He gave an inspirational presentation on the values and merits of social entrepreneurship in the context of the alleviation of the suffering of the poorest of the poor. He gave the girls an insight into the work he had done in underdeveloped countries and provided them with stories of his many visits to those very poor places. He referred to those areas as the 'forgotten countries in our world'.

He impressed upon the girls that the work he does offers the prospect of a solid livelihood choice, either at home or abroad. John encouraged the girls to make a contribution and a difference to their world by assisting the poorest of the poor.

It was a very engaging talk, a worthwhile learning opportunity and was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

Build a Bank

Transition Year students from Ursuline College Sligo took part in the AIB Build a Bank Challenge. Six students were interviewed and chosen by a team of Student Officers from the AIB branch in Sligo to open a bank in the school and partake in the Regional competition. At the regional competition, the school bank competed against banks from all over the country, in an effort to win various prizes for their school and for themselves.

The name of the bank set up in the Ursuline was 'Shareleaders' and the members of the bank were: Anna Quinn (Bank Manager), Áine O'Boyle (Assistant Manager), Nicole Conway (Sales and Marketing Director), Emma Gallagher (Financial Director), Niamh Fitzgerald (Customers Services Representative) and Eimear Fennelly (Customer Services Representative).

The bank offered second level student current and savings accounts to the pupils in the school. Approximately 80 current accounts were opened. The students found the school bank a very convenient method of saving and enjoyed having these banking services available to them in the school.

In the running of the bank the girls held events such as their 'Launch Day' where they brought in local GAA star Neil Ewing to officially open the bank, and their 'Pizza Day' where they gave out free pizza to all students who lodged money into their accounts or who opened new accounts with the 'Shareleaders'.

The bank team were also very successful in creating and publishing an app for their bank using the Windows Store. They worked in Sligo IT with

professional app creators for a day and learned the necessary skills needed in order to create their app.

The 'Shareleaders' Bank was a great success. The girls hope that a strong tradition of saving with AIB has been established.

Japanese Visit

Yuichi Yamada, Cultural Attaché of the Japanese Embassy visited Ursuline College on 27th March. He gave a presentation on Japan and Japanese culture to the Transition years. He discussed potential future opportunities in Japan, including the Japanese exchange and teaching programme and the Japanese one year working holiday visa. He also played a Japanese short animation entitled 'Blossom' by Yutaka Yamamoto. Ruth Crawley and Sinead Ryan showed their amazing drawings of the famous Japanese animation 'Pokémon' and 'my Neighbour Totoro' characters. Mr Yamada was very impressed with these.

First Year Mini Company

On the 12th March, five first year mini companies attended the Student enterprise finals in the Sligo Park Hotel. These were Seodra, Locker Potz and Soothing scents. From the outset, it was evident that the level of competition was extremely high.

The Ursuline Mini Companies did extremely well. They picked up both 'Winner' and 'Runner-up' in the junior category. The Runner-up 'Oh My Garden' based their ideas on re-using old plates and making them into window boxes. The winning group 'Let's Get Signing' centred their idea on developing the skill of basic Sign language. The winning group got the opportunity to attend the All-Ireland student Enterprise Awards final in Croke Park, Dublin.

Having won the county finals stages, 'Let's Get Signing' began their preparation for the All Ireland Final. After a month of hard work and preparation, the day finally arrived. On the 22nd April 2015, 'Let's Get Signing' began setting up their stand at 8.30 am. Throughout the morning, the group were interviewed by three separate judges and the standard was extremely high. In the afternoon there was the prize giving ceremony. The girls had a great day and did themselves and their school extremely proud. On behalf of their teacher Ms. Tighe and all the first year mini companies, they would like to thank the school and Sr. Mairead for all their support throughout the year.

Calligraphy Creations by C2N

Niamh Cromin, Niamh Keaveney, Cara McPadden set

up a Transition Year Mini company entitled C2N. The company decided to produce unique, hand designed cards and began by designing cards with Christmas images. The market for these cards proved very successful. In February, they designed Baby, Communion and Birthday cards which also sold well. They were Regional finalists in Sligo and went on to compete in the Junior Achievement Ireland competition in Letterkenny IT. The competition consisted of a ten minute interview, followed by a presentation. C2N had a very successful day and were delighted to bring back a trophy.

C2N were selected to compete in Local enterprise board competition which was held in the Sligo Park hotel, where they were awarded 1st prize for best display. They were presented with a large cheque for the school and another trophy. They set up an Instagram and Facebook page to show the products they were offering and to tell people the cost of the cards and when and where they would be on sale.

For more information please follow them on Facebook. Their products can be purchased in Kool Kidz, Sligo and Strandhill Peoples' Market.

Hello to Broadway

On May 5th and 6th the Transition Year students from Ursuline College took to the stage of the Hawkeswell Theatre for their production of the musical entitled 'The Best of Broadway'. The musical is a compilation of the best and most memorable songs and dances from musicals performed on Broadway. It featured songs from Abba, Hairspray, Footloose, Les Miserables, Bugsy Malone, All Shook Up, Grease, Jesus Christ Superstar, Fame, Matilda, Sister Act and Rent. Under the direction of Mary MacDonagh, Steffen Jorgensen and Niamh Crowley, the girls brought the audiences on a show-stopping and memorable journey of Broadway musicals through the decades.

Waltons Competition

45 students very successfully participated in the Walton's Music for Schools competition this year with the help of their teacher Ms Prendergast. On submission of a recording featuring a selection of traditional, funk and pop, the "Funky Monkeys" from Ursuline College were thrilled to discover that they had been selected to participate in the final. They were one of six groups to perform in the National Concert Hall in Dublin in May. Their entry, Pop Ceol Funk combined efforts of instrumentalists, singers and dancers from first to fifth year. A special mention must go to Aoibhinn Buckley who choreographed the composition. Well done!

Siansa

Our traditional group 'Beogacht' successfully reached the final of the 'Siansa Gael Linn Competition' this year. The girls made it through two gruelling stages to become finalists in the fantastic competition held in April this year. In the National Concert Hall in Dublin, Beogacht performed a 10 minute programme alongside 7 other groups live on Radio na Gaeltachta. They also featured on a television programme dedicated to the competition. The girls played wonderfully on the night and enjoyed the experience immensely.

Buaiteoirí sa Ghaeilge

Comhghairdeas le Katie Mc Goldrick 3D a bhuaigh scoláireacht chuig Coláiste Chiaráin I gConamara. Rinne sí comhrá i bhFeis Ceoil, Sligeach I rith na Cásca.

Bronnadh scoláireacht ar Aoife Platt 1A do Champa Samhraidh i gColáiste San Aingeal. Comhghairdeas le hAoife!

School Tour to Lake Garda

On the 26th March, fifty two very excited 4th and 5th year girls set off for Lake Garda accompanied by their teachers. The group had the use of a double decker coach for the whole of the trip which was a great novelty. When the group boarded the bus on the first morning, Ms. McTiernan handed everyone (including the teachers) a sheet with useful Italian phrases which they had studied in class. They had to work out the meaning of each phrase and were encouraged to use them whenever they could.

The first day, the group visited Sirmione, a lovely authentic lake side town village on Lake Garda. Some of the group took the opportunity to take a boat trip around Lake Garda while others visited the battlements of Scaligeria Castle. The view was deemed amazing. As for the ice-cream - out of this world!!

That afternoon, the group went on to Verona, a very busy modern commercial city where they saw the famous Roman Arena and visited Juliet's house and balcony. Off the Piazza Erbe, there were many high end shops well as art, food and jewellery ones. In the evening, everyone enjoyed a game of bowling and competition between teams was fierce.

The next day, the group visited Gardaland and sampled rollercoaster rides that left them exhilarated and dizzy! That evening the group were brought to Bardolino, a Mediterranean lakeside town. Some of the group took a train ride around the town looking at the Easter trees and the little quaint streets. The ice creams especially the amazing pineapple sorbet, kiwi, coconut and raspberry ice creams are still talked about!

In Venice the group got the vaporetto water taxi to Venice. They visited sights such as Piazza San Marco, Ponte de Rialto, Doge's palace and Bridge of Sigh

With a guided tour of Milan, the group saw many sights including the Il Duomo cathedral, the 3rd largest Christian Cathedral in the world. The students discovered a great place called Luigis where you could get the best mozzarella and tomato panzerotti. A great recommendation for the next group!!

The group came home with wonderful memories of a fantastic trip. A big thank you to Ms. Murray for organising such a wonderful trip!

Wesley Choir

This year, the 2nd and 3rd year music students with Choir teacher Ms McQuillan and accompanist Ms Prendergast, entered the Two-part category in Wesley Inter schools Music Festival. They sang 'Alexander's Ragtime Band' - a song that was very well received by audience and judges alike. They came second out of thirteen choirs and were delighted with themselves. A wonderful result!

RDS Horse Show Beckons

Zarah Kelly 2E qualified for the RDS Dublin Horse Show this summer. She is the first Ursuline student to reach the Dublin Horse Show. She had attempted to qualify for the last three years. The qualifying round was in Cavan equestrian centre. There were 79 ponies in her competition and six qualified for Dublin. In total there will be 24 competing, the other 18 coming from

other equestrian centres. Zarah will be jumping on Friday and Saturday 7th and 8th of August. We wish her the very best of luck.

Swimming Competitions

The school achieved great successes in the Connaught Swimming championships this year. Carrie McDaid, Liadhan Hanley, Maria Lyons. Lauren Gordon, Tara Walsh and Anna Mc Partland achieved first place in the Junior Relay at the Connaught schools' Swimming championships. Shona Keaveney came first in the 100m Butterfly, Maeve Keaney came first in the Backstroke and Carole McDaid came second in the 100m Freestyle.

A number of students were also picked for the interprovincial swimming team. They were: Maeve Keaney, Shona Keaveney and Carrie McDaid. The swimming team won gold in this competition. Swimmers for the interprovincial swimming team are selected based on their commitment, leadership and performance on the schools' teams. Well done girls - a fantastic achievement!

School rowing team

The school rowing team consisting of Cora Hackett, Anna Quinn, Fiona Kelly, Nicole Conway, Danielle O' Hehir, Nease Henehan, Meadhbh Murtagh, Eve Henry, Tara Dunbar took part in the Limerick's Schools Regatta on the 26th April. They reached the final which was a great achievement. Well done Team Ursuline!

Gaelic football

The U14 and U16 teams topped their group and progressed to the quarter finals of their respective competitions. Both teams were unlucky not to proceed further.

U15 Soccer

The U15 Soccer team were convincing winners of all their group stage matches and lost out to a stronger Taylor's Hill Galway in a very closely contested semi-final match.

First year Soccer

Well done to the 1st year soccer team who reached the Connaught final this year. They were convincing winners of their group games defeating Mercy Ballina, and Sacred Heart Westport. They met Claregalway in the Connaught semi-final and were convincing winners; they lost out, however, to a better team in the final. Keep up the hard work!

Basketball

Following on from their All-Ireland success last year, the senior basketball players found themselves competing at the top division of school basketball. In the league playoffs, the girls travelled to Dunshaughlin where they defeated the home team and were unlucky they lost out to Malahide by the narrowest of margins.

The first year basketball team travelled to Ballyshannon where they took part in the North West league and were placed second. Well done! They also got the opportunity to travel to Carrick on Shannon for a basketball blitz at the end of the year.

The second year basketball team travelled to Castleblayney for the All Ireland playoffs but were narrowly defeated by Clontarf.

The Cadette basketball team travelled to Castleblaney and qualified for the quarter final of the Cup. They were eventually defeated by the eventual champions Leixlip. Keep working hard, girls!

Marty's Party

Two of Ursuline College's PPI Gold Radio Award winning groups and their teacher Martha Lee were invited to RTE's Marty Party on Radio 1 on Friday 30 January 2015, by the man himself, Marty Morrissey. Marty interviewed fifth year student Ellen Murphy about the school's radio success, culminating this year in Ursuline's 21st national radio award. The group were also invited onto the set of the Late Late Show by Ryan Tubridy. The girls had a most enjoyable day.

Rathcairn Trip

A group of 6th year students travelled to the Rath Cairn Gaeltacht with their teacher Ms Lee to immerse themselves in Irish language and culture immediately before their oral exam. Alongside classes, mock orals, céilithe and quizzes, the group enjoyed a tour of the Royal Hill of Tara and the historical Trim Castle. All agreed that it was a most enjoyable and worthwhile weekend.

Golf

Jenny Demmel, Niamh Cronin and Meadhbh Rooney represented the school in the Connaught schools Golf competition which was held in Ballinrobe Golf club. They came first and qualified for the All - Ireland finals where they were awarded fourth place. They competed against St Michael's Grammar school Lurgan, Scoil Christ Ri, Santa Sabina Dublin and Intermediate Killorglin. Special congratulations to Jenny Demmel 1st year who achieved an overall best net result on the day. Well done!

Cross Country

Special congratulations to the Junior and Senior Cross Country team who won first prize at the Connaught finals. The senior team consisted of Caelinn McGonigle, Riona Connor, Laura Joyce and Kathy Devaney. The junior team were Ailbhe Morgan, Sadbh McCarthy, Eimear Joyce and Sarah Kisby. They went to the All - Ireland finals which were held in Kildare and all ran well. Ailbhe Morgan, 2nd year, finished 18th in a highly competitive race.

Track and Field

Our athletes performed very well at the Connaught schools Track and Field event held on the 14th May in Athlone I. T. Holly Davis achieved 1st place in the discus; Ciara Mooney, Caelainn Mc Gonigle and Orla Delahunt came 1st in the 200m, 800m and the Senior Girls walk respectively. Eve Delahunt came 1st in the Junior walk as did the Junior relay who came 3rd also in the hurdles. Other successes include Ailbhe Morgan 2nd in the 1500m, Lauren Cadden 2nd in the 100m, Laura Joyce 2nd in the 3000m and the Intermediate relay team also achieved 2nd place. We had a number of 3rd places including Cathy Devaney in the 1500m, Eimear Mc Callion in the Discus, Eimear Joyce in the 800m, Ciara Mooney in the hurdles and Tara Leech in the triple jump.

The All Ireland final of the track and field was held on Sat May 30th in Tullamore. Congratulations to all who participated in the finals. A special mention goes to Orlaith and Eva Delahunt who were placed 2nd and 3rd respectively in the walking races and Caelinn McGonigle who was placed 5th in the 800m. Well done girls.

Hockey News

U15

Both U 15 teams performed very well this in their 'A' league games. The Lupton team particularly had a great season. They got to the semi-finals of the Connaught league where they were narrowly defeated 2-1 by the eventual winners Salerno.

Over 50 first year students signed up to play hockey this year. After a slow start the Blackmore team won their matches. They qualified for the semi-final where they came up against Taylor's Hill in Galway. They played superbly helped by Katie Haran in goals. Robyn Kennedy got the only goal and the Ursuline was through to the final. The team were unlucky to lose the final to a very good team from Salerno. Keep up the hard work, girls!

Cahill also played very consistently well throughout the season and were unlucky not to qualify for the semi-final. All the girls are looking forward to playing hockey next year on our new Astro turf pitch. This will ensure an even higher standard of hockey and will cut down on the travelling for games.

We would also like to congratulate Katie Osborne who was selected to represent Ursuline College on the Connaught Interpros team.

Equestrian Success

Congratulations to the School Equestrian Team consisting of Jennifer Burke, Emily Burke, Isabel Burke and Elisa O'Connor who had a very successful year in the Equestrian Interscholar's Competitions. They finished in 9th Place on a score of 40 points in the Team League and finished 8th in the 5 Score league on a score of 38 points.

School Council

This year the student council members were involved in a variety of activities. During the Christmas term, the School Council organised a Christmas jumper day successfully raising 1,400 euro for the Simon Community. They also helped 5B with the collection for Nepal. The Nepal collection raised 1,400 Euro. In January, the School Council joined with other students in the school to act as Guides on Open Night. An Easter raffle was organised by the Council. This raised over 530 Euro, the proceeds of which will go towards the new Astro-turf pitch.

In the last term, the Council also organised a book collection for the school library. They would like to thank everyone who contributed and helped make this initiative successful. At the end of the school year, the Council reviewed the school's RSE policy and the Code of Discipline.

Career Guidance

Throughout April and May, 102 students from 3rd and Transition year sat the Cambridge profile aptitude tests. In the last term, a number of guest speakers came to talk to 5th years from Queens University, Sligo I.T. and NUI Galway, St. Angela's and Trinity College. Sligo I.T. held a TY Careers day in March which Ursuline Transition year students attended and enjoyed very much.

World Class Dancer

Congratulations to Ciara O'Mahony 1C who achieved first place in the U13 World Irish Dance Association World championships, which was held in Dusseldorf in April. She attends the Gallagher School of Dance.

First Year Trip

First year students enjoyed a trip to Boda Borg in Lough Allen Forest Park at the beginning of May. The students engaged in fun-filled activities, imaginative puzzles and other enjoyable team-building tasks. Each adventure allowed students to explore new paths together with curiosity, fun and excitement. It was deemed a thoroughly enjoyable day by students, Tutors and Year Heads alike.

Green Council

The Green Council are at present working towards their 4th flag for Sustainable Travel. This year, they liaised with the County Council regarding safe walking routes for students, and have contributed to improved road safety for students by adding reflective strips to the school jacket. They organised a Green Travel Day whereby students and teachers were encouraged to use more environmentally-friendly ways of travelling to school. The Green Council hopes that this will raise more awareness of sustainable methods of travelling to school and will help to remind everybody that each one has a part to play in the conservation of our environment.

The Poetry Slot

In Sept 2014 John Murray's show and 'The Works' on RTE1 began a search for a stand out poem in the last 100 years that told a story about us as a people. Thousands of poem nominations were whittled down to a long list of a hundred and to a final list of ten. On the 11th March in the Royal Irish Academy, Michael D. Higgins announced the winning poem 'When the others were away at Mass' by Seamus Heaney. The project was about two things, putting poetry at the heart of the Nation's conversation and to celebrate the things we do best.

Ursuline College students became involved in the project. Each Friday, a student from 'Poetry Aloud' recited a poem from the final list of poems and

prefaced each poem with a brief background to the poem. The poetry slot gave students a greater appreciation of Irish poetry.

The Royal Visit

In May, Sligo was honoured by the visit of Their Royal Highnesses the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall. There were many events arranged in honour of their visit. A number of Ursuline College students were involved in some of the organised events. Orla Nolan was asked to recite 'He wished for the Cloths of Heaven' by W. B. Yeats at the Model Art Centre. 3rd year students Sarah Waters and Grace Feeney and 6th year Catriona Feehily were part of the instrumental group who played Michael Rooney's new composition entitled 'Lord Mountbatten' for Prince Charles and the Duchess of Cornwall. This composition which incorporated themes of reflection, lament and celebration, included a poignant movement titled 'Lord Mountbatten' followed by the finale, 'Reconciliation'.

Niamh McGloin played 'Carolan's Concerto' and other airs on the harp as the Royal couple entered Sligo I.T. Aoife McKiernan, Bethany McLoughlin, and Etain Sweeney Keogh joined the combined schools choir who sang at the Ecumenical Service for Peace and Reconciliation which took place at St. Columba's Church Drumcliff. The event was attended by former President of Ireland Mary McAleese, Ambassador Dominick Chilcott and Bishops Glenfield and Doran. It was a very moving and symbolic service. These students will certainly cherish their memories of the events.

Amnesty international

An Amnesty International group was formed this year by a small group of 5th years. They held regular meetings in the school library. They also ran a poster competition to raise awareness among the student body of serious miscarriages of justice and to highlight the shocking abuse of human rights that still exist in the world. In May, they arranged for a guest speaker who worked with Amnesty International to speak to 5th years regarding the atrocities prevalent in Syria at present. Well done, girls for showing great initiative on such important issues.

Sci-fest 2015

Sci-fest is a series of one day Science fairs for second level students hosted locally by schools and regionally by Institutes of Technologies. The aim of the project is to encourage a love of Science, Technology and Maths through active, collaborative, inquiry-based learning at local, regional and national level. A number of Transition Year students entered the competition. Aoife Kearins and Aoibhinn Powell compiled a project entitled 'Listen Up, Fasten Up'. They produced a safety device for ensuring seat belts are worn in cars. Meadhbh Kenneally, Katie Osborne and Lauren O'Sullivan's project was entitled 'The Effect of Physical Exertion on Concentration Levels and Academic Performance.' They got highly commended. Well done girls - future scientists in the making, hopefully!

Cakes and Bakes

The school's entry to the St Patrick's Day parade this year was entitled 'Cakes and Bakes. All twenty six students spend six weeks assembling and decorating their individual costumes. They were awarded 'Best Novelty Entry' by the Sligo Parade committee. They added a great sense of humour and colour to the streets of Sligo. Well done to all those involved and particularly to Ms Milne who co-ordinated the project.

John Paul II Awards

Nine students received John Paul II Awards at a ceremony hosted by Summerhill College in May. The Gold recipients were Rachel Connolly, Shannon Connolly, Ruth Crawley, Neasa Henehan, Fiona Kelly, Eve Henry and Maeve Murtagh. Rebecca Friel and Ellen Murphy received the Papal Cross, John Paul II's highest Award. The recipients had to undertake Parish work such as reading at Mass, Eucharistic ministry, ushering, visiting nursing homes, working in charity shops and singing in church choirs for their Community Involvement section. They then had to give a

presentation to complete their Award. The Master of Ceremonies for the evening was Frank McGuinness. The Ursuline Junior choir opened the ceremony singing three songs, 'The Water is Wide', 'Get on Board' and 'Kum Ba Yah' conducted by Ms. Murray and accompanied by Ms. Prendergast. The guest speaker was Galway Rose Nicola Corcoran. She was very inspirational and made reference to the importance of personal relationship with God and also the importance of young people giving back to society. Our newly appointed Bishop of Elfin Kevin Doran was in attendance. The Summerhill College Choir closed the ceremonies. It was a lovely ceremony. Congratulations to all the recipients. Well done!

Gymnastic Glory

Congratulations to the following students who achieved great success at the National Acrobatic Gymnastic finals under the auspices of Club Dynamo which were held in Limerick this year. In the National finals, Aislinn Doggett 1C achieved 1st place in the Grade 4 mixed pair and Aoibhinn Darcy 2E achieved 1st place in the Grade 5 mixed pair.

In the regional titles, Jenny Demmel 1A and Anna Flanagan 5B came 1st in the Women's Grade 3 section, Aislinn Doggett came 1st in the in the Grade 3 mixed pair, Aoibhinn Darcy came 1st in the grade 5 mixed pair and Carrie Brennan 3A came 1st in the grade 4 Women's section. In the Grade 5 Women's group, 1st prize went to Kate McGuinn 2D. The clubs mixed pair David and Aoibhinn were also selected onto the Irish squad and competed at the Celtic cup and were placed in 2nd position. Well done to all involved. A wonderful achievement for well concerned.

Trocaire

This year's Trócaire's Lenten campaign highlighted how communities in developing countries are struggling to survive in the face of extreme changes in their weather systems. Ursuline students participating raised over 885 Euro for Trocaire. Congratulations to all who participated in the Fast.

Darkness into Light

The 5th year Art designed and painted a banner for the Darkness into Light run and walk which took place on the 9th May in aid of Pieta House. This is a walk/run that begins at 4.15am, and all participants cross the line as the dawn breaks. Many people commended on the lovely banner. Well done girls.

Public Speaking

This year Etain Sweeney Keogh 5th year participated in the Soroptomist Public Speaking competition. The topic she chose for her speech was 'Could the gender quota in politics have a detrimental effect on women or benefit us at all?' She was extremely successful and reached the All Ireland final which took place in Bray in February. Etain's speech was delivered with confidence and eloquence. Well done Etain!

Astro Turf Fund Raising Events

Boston Tea Party

The fund raising events began with the Boston Tea Party which was held in the Radisson on the 30th January. Guests were greeted by the Ursuline traditional group 'Beogacht'. Tables were hosted by the Parents' Council, the Ursuline community, Senior hockey team students, staff, past and present pupils and Yeats hockey club. A total of twenty six tables in all were hosted and some went so far as to name their tables 'Mammas and Pappas' and the 'Naughty Corner'. Guests feasted on gastronomical delights provided by their hostesses. In the background on huge screens was a slide show set on a continuous loop throughout the night. Its theme was 'Ursuline Times Past and Present' featuring photographs of past and present students and staff gathered by Brenda McCallion. This gave a nostalgic atmosphere to the evening. Scruffy Duffy provided entertainment throughout the night.

A little light entertainment was provided by our own Eileen Clifford and Sean Martin competing in a bake off. To warm up, both competitors danced a short

excerpt from River Dance. To encourage audience participation, each table was supplied with an X factor sign. The winner was decided by the greatest amount of signs held up by the audience. The Bake-Off was taken very seriously. A chef from the Hotel judged the final result with Sean deemed the winner. Entertainment was also provided by a lovely female barbershop quartet entitled 'Notorious 4'. Dancing continued into the small hours and a wonderful night was had by all. This event raised over 8,000 Euro. Thank you to everyone who supported this event with particular thanks to the fund-raising committee.

Pledge a Pound

Ursuline students participated in our 'Pledge a Pound' Astro-turf fund-raising project. All students were given 'Pledge a Pound' cards. They were encouraged to ask family and friends to nominate tasks in return for a small donation. Baby sitting, washing cars, house hold tasks, walking dogs and mowing lawns were some of the more popular tasks undertaken by the students. The students worked hard and raised over 5,000 Euro. Sincere thanks to all the students who supported this event. Well done!

5K Run/Walk

The 5k run/walk took place on Sunday 26th April. The weather was very favourable. The race started and ended at the school via Ballast Quay and the First Sea Road. The event involved the whole school community with students, parents and staff participating. Some were involved in providing refreshments, others in the organisation of the event and many participated in the race. An official ending point was set up by Cor timing as there were prizes for first and second place. A great morning was had by all with a total of 200 participants taking part. The event raised over 2000 Euro. Well done, everyone!

We gratefully acknowledge the support, sponsorship and hard work of all those who contributed in any way to the success of our fund-raising activities to date.

'Ar scath a cheile a mhaireann na daoine' is indeed true. Thank you, everyone.

King Lear

All 5th year Higher English students attended a performance of King Lear in the School's Sports Hall on Friday 13th March. The performance featured a selection of scenes. Afterwards there was a question and answer session. The students really enjoyed the performance and found the Q and A session very informative.

World Book Week

There was a week of activities in March to celebrate World Book Day. First years were encouraged to dress up in a costume of their favourite character from a book while second years had a table quiz in the canteen. There were Easter eggs as prizes for both events. Transition years went on a private viewing of 'Suite Française' in the Gaiety Cinema.

Healthy Living Week

Healthy Living Week (27th April – 1st May) involved cross curricular activities promoting positive mental health and wellness for young people, carried out by all teachers in their subject area. This week linked in with the Department of Education and Skills' Active Week Initiative. Activities included posters which were displayed on corridor walls, guided meditations, incorporating physical activity into lessons and classroom discussions on stress and resilience, balanced nutrition and healthy use of leisure time. 5D made up and sold healthy smoothies at lunchtime. 2B organised a Healthy Snacking Event also, both of which were very successful. Free Fruit and dairy products along with seed based snacks were promoted to students and proved very popular. These samples were sponsored by Total Produce, Aurivo and Good4U. Fifth year council members delivered a 'thought for the day' each morning on the intercom. Students received talks from outside visitors i.e. Aware gave a presentation on mental wellbeing and resilience to 5th years, Mental Health Ireland gave a

talk on Managing Stress to 6th years and 3rd years. The Marie Keating Foundation gave 2nd years a talk on substance use and Cancer Awareness. Sligo I. T. gave 1st years a synopsis of the recreational activities available in Sligo. The week ended with a whole school walk to the Mitchell Curley Park followed by a Céili Mór in the Sports hall for all 1st and 2nd years organised by the Irish Department. Student and teacher feedback from all the activities was extremely positive. Well done to all staff and students for getting involved and supporting this Healthy Living initiative and sincere thanks to Ms Clarke for co-ordinating the week's activities.

Prize Giving Ceremony

This year's prize giving ceremony took place on the 14th May in the Ursuline College Sports Hall. The entire student body gathered with Sr. Mairead and teaching staff to celebrate and acknowledge the participation and hard work in Academia, Sport, Voluntary activities, Social Justice, Music, Arts and Culture and Leadership of so many students throughout the school. We congratulate all recipients. 6th year Student of the Year 2015 Sinead Lynch was presented with the prestigious Sr. St Paul Trophy. Etain Sweeney Keogh 5th year, Emer Harte 4th year, Jenna Conway and Aoife Gallagher 3rd year, Eimear Kearins and Aoife McIntyre 2nd year and Leonie Scanlon and Aoife Barrett 1st were presented with Student of the Year Awards for their respective years. Special Merit Awards were awarded to Fatma Dogan 1B, Karen Morgan 4D, Niamh Feeney 6D, Niamh McGloin 6B, Fatima Arif 3B, Tiffany Qiu 2C and Kirsty McNiffe 6C. Junior Scientist of the Year Award was presented to Katie McGoldrick 3rd year and the Senior Scientist of the Year Award was presented to Sinead McKenna, Doireann Lawless and Fiona Gallagher. Emma Kevany received the Sports Star of the Year Award for her outstanding talent, leadership qualities and commitment to sport in the school. Sr. Mairead acknowledged the contribution made to the school by Head Girl Fiona Mc Cormack and Deputy Head Girl Emma Kevany and each received Leadership awards. Sr. Mairead also recognised the hard work, generosity and enthusiasm of the student council and their contribution to the school. They were awarded certificates.

There were musical and poetic interludes throughout the Awards. 'Beogacht' an Irish traditional group performed twice, first singing an Irish song and then performing an instrumental piece. Tiffany Qiu played the Flight of the Bumble Bee, an immensely challenging piece on piano and The Waltons group performed one of their songs from their recent performance in the Concert Hall. Julia Mullaney recited her poem 'The Whole Mess Almost' and Ava O' Grady recited from Clearances: 'When All the Others Were Away at Mass'. Both of these students took part in the National Competition Poetry Aloud. The ceremony was a very enjoyable event for all. Sincere thanks to Ms Ni Loideain and her team for co-ordinating the event.

Transition Year Night Awards

Transition year students showcased their work at Parents' night held in the Sports Hall on the 18th May. The students presented the work completed in each subject area and in a wide range of extracurricular activities. Each student was then presented with their certificates of achievement. Niamh Mc Kenna played a lovely piece on violin from the film 'Schindler's List' and Aoife Kearins, Poetry Aloud Semi-finalist, recited a poem entitled 'The Beat Box'. Transition Year Co-ordinator Colm McIntyre thanked everyone for all the help he'd received in his new role as Transition Year Co-ordinator. He congratulated the students for getting involved in so many activities and on their commitment to seeing their projects through to the end. Sr. Mairead spoke of the potential of Transition Year and she encouraged students to take their learning with them and build on it for 5th year. She also reminded students that with long holidays before them, students might volunteer in their local area or parish to make life better for others. She thanked the staff for all their hard work

and energy throughout the year. She also thanked Mr. McIntyre for his dedication to the Transition Year students. After her words, refreshments were served and parents inspected the various displays around the Sports Hall

Graduation Mass

The 6th Year Graduation Mass took place in the Sports Hall on Wednesday 20th May. The students processed into the hall with music played by Zita McLoughlin on piano. Each student placed a leaf with their hopes and dreams inscribed on painted branches. The opening hymn Cantate Domino set the tone for the evening. Head Girl Fiona McCormack welcomed everyone to the Mass before handing over to the Celebrant Fr. Declan. The theme of the Mass was 'New Possibilities' and the readings, prayers, reflections and songs sung by the choir reflected the theme. 1st and 2nd readings – Jeremiah 31; Romans 8 were read by Rebecca Lowney and Niamh Ni Dhomhnaill and the responsorial psalm 'Cloud's Veil' was sung by Gillian Fallon. The Offertory instrumental 'Innisfree' was played by Niamh McGloin, Ciara O'Neill, Sinead McKenna and Kate Healy. During Communion, the choir sang 'Lord we are not worthy' and 'Stand by me.' This was followed by a small group of singers/musicians comprising of Niamh Feeney, Aoife Keane, Gillian Fallon, Laura Curley and Debbie McGoldrick who gave a lovely rendition of 'Lean on me.' Fr. Declan referred to the importance of students being able to take the initiative. At the end, Sr. Mairead's final message to the students was to believe in themselves, to build community, to be aware that they are not alone as the Mass readings reminded them and to have the confidence and resilience to build on their experiences to meet the challenges ahead.

When Mass had finished, the girls sang a rousing version of 'These Days' - their final song.

After the Mass, Fiona McCormack and Emma Kevany thanked Sr. Mairead, Mrs Waters, Teaching Staff, Office Staff, Maintenance Staff and their parents for all the care shown to them during their school years. They relived memories and events of their past six years. Without doubt, this was a very moving and emotional evening for all present.

The 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.

Farewell

We bid farewell to Ms. Patricia Jordan who has been a very valued member of our Home Economics department. We would like to thank her for her immense contribution to school life in the Ursuline College. We would like to wish her luck as she approaches a new and exciting phase in her life.

The Board of Management also takes this opportunity to wish Ms Jordan every happiness in her new job. The Board thanks her most sincerely for her very real dedication and commitment to the students of Ursuline College and to the overall life of the school for many years.

End of Year

I wish the best of luck to 3rd and 6th year students in their exams. Stay calm, do your best and keep a balanced view. I encourage all students to give generously of their time over the summer to make life a little easier for others and I wish one and all happy and safe holidays.



Sr. Mairead O'Brien

Sr. Mairead

'Be glad of life because it gives you the chance to pray and to love and work and to look up at the stars.'
(Van Dyke)