

Ursuline College • Sligo



PARENTS' NEWSLETTER - CHRISTMAS 2015

Dear Parents / Guardians,

As the term draws to a close, I thank everyone for their hard work and enthusiasm, their focus and initiative, their care and concern for others and the generosity of spirit that have characterised school life this term. The Newsletter gives a snapshot of many of the curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities that have taken place over the past few months. I hope that you enjoy reading about them.

Entrance Scholarships

Congratulations to the following students who received Entrance Awards from University College Dublin: Fiona Gallagher, Clíodhna Hanley, Doireann Lawless and Jennifer Mahon. They were recognised for their excellent academic achievement in the Leaving Certificate Examination this year. We wish the girls every success in the future.

J P McManus All Ireland Scholarship 3rd Level Education Award.

This year, Sinead Lynch, a student of the 2015 Leaving Certificate class was awarded a JP McManus scholarship. Sinead will receive almost seven thousand euro per annum and this will continue for the duration of her chosen undergraduate course. Only one hundred scholarships are awarded each year with a minimum of two per county. The purpose of the scheme is to support young people so they can avail of 3rd level education. This is a wonderful opportunity for Sinead and we wish her every success in her chosen career. Sinead was presented with her award by Minister for Education and Skills Jan O'Sullivan and JP McManus.

Naughton Foundation Scholarship

Congratulations to Doireann Lawless who has been awarded a 20,000 Euro scholarship to study engineering at UCD. Only one scholarship is awarded per county. Doireann will receive E5,000 per annum for each year of her undergraduate degree. Scholarships are awarded to students who progress to courses in Science, Maths, Engineering or Technology in publically funded third level institutions in Ireland north and south. Doireann was presented with her scholarship by the University College Dublin's President Professor Andrew J Deeks and Dr. Martin Naughton and his wife Carmel.

Prix De Laureat de la Licence en Droit

Congratulations to Claire Mohan a UCD Astra Academic Scholar who was awarded a Prix de Laureat en Droit by the University of Toulouse 1 Capitole for achieving results that placed her in the top three students of her class 2014-2015. Claire who was a student in the 2012 Leaving Certificate class is in her final year of the BCL/Maitrise degree programme. We wish her every success in her final exams.

The opening of the School Year Mass

The Opening of the School Year Mass took place

on the 7th October in the Sport's Hall. Staff and students along with celebrant Fr. Declan gathered together to ask God's blessing on the new school year. The ceremony began with the bringing up of symbols of Ursuline life - a crest, a bible and a globe made by the art department. The opening words were spoken by Head girl Bronagh Hever, who had a special welcome for first years and Fr. Declan blessed the students with holy water brought back by the 3rd years on their trip to Lough Derg. The readings were read by Aoife Platt and Fiona Kelly and the psalm was sung by Aishling O'Regan. There were prayers of the faithful, singing and instrumental music by Niamh McKenna and Dionne Tims, Emily Acheson, Etain Sweeney Keogh, Elise Brennan and Bláithín Wall.

The theme of this year's Mass was justice. In his homily Fr. Declan shared his own personal experiences re faith and good works and all were deeply touched by his honesty. He believes that true faith is in our actions and how we treat those in need. He mentioned how the school is noted for its charitable works but he reminded us that that our good deeds must be God-centred, that if good deeds are done through God, it will feed our soul not our egos. Sr. Mairead gave a short address at the end of Mass encouraging us to keep praying: 'More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of' (Tennyson); to keep helping others, working hard and striving to be the best we can be. Sincere thanks to the R.E. and Music departments who did great work in the preparation of the Mass

Business Awards

Six students who achieved an A in Junior Cert Business in 2015 were honoured by the National Association of Business Teachers of Ireland in conjunction with the National University of Ireland Galway. These students were Katie McGoldrick, Grainne Moyles, Volga M. Saini, Maeve Rooney, Leah Rooney and Ewelina Chmielak. The ceremony was held in the College of Business, Public Policy and Law in NUI Galway on the 19th October 2015. We congratulate the students and wish them continued success in their studies.

Science Olympiad

Congratulations to Volga M. Saini and Katie McGoldrick who have been identified by the state Examinations commission as High Achievers in Maths and Science in the 2015 Junior Certificate Examination. They will go forward to compete in the Irish European Union Maths and Science Olympiad

to be held on the 24th October in DCU.

Students Councillors 2015 -2016

The student council for the coming year has been formed. Congratulations to Bronagh Hever 6C who has been appointed Head Girl and Caitlin Connolly 6C who has been elected Deputy Head girl. The 6th years elected to the school council were Ella Burke 6A, Etain Sweeney Keogh 6C, Denise Regan 6D, Ellen Murphy, Shirley Nicholson and Rachel Flynn. 5th years elected were Meadhbh Murtagh 5A, Emer Harte 5B, Niamh McKenna 5C, Evanne Kilgannon 5D, and Meadhbh Kenneally 5E. TY Councillors are Alice Jo Purcell 4A, Ella Morrison 4B, Lisa Flynn 4C and Sarah McMorrow 4D. Third years elected to the Council are Anya Raftery 3A, Emer McKenna 3B, Aoife McIntyre and Aisling Sweeney 3C, Joanne Fitzpatrick 3D and Tara O'Reilly 3E. Second year Councillors are Aine Keaney 2A, Lauren Gordon 2B, Ellen Given 2C and Leonie Scanlon 2D. Ellie Gray 1A, Lauren French 1B, Anna Flanagan 1C, Lisa Kelly 1D, and Ingrid Sheils 1E were elected to represent First years. We wish them well all in the year ahead.

Knock Retreats

Since the beginning of the school term, first and second year students have attended a day retreat in Knock as part of the school's Religious and pastoral programme with our school chaplain Sr. Dorothy. The aim of the retreat is to give students a much needed time out to explore their relationship with God and give them a memorable experience of Knock.

The day includes ice breakers and games, self-reflection workshops, a guided tour of Knock Shrine, a visit to Knock Museum and time for reflection and prayer at the end of the day. It is evident that the students thoroughly enjoyed their retreats and will hopefully have fond memories of their experience in Knock for years to come.

Delphi Adventure Centre

Towards the end of September, the Transition Year group travelled to Delphi Adventure centre for a residential bonding session. During the two days, the girls were arranged into teams for activities such as kayaking, abseiling, climbing, mud running and the forest walk. The experience proved to be very enjoyable for the girls and it also allowed them the opportunity to get to know their team mates better.

Poetry Slam Workshops

Inspireland's multi award winning poet, Stephen

Murray, visited the school in September. All TY students were given the opportunity to participate in interactive workshops facilitated by Steve. He encouraged students to delve into their own experiences and imagination and to produce their own poems. The girls enjoyed the enthusiastic, energetic and vibrant approach of the poet on the day.

Lough Derg Visit

On October 5th, 70 third year students, along with their Religion teachers Ms. Murray and Ms. McCann, travelled to Lough Derg in Pettigo Co. Donegal. The students were visiting Lough Derg as part of their journal work for their Junior Certificate Religious Education Journal booklet. They were investigating two places of religious importance in Ireland today to discover their similarities. All students had been to Knock as part of their 1st and 2nd year retreats and so were now able to compare the two experiences. Students went on a guided boat trip around the islands of Saint and Station. They also watched a DVD on the history and pilgrimages of Lough Derg and were brought on a guided tour of the Island. It was an educational and enjoyable trip for all.

Geography Fieldtrip to Rosses Point

Over 70 Leaving Cert Geography students travelled to Rosses Point beach with their teachers Ms. Reilly and Ms. Horan to complete their Geography fieldwork. Students examined the effects of Coastal erosion and human activity on the development of landforms in Rosses Point. We wish them luck in their fieldwork projects.

BT Young Scientist and Technology Exhibition 2016

This year, five projects were accepted from Ursuline College Sligo to display at the BT Young Scientist and Technology Exhibition 2016. Aoife Kearins is presenting a Senior Technology project based on Road safety. Tina Gheghici is working on an Intermediate Behavioural Science project investigating veganism. There are three group projects: Katie McGoldrick, Leah Rooney and Maeve Keane are entered in the Intermediate Physics section with a project on Humans' ability to travel without frames of reference; Eva Ryan, Ella Morrison and Maeve Rooney are investigating a new type of alarm for their entry in the Intermediate Technology section and Laura McGuinn, Shauna Griffin and Denise Conlon are studying the physiological effects of ultrasonic frequencies on humans for their Intermediate Physics entry. We wish them the best of luck.

Well done to Cliona Hynes, Aoibhinn Buckley, Aishling O' Regan, Aoibhinn McGauran, Eadaoin Kelly and Charlotte Kinsella who entered the BT Young Scientist and Technology Exhibition too. Though they didn't make it to the final, they are nevertheless continuing their projects for display in Scifest later in 2016. All students worked very hard and deserve congratulations for their efforts.

Life choice Programme

The second group of students have just completed the Life Choice Programme. During this course the girls learn about topics such as relationships and responsible behaviour under the guidance of Catherine Mc Cann from NCYCS. Students were then given the opportunity to bring a virtual baby home with them overnight. Judging by some of the tired faces the following morning, these babies were not quite as angelic as they first appeared. The girls were then given computerised feedback from Catherine.

My Adopted Soldier

Earlier this year, Emily Acheson, a 6th year student was chosen to represent Co. Sligo in an All - Ireland history competition in which she researched a WW1 soldier from Sligo. In June, along with 31 other students, she travelled to the Somme in Northern France to visit the graves of their respective soldiers. R.T.E 1's 'Nationwide' did a special 2-part programme on the project which was aired on the 9th and 11th November to mark Remembrance Day. It is still

available to watch on the RTE player. Additional information on the project can also be found on the website: www.myadoptedsoldier.com. Well done, Emily on your wonderful work.

Requiem for Julie

Transition year students attended the Musical Production of "Requiem for Julie" written by Shaun Purcell in October at the Hawkswell Theatre. Students from T.Y. and 5th year were participating in the production. It was very much enjoyed by all who attended.

TY Days of Reflection

Our Chaplain Sr. Dorothy arranged two days of reflection for the Transition Year classes. The days were facilitated by Gerry Keegan using his unique brand of storytelling, music and song. The feedback from students indicated that the days were both enlightening and enjoyable.

Japanese class trip to Miso Restaurant

After weeks of wading through the learning of hiragana and katakana symbols, Miss Walker suggested the class might benefit by having lunch in the new Japanese restaurant, Miso and try out their newly learnt phrases.

Miso was beautiful; paper lanterns, carved chopsticks and a long mirror inscribed with meals of the day. The staff welcomed the group and presented each with cups of Miso soup, the dish from which the restaurant takes its name. The next course consisted of oddly shaped tempura shrimp and vegetables. Then came enormous platters of yakisoba chicken and vegetables with noodles. Finally the anticipated sushi, cut into neat rounds, served with pickled ginger.

All enjoyed the food though some found the eating of raw fish a little more challenging. Despite the group's incredibly broken Japanese, the staff were friendly and accessible. Some members of the group managed to string together some of the newly learnt sentences; *gochisosama!*

Faith and light

2C organised a pick and mix sale in aid of Faith and Light, the sister organisation of L'arche, a community they had studied this term as part of their Religious Education course. They raised €160 from their fundraiser and presented the cheque to Sr. Teresa Fahy and Liz Magadin from the Faith and Light shop in Sligo. The money will go towards services for people with intellectual disabilities. Well done to 2C for all their hard work.

Gaisce – The President Awards Ceremony

The Gaisce President Award Ceremony 2015 was hosted by Ursuline College on the 21st October. Students from Colaiste Cholmille Ballyshannon, Mercy College and Ursuline College received Bronze and Silver awards. Michael Collins, Regional Development Officer was the MC for the occasion. The awards were presented by Sandy Kelly, entertainer and former Eurovision entrant who spoke very warmly and eloquently and offered personal reflections from her own life's experiences. Three speakers from Ursuline College – two students and one staff member – spoke about their Gaisce experiences. Kate Barlett spoke about her trip to the Camino trail in Spain which she undertook for the adventurous section of the Gold Award. She also offered advice to those who might consider the same trip next year. Elaine Maguire, another Gold participant related her experiences at the army boot camp in the Curragh which she completed last June. Finally, Emer Prendergast, a staff member and a Gold recipient described her personal journey to the Gold Award. Michael remarked during the ceremony that the participants receiving awards had volunteered over 2000 hours locally in many locations throughout Sligo and Donegal. Congratulations to the 39 Bronze and 15 Silver Ursuline Gaisce participants on their achievements.

Public Access to the Law

In November, TY students were visited by three

Barristers, two females and one male. They were introduced to topics such as a definition of Law, sources of Law, the concept of Justice and life as a practising Barrister/Solicitor. In the afternoon the students then participated in Mock Trials where they were divided into Solicitors, Barristers and Jury. The Barristers were very impressed with the abilities and potential of the students. It is hoped that some of the girls may enter the forthcoming Mock Trial Competition in Dublin.

Crocus project

Class 4B, history module, participated in the H.E.T.I. Crocus Project in commemoration of the child victims of the Holocaust. On October 23rd, the girls planted the bulbs in the ground prepared by Medbh Martin who impressed all with her gardening skills. Stella Marufu organised the distribution of the bulbs. When planting was completed, Jorja Hallahan read a beautiful poem and spoke movingly about the children. Eve Ryan provided music for the occasion and Claire Keane photographed the ceremony. The girls will monitor the growth of the flowers.

Fundraiser for the Northwest Hospice

As part of a Religious Education class project, 2A carried out a fundraiser for the Northwest Hospice. They baked delicious cakes, buns and cookies and sold them at break and lunch in the sale. They raised over 130 Euro for the Northwest Hospice which they presented to Bernadette, a representative from the Hospice. Bernadette also gave the class an informative and interesting talk on the work of the Hospice and where the funds they raised will go. She congratulated the class on their hard work and achievement.

Show jumping Achievement

Congratulations to Louise Mahon 3B, who secured a Gold medal for Ireland in an International Show Jumping competition over midterm in Southview England as part of team Ireland. Well done also to Zara Kelly 3E, who in the same competition secured an individual top ten position against stiff competition nationally and internationally. Well done to both girls.

Web Summit 2015

This year, Ireland had the honour of hosting the prestigious 'Web Summit 2015'. In four years, the web summit has grown from 400 attendees to 22,000 from more than 110 countries. It has been called 'the best Technology Conference on the planet'.

On Tuesday the 3rd of November, 40 students from 1st year and Transition Year had the pleasure of attending the event. They arrived at the RDS just before the start of the innovative conference. On entering the venue, the students audibly gasped at the stage set up and lighting which were very impressive.

The evening speakers touched on a variety of subjects, from curing cancer to stamping out bullying in schools. Each speaker had one thing in common, they all believed that their business idea came from a personal belief and passion.

The first speaker, a young man, Reily Ennis from America told his poignant story of how his sister fell ill with cancer. He told the audience how he combined his three passions of marine Biology, Immunity studies and cancer cures to pursue all avenues to find a cure. Another speaker Scott Harrison told them how he gave up all his wealth to devote his life to helping Third world countries receive basic clean water. The students heard from two Primary school girls Chloe and Caitlyn who devised a wristband connected to an App entitled 'Bullybug' which alerted teachers if someone was being bullied. All through the evening's talks, the students were encouraged to 'Prove their Passion'.

It was a very inspirational conference that touched and impressed all the students attending. The evening was truly informative and hopefully when the event is back in Dublin in the future, there will be an Ursuline College student up on the stage inspiring others.

High Achiever Awards

Roisin McIntyre 1st year and Aishling O' Regan 4th Year were awarded High Achievers' Awards in Piano

and Singing respectively recently. This was presented to them at the High Achievers' concert held in the National University of Ireland Galway. Aishling also performed at the concert which was a huge honour. Achiever's Awards recognise outstanding students who show potential in instrumental and vocal categories.

Poetry Aloud

On Friday 6th November, the Regional final of Poetry Aloud took place in Sligo Grammar School. This is an annual competition open to all Post Primary students in Ireland. It is organised by Poetry Ireland and the National Library of Ireland. Over seventy students from Sligo, Donegal and Tyrone took part in this year's regional heat. Each entrant had to recite two poems, a mandatory poem and a poem of each one's own choosing. Four students from Ursuline College Sligo qualified for this Year's semi-final. They were Orla Nolan, Ava O Grady, Martha Lovett Cullen and Aoihbhinn McGauran.

The Semi-final took place in the National Library in Dublin on November 19th. Again each student was required to recite two poems. A very high standard was achieved by all participants. Congratulations to Ava O' Grady and Martha Lovett who qualified for the All-Ireland final in the Intermediate and Senior category. Thirty six students were chosen out of 1806, the highest number of entries to date. The Final was held on the 4th December. Though not placed, both girls recited their poems wonderfully well and it was a great achievement to have reached the final. They were a credit to the school. A big thank you to Ms. Morris for all her work and preparation with the participants and to Ms Moran for accompanying the students.

St Vincent de Paul Youth Group

A St. Vincent de Paul Youth group was formed this year by a number of TY & 5th year students with the help and guidance of Home Economics and RE teacher Ms Hanahoe. The group's aim is to help make a difference in the lives of those less fortunate in our community. Initially, a member of SVP youth development team Sharon Tuohy, visited the students to offer advice and support in the setting up and running of the group. Sharon spoke to the students about the important and selfless work people do for the society of St Vincent de Paul, and the small steps that can be taken to make a difference in people's lives. She will provide continuous guidance to students over the coming year as they seek to work for change. The students meet every Monday at lunch to plan projects and arrange volunteering. So far, the SVP group has been very successful in raising awareness and fundraising for activities including a bake sale, a Christmas raffle and the Annual SVP food appeal.

The school community has responded very enthusiastically to this year's food appeal, as students from every class brought in non-perishable foods for distribution by the local branch of the St. Vincent de Paul. This effort will be a great help to those in need. Thank you to everyone for your kindness and generosity. The generosity of so many will help to make a big difference to those for whom life is particularly difficult this Christmas. Each one's help can last a lifetime.

The SVP group also created a Remembrance tree this year which provided comfort for those who had experienced bereavement. The group designed a tree on which students could attach tree ornaments with the names of deceased relatives and friends. There was a lovely vibrant display of faith and prayers in the Prayer room for those loved gone before us to heaven.

Well done to these students who have given their own time to establish the group and whose hard work and dedication has resulted in such a fantastic addition to our school and community as a whole.

A sincere thanks to the following businesses that have been very generous in donating prizes for the Christmas raffle and in supporting the work of the Ursuline SVP group: Fabios, Nicholson's Pharmacy, Horan's Chemist, Lyons Café, Higgins Pharmacy, EJs, Cadeaux, Rosannos, Liber, Yums Yums, Grappa, Naturelles, Casa Mia, Heart's Desire, La Femme, The Harp Tavern and The Snug. We deeply appreciate your support.

Soroptomist Girls Public Speaking Competition

Cliona Hynes and Rhian Sayers 4th Year participated in the first round of the Soroptomist Girls Public Speaking Competition on Sunday 22nd November in the Clarion Hotel Sligo. Both girls delivered their speeches with eloquence and passion. They have both qualified for the regional finals which take place on 30th January 2016. Well done, girls! Best of luck in the next round.

Show jumping Glory

Congratulations to Elisa O'Connor who was a member of the Irish Team that won the Nations Cup at the CSIP tour at the International show in Neeroeteren Belgium. There were fifteen teams from all over Europe. Well done, Elisa! A fantastic Achievement.

Maths Inspection

The Maths Department underwent a Maths inspection by Jason Kelly from the Department of Education and Skills on the 23rd and 24th November. He visited a number of Maths classes from 1st to 6th year over the course of the two days. He commended the great work being done by the Maths Department. The report will be available on the Department of Education's website in the New Year.

Shoe box appeal

This year the First year group had the opportunity to meet Carol Hennessy from the 'Samaritans Purse', the Irish branch of the Shoe Box appeal. They heard at first hand where all the shoe boxes are sent and also stories of children's reactions to receiving them. Students again responded very enthusiastically to this year's Shoe Box Appeal. Over 185 shoe boxes were collected. Ms. O'Neill and 2B set up a 'Shoe Boxometer' around the pole inside the yellow doors. Many thanks to Ms. O'Neill's 2B class and the Student Council who helped co-ordinate this year's campaign.

School Council News

The School Council had a training day on Monday 16th November. The officers were elected at the end of the training sessions. The Chairperson for 2015/16 is Ellen Murphy; Denise Regan is Vice chairperson; Alice Jo Purcell and Niamh McKenna are Secretary and Vice Secretary respectively. The Treasurer is Etain Sweeney Keogh and Assistant Treasurer is Emer McKenna. Finally Caitlin Connolly is P.R.O. and Assistant P.R.O. is Rachel Flynn.

The Council visited Nazareth House Nursing Home on Tuesday December 15th where they sang carols and entertained the residents. They all enjoyed the afternoon immensely.

National Youth Orchestra of Ireland

Congratulations to Dionne Tims who has been offered a place in the National Youth Orchestra Viola section. Niamh McKenna has been selected for the reserve National Youth Orchestra's violin section. The National Youth Orchestra is drawn from all of Ireland and so highlights what a great achievement it is for both girls. Well doen!

Guidance News

The Guidance department had a very successful productive term. 5th and 6th years engaged in study skills classes at the beginning of the term. 6th years have begun the process of their CAO applications. Students received talks from NUIG and NUI Maynooth with more planned for the coming months.

5th year students have conducted some career interest tests. TY students spent the term learning about the world of work and preparing for Work Experience.

It is hoped that all of this work will enable students to identify their own interests and skills and help guide them to some informed decision-making re career choices.

Green Council

This year, Ursuline College has a very vibrant and enthusiastic Green Council working on our 4th green

flag for Sustainable Travel. It is also important to maintain the good practice of our previous flag themes, sustainable waste, energy conservation and water conservation. So far this year, Green Council members have worked with Aine O' Loughlin from An Taisce to conduct a Walkability Audit to make sure all routes to school are safe, before we encourage students to walk or "park and stride" to school again in Spring.

We were pleased to welcome the "Bin It!" roadshow to the Sports Hall in November. The show sent a strong message to all first years to bin their waste, especially chewing gum. It was presented in a fun and interactive way and was enjoyed by all present.

The Green Council members for 2015/2016 are: Caoilfhionn Callery, Aoife Devlin, Aoife Maher, Emma McGoldrick, Ava Murray, Clara Barrins and Nuala Kerrigan - First Year. Muniba Mustafa, Amy Hopkins and Maria Lyons - Second Year.

Maria Henehan, Rolissa Rugamba, Kamla Ahmad, Sarah Healy, Aoife Rafter, Eimear Rafter, Ava O Grady and Emily Howard - Third Year. Tina Gheghici, Tara O' Hehir, Ceola Mitchell and Eva Ryan - Transition Year. Anna Petsch, Fiona Kelly, Tara Dallat, Laura Kaufmann, Belissa Rugamba - Fifth Year. Elise Brennan, Emily Acheson, Sarah Lynch, Sarah Rice, Martha Mc Govern, Blaithin Wall, Katherine Demmel, Emma Feehily and Sarah Nicholson - Sixth Year.

Sports Council 2015 -2016

Sarah Keaney 6E was elected school Sport's Captain for 2015/16. Sixth years Sinead Ni Bhroin 6A, Helen McDonagh 6B and Eva Martin 6C, Niamh Cassidy 6E, Grainne Egan 6E were also elected. Fifth year Sports captains are Aoife Leahy 5A, Emma Gallagher 5C, Kate Anderson 5D and Katie Osborne 5E. Elected in Transition Year were Aoife Gilroy 4A, Ebha Reddy 4B, Attracta Halloran 4C and Ella McDermott 4D. The 3rd years elected were Ciara Mooney 3B, Andrea Flynn 3C, Kate Keyes 3D and Yasmin Connolly 3E. Representatives elected from 2nd year are Aoife Smyth 2A, Tara Walsh 2B, Laura Denvir 2C and Kelsey O'Boyle 2D. In First year Kate Gonley, 1A, Cathy Harrison 1B, Sorcha Cunnane 2C, Sarah Melvin 2D and Sophie Mc Donagh were elected. We wish the girls the best of luck in the year ahead.

Hockey

The first half of this season has seen both our senior teams and our U.16 team compete in their respective leagues. The Senior A team played some really close matches and were unlucky to miss out on a semi-final spot. The Senior B team were in a very tough section but played some very good hockey. The U.16 team had a great run all the way to the semi-final where they came up against a well organised team from The Jes in Galway. Despite going ahead 1-0 early in the first half and playing the better hockey, the Ursuline lost out on a final spot by 2-1.

The start of November saw the first hockey matches held on our new Astro turf pitch. This fantastic facility now means the students can compete in their own school and not have to travel to so many away games. All 3 teams played their last pool games of their league at home. Eva Martin was the first Ursuline student to score on the new pitch.

On the 27th of November the Ursuline hosted a first year blitz. Despite some awful weather conditions, over 100 students from 3 different schools took part in the 5-aside matches. This was a great learning experience for all involved and the girls are now looking forward to competing in the Connacht league in the New Year. Well done to all involved especially the Transition Year students who managed teams, umpired and coordinated on the day. The Ursuline 1st year team emerged victorious on the day. Well done, First years!

Congratulations to the following girls who played for Connacht at the recent Interprovincial tournament which took place in Dublin this year: Katie Osborne (U.18), Katie Haran, Medbh Martin and Eimear Osborne (U.16). The girls represented their school with pride and played fantastically throughout the weekend.

Soccer

Congratulations to the 1st year futsal team who won the Connacht finals on November 19th in Sligo IT. The Ursuline girls had a great opening to their campaign with a 3-0 victory over Scoil Mhuire, Strokestown. They progressed to the final defeating Lough Allen College, Leitrim, and Claregalway College, Galway in their final game. The girls played Sacred Heart, Westport in a tense and thrilling final emerging victorious on a 3-1 final score line. They took part in the All-Ireland finals on December 8th at the National Basketball Arena Tallaght where they met other provincial winners and were awarded Bronze medals. Keep up the good work, Girls!

U17 Soccer:

Well done to the U17 soccer team who finished top of their group after two convincing wins in their league games. They defeated Scoil Mhuire agus Padraig Swindford, 5-2 and Mercy Ballina on a score line of 6-1. They then progressed to the quarter finals which were held on December 15th at Sligo IT where they were narrowly defeated by Mercy Roscommon. The senior soccer team have finished their league campaign. The First year and U15 leagues will begin in the New Year.

Gaelic Football:

The U14 Gaelic team are currently in the middle of their competition and have one league game left to play in the New Year.

The First years enjoyed a friendly blitz in Kilcoyne Park, Tubbercurry on September 23rd where over 60 First years travelled and participated in the event. All of these girls are currently training for more blitzes in the New Year.

Basketball

This year our U16 and U19 teams entered a new highly competitive region competing against St. Louis Kiltimagh and Calasanctus Oranmore.

Our U16 squad showed great determination and character against a highly skilful Kiltimagh side, who were the eventual winners of the region. The girls can look forward to 3V3 in-school competition in the New Year.

First and Second years are busy training and preparing for their leagues in the New Year.

Congratulations to Rachel Hanbury (3rd year) who was selected on the U15 North West Regional team.

Cross Country & Athletics

The girls are currently preparing for their first competition-North Connacht Cross Country which will take place at the Sligo racecourse in January.

Congratulations to Eva Delahunt (2nd year) and Orlaith Delahunt (6th year) who both won Silver medals in their respective races at the All-Ireland track and Field Schools Championships which took place in Tullamore last June.

Swimming

Good luck to the school swimming team who will compete over the Christmas holidays in the Connacht Schools Swimming Championships.

Rowing

The school Rowing team are currently training two lunchtimes per week for their upcoming competitions in the New Year.

DeafHear

Some TY students attended a talk given by representatives from DeafHear. They received a talk on the damage listening to loud music through earphones can have on a person's hearing. They were then given an opportunity to plug in their earphones with an iPod attached onto a virtual head. The girls received feedback regarding the loudness of their music and any potential damage they may inflict upon their hearing. The representatives of DeafHear will return to the school again after Christmas to test the other students' earphones.

Parent Teacher Meetings

6th year, 3rd year and 5th year Parent Teacher meetings took place on the 22nd October, 11th November and the 1st December respectively. They were very well attended. The next Parent Teacher meeting is for 2nd years and is scheduled for 11th January 2016.

Work Experience

Work experience is an integral element of the Transition Year programme. We are very grateful to the employers of Sligo and beyond who provide students with opportunity to experience working life. Students must reflect upon and record their experiences in their TY journals. The school will also receive feedback from the employers re the student's ability to learn new tasks, interact with others and punctuality

Lyric FM Broadcast

The senior choir is a three part choir drawn from 4th, 5th and 6th year. They were established in September of this year. They recorded a Carol for Lyric FM 'Choirs for Christmas Competition'. They featured on Niall Carroll's Classical Daytime show aired on the 10th December. They recorded a lovely Carol entitled 'What Sweeter Music' composed by John Rutter. The results of the competition will be announced on the 23rd of December. We wish them the best of luck in this competition and in future choral events

Christmas Carol Service

Our annual carol service took place on Thursday 17th December in the cathedral. This is always a lovely occasion where the whole school community enters into the real spirit of Christmas with carols, poems, prayers and readings. O Holy Night was sung by Bethany McLoughlin 6th Year. IC performed a play entitled 'The real meaning of Christmas.' Harpists Etain Sweeney Keogh, Elise Brennan and Blaithin Wall played 'The Christmas Canon' and 'Away in a Manger' Siomhna Heekin sang 'Silent Night' accompanied by Clodagh Melly. It is hoped that the true meaning of Christmas was conveyed in many different ways, and left a lasting impression on all of us.

Fund Raising: Remembrance Tree

A large number of TY students volunteered to assist the Rotary Club with their Remembrance Tree fund raising initiative before Christmas. On other occasions during the term, students helped to fundraise for adults with Downs Syndrome in Sligo and with the North West Hospice coffee morning in the Lord Mayor's parlour. Well done, girls!

Ice Skating

On the 18th December, two coaches of TY students left the school at 7am to travel to Dundrum for ice skating. The girls were also allowed some time for shopping and to soak up the Christmas atmosphere. After the stress of two weeks Work Experience, it was the antidote they needed.

Singing for Simon

The Junior choir are singing Carols to raise funds for the Simon Community in Tesco Arcade on Saturday 19th December from 1-2pm. Happy Caroling!

Carol singing for the Vincent de Paul

Ursuline students together with staff assembled in Tesco Arcade to sing carols and raise funds for St Vincent de Paul on Monday 14th December. People were very generous and a **substantial amount** was raised. This has been sent to the local branch of St Vincent de Paul. Many thanks to Ms. Clarke and Ms. McKiernan for co-ordinating this year's event.

In addition to the Carol singing proceeds, both students and staff contributed very generously to the St Vincent's de Paul food appeal. The generosity of so many people will help to make a big difference to those for whom life is particularly difficult this Christmas.

Astro-turf News

Thanks to receiving a Sports Capital grant last year, Ursuline College has now its own state of the art Astro-turf facility. It is wonderful that we can now play Hockey and Soccer home matches on our own school grounds as well as offering an excellent facility for other field sports. We have also seen increased participation in Hockey throughout the school this year. After Christmas, Yeat's County Hockey Club will take up residence here. The facility will also be available to the wider community and hopefully will benefit many groups and organisations.

Sr Mairead is deeply grateful to all those who helped realise the pitch's completion. She would like to thank the Board of Management, the Ursuline Congregation, staff, parents, students, past-pupils and all those who were involved in fund raising events this past year. Ongoing fund-raising events have been arranged for the coming year to help defray the costs involved in the completion of the Astro-turf. We are deeply grateful for all support received to date and look forward to continued support in the year ahead.

We wish present and future generations of students huge enjoyment from the use of the pitch.

Major School Extension.

We are delighted to be part of the Department of Education and Skills new Capital Building programme. We look forward to working with the Department in the ongoing provision of twenty-first century facilities for our school community and we await their instructions regarding the next steps in this process. We intend to be shovel-ready as soon as we possibly can!

Family contribution

The Board of Management thank you very sincerely for the Family contributions received this year. Should anyone have overlooked this, we would be very happy to receive contributions as the year progresses. Thank you for your ongoing support of the school.

Message from the Parents' Council

The AGM of the Parents' Council was held on Tuesday 6th October and a new committee was formed. The Chairperson for 2015/16 is Paul Murray. The new committee extends a warm invitation to all parents to attend meetings and hopes to organise events in the coming year in support of the school.

Condolences

The Board of Management, Staff and Students of Ursuline College were deeply saddened at the recent death of Philip McGovern R.I.P. We send our deepest sympathy to his wife Anne Marie and to Jessica in 6th year, Megan who completed her Leaving Cert in 2014 and to their younger daughter Grace. We pray that God will support and comfort them in their sadness and grief.

Holidays

Christmas holidays begin at 12.45 on December 22nd. School resumes at 8.55 on January 7, 2016. I wish you all the peace and hope of this Christmas season.



Sr Mairead O'Brien

Sr Mairead

'The Advent bells call out 'Prepare,
Your world is journeying to the birth
Of God made man for us on earth'

Advent 1955: John Betjeman.

'To discover how to be human now
Is the reason we follow this star'

*'For the Time Being'
(A Christmas Oratorio)
W.H. Auden*