

Ursuline College • Sligo



PARENTS' NEWSLETTER - CHRISTMAS 2014

Dear Parents / Guardians,

Our Christmas Newsletter gives you a snap-shot of some of the activities - extra/co-curricular - that have taken place since the term began. I hope you enjoy reading about them.



The Opening of the School Year Mass

The Opening of the School Year Mass took place on the 11th October in the Sports Hall. Staff and students gathered with Fr. Declan Boyce to celebrate Mass and to ask God's blessing on the new school year. The theme of this year's Mass was 'New Beginnings'. A Romanesque arch with the words 'New beginnings' designed by the Art Department was carried up by students. The Ceremony began with Head Girl Fiona McCormack's address. In his homily, Fr. Declan talked about the colour Green and he asked us to think how we would explain this colour to a blind person. He explained that some things in life are impossible to describe, that no two people see things in the same way. The reading was read by Kathleen McNamee and the psalm sung by Aoife McKiernan. There were prayers of the faithful, instrumental music from Niamh, Sinead and Emer McKenna, Charlotte Kinsella and Megan Corcoran, and a vocal solo from Niamh Feeney. Sincere thanks to the RE, Art and Music departments and to other staff members who helped in the preparation of the Mass.

Entrance scholarships

Congratulations to the following students who received Entrance Awards from University College Dublin: Sadbh Brennan, Emer Flood, Rachel Monahan and Eimear Mulligan. They were recognised for their academic achievement in the Leaving Certificate Examination results this year. We wish the girls every success in the future.

JP McManus Scholarship Winner

This year, Emer Flood a student of the 2014 Leaving Certificate class became a recipient of a JP McManus scholarship. Emer will receive almost seven thousand Euro per annum and this will continue for the duration of her chosen under graduate programme. 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 Emer and we wish her well in her chosen career.

Business Awards

Fifteen students were honoured by the National

Association of Business Teachers of Ireland in conjunction with National University of Ireland Galway as a result of receiving an A in their Junior Certificate Business Examination 2014. These students were Rachel Connolly, Aoife Kearins, Jennifer O' Driscoll, Fiona Kelly, Anna Quinn, Aisling Jones, Evanne Kilgallon, Alissia Hrustsova, Mariam Ahmed, Niamh Cronin, Emer Harte, Neasa Henehan, Eve Henry, Caoimhe Sweeney and Sophie Gillespie. The ceremony was held in the College of Business, Public Policy and Law in NUI Galway on the 15th October 2014.

Student Counsellors 2014 - 2015

The student council for the coming year has been formed. Congratulations to Fiona McCormack 6C who has been appointed Head girl and Emma Kevany 6B who has been elected Deputy Head Girl. The six years elected to the student council were: Jennifer Mahon 6A, Emma McTiernan 6B, Aine Costigan 6C, Doireann Lawless 6C, Lisa Gerrity 6C, and Sinead Lynch 6D. Fifth years elected were Anne Kearns 5A, Kate Barlett 5B, Caitlin Connolly 5C, Ellen Murphy 5D, Aoife McKiernan 5E. Fourth year council include Lea McCarthy 4A, Emer Harte 4B, Sarah Henry 4C, Niamh Fitzgerald 4D. Third year students elected to the council were Ceola Mitchell 3A, Heather O'Dowd 3B, Grace Elliott 3C, Eilis Callaghan 3D. Second year council are 2nd year: Emma Christie 2A, Rachel Hanbury 2B, Aoife McIntyre 2C, Lisa Jane Cawley 2D, Rebecca Moylan 2E. Jenny Demmel 1A, Katie Haran 1B, Caoimhe Buckley 1C and Aoife Barrett 1D were elected to represent first years. We wish them well in the year ahead.

4D visit World War 1 Exhibition in Sligo County Museum

TY class 4D visited the World War 1 exhibition in Sligo Museum on Wednesday 17th September as part of their History module. The girls looked at newspaper reports, medals, artefacts and other items which illustrated the contribution of Sligo to the war. They searched and found many familiar Sligo names listed on the Roll of Honour. The Prussian Officer's Picklehaub leather helmet from the Battle of Verdun was a popular artefact with students. Students enjoyed learning of women's contribution and how they sent tobacco, socks and scarves to the men at the front. 4D were also intrigued to see an early Burberry

trench coat with one student commenting that history truly encompasses a surprising number of areas! Many thanks to Mrs Angela McGurrian of Sligo library and museum for facilitating our visit.

Green Council

This year the green council are working towards the 4th Green flag for sustainable travel. In November, the council was visited by An Taisce travel officer Imelda Ryan Jones who surveyed staff, 1st year and Transition year students to see how everyone gets to and from school at present. A very high number of staff and students currently travel by car, but we hope to make some changes and improvements in the New Year.

The following students form the Green Council for this year: 5th years: Emily Acheson, Jennifer Burke, Blaithin Wall, Aoife McPadden, Katherine Demmel, Martha McGovern, Shirley Nicholson, Megan Farrell. 4th year: Fiona Kelly, Rachel Connolly, Ruth Cawley, Sinead Ryan. 3rd Year: Denise Conlon, Aishling O'Regan, Niamh McMurray. 2nd year: Maria Henehan, Rolissa Rugamba, Kerry Turland, Eimear Rafter, Aoife Howard. 1st year: Ksenia Grigorjeva, Maria Lyons, Lauren Gordon, Elina Matvejeva, Laura Keane, Niamh Gowran.

French Drama

On Tuesday 7th October, all students studying French were treated to a lively, interactive and hilarious theatre performance by four native actors. 1st, 2nd and 3rd years were treated to a play entitled 'Le Role' a play about a group of students helping a friend to learn to sing and dance in order to prepare for an audition. The same actors entertained TY, 5th and 6th year students with a hilarious performance called 'La Decision Dangereuse', a play about three strangers who meet at what they believe is a job interview only to discover that the interviewer is planning a bank robbery!

The actors used clear repetition, physical comedy and props to ensure their meaning was understood and our Ursuline volunteers were a fantastic addition to both plays. All students thoroughly enjoyed both performers.

Parent teacher meetings

6th year, 3rd year and 5th year Parent Teacher meetings took place on Thursday 23rd October, 12th

November and 2nd December respectively. They are very well attended. The next Parent Teacher meeting is scheduled for Monday 12th January.

Poetry Aloud

On Friday 17th October, the regional final of 'Poetry Aloud' took place in Colaiste Ailigh Letterkenny. 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 100 students took part in this year's regional heat. Students from Sligo, Donegal and Tyrone each spoke two poems, a mandatory poem and also a poem they chose themselves. There was a very high standard in the competition. Three students from Ursuline College Sligo qualified for the semi-finals. They were Ava O'Grady 2nd year, Aoife Kearins 4th year and Orla Nolan 5th year.

The semi-final took place in the National Library in Dublin on November 20th. The standard was extremely high. Again each student spoke two poems. All three performed really well. Ava O'Grady 2nd year qualified for the All Ireland final in the junior section. Thirty five students in all qualified out of a total of hundred and fifty. The final was held on the 5th December in the National Library. Ava travelled with her teachers Mrs Morris and Ms. Curley. She spoke both her poems wonderfully well and though wasn't placed, she was a credit to herself and the school. Well done to all who entered.

Clár Raidió

Ursuline College Sligo has, for the second time in two years, scooped the ultimate accolade of the radio world, winning the Gold PPI National Radio Award for Craoltóireacht le Gaeilge/Best Irish Language Programme 2014. Recorded in the Ocean FM studios with Kevin Blessing, 'Beezie, Bean an Locha' is based on the life of Beezie Byron, the last resident of Cottage Island on Lough Gill. The programme has already won the National Conradh na Gaeilge and Gael Linn awards. Ms Lee and previous Ursuline students have won the Gold PPI award in this category in 2013 for their programme about UFO activity in the Boyle area and beyond and PPI Silver in 2012 for their programme on Bram Stoker.

'Beezie, Bean an Locha' brings the number of national Irish Language radio awards won by the Ursuline to 21. The winners were announced on October 3rd in Lyrath House, Kilkenny, at the PPI Awards Ceremony, dubbed 'The Oscars of the Radio World' and attended by all the big names in Irish radio. Ursuline College's entry triumphed over BBC Ulster, Newstalk, Spin 103, WLR FM and Spin Southwest. The Judges described the entry as a creative piece that was head and shoulders above the other entries. They commended it as a well-produced and polished production which brought the stories of the area across, married with high production values. The students involved were Katie Kilgallon, Etain Sweeney Keogh, Orlaith Delahunt, Laura Joyce, Enya Curley, Helen McDonagh, Eva Devaney, Sarah Donnellan, Jennifer Burke, Ellen Murphy, Rebecca Friel, Rebecca Conlon, Taylor Corrigan and Orla Nolan.

Newgrange Art trip

The mound of the passage tomb appeared like the sunrise on the horizon. An architectural marvel for its time, it is beautifully decorated inside and out. Newgrange was a spectacular sight for the 5th art students to see. They arrived at the site on November 6th accompanied by their art teachers Ms. Milne and Ms. Mullaney. As the rain poured down outside, no water was to be seen in the chamber. We can only truly admire the workmanship of our ancestors in the cavity which has remained fully dry for 5,000 years. The students could only imagine the sight of the sunlight

flowing through the roof box and illuminating the passage vault and its designs on the shortest day of the year. The true meaning and inspiration behind this feature can only be guessed. Newgrange is a very special place and the art students came away truly in awe of such a structure. Thanks to Ms. Milne and Ms. Mullaney for organising the trip.

Adopt a WW1 Soldier

As 2014 is the centenary of the outbreak of World War 1, a nationwide scheme was launched by Gerry Moore of St Columba's Comprehensive School Glenties, to bring one student from every county of Ireland to visit the region of the Somme battlefield in June 2015. Emily Acheson from Ursuline College Sligo has been chosen to be County Sligo's representative. Each person will adopt a soldier from their county, carry out research on their story and contact their relatives before visiting the grave. There will also be a wreath-laying ceremony at the Thiepval memorial to the missing of the Somme. Emily has a great interest in history, music, public speaking and photography, all of which will contribute to the experience. Emily will join the 31 other students each representing their own county.

Ploughing Championships - Ireland's Farming Festival

On the 24th of September, 5th Year Agricultural Science class went to the NPA National Ploughing Championships Ratheniska Stradbally with their teacher, Mr Monaghan. It was their first time to attend such an event, and also a first for the school. There were thousands of stalls and displays, and information was available about subjects relevant to what was learned in class. To see the practical element will help students with their course work. They now know their Blackface sheep from the Texel! It was a very long journey from Sligo but a very enjoyable trip for all who went.

Magical Mystery Choir Tour to Wales

On the 7th November, the Ursuline Senior choir departed to Wales for the North Wales Choral Festival in Llandudno. This was the first international choir trip ever undertaken by the school. Forty five students and four teachers travelled by ferry and coach to Holyhead. A smooth crossing was had by all despite dire warnings by our coach driver Damian. The group stayed in a very eclectically decorated hotel in Llandudno consisting of two Georgian houses linked by a corridor. The Titanic bell rang loud and clear for meals. Choir practices were held in the basement of the house which transformed into a virtual sauna as rehearsals progressed. The choir performed very well at the competition and though not placed did the school proud. The judge commended them on the sweetness and the distinctly Irish tone of the choir. Their programme consisted of 'Michael row that boat', 'The Elm Tree' and 'Johnny said No', a very contrasting programme.

After the competition, the group visited Chester, a lovely medieval town with black and white buildings and shops on two levels. The next day the students visited Liverpool and went on a Beatles mystery magical tour. Students decamped from the bus at Penny Lane and Strawberry fields for many photos. Some students even got to perform in the famous Cavern club. The choir visited Liverpool 1 for a final hour of shopping and continued to Holyhead to catch the last ferry. The trip was deemed a huge success by all, an experience we hope to repeat in the future. A big thank you to Ms. Waters and Ms. O'Neill who were such a support to Ms. McQuillan and Ms. Prendergast and who were particularly adept with the tying of the ties!

Sports Council 2014 -2015

Stacey Kerr 6D was elected as school Sports Captain. Sixth years Anna Dunikowska 6A, Niamh Kerins 6B and Yvonne Hedigan 6C were also elected. Fifth year Sports Captains include Carron Griffin 5A, Helen McDonagh 5B, Eva Martin 5C. Elected in Transition year were Katie Osborne 4A, Meadhbh Kenneally 4A, Jenny O' Driscoll 4B and Niamh Cronin 4C. The 3rd years elected were Ciara Goonan 3A, Meadhbh Donaghy 3C, Emma Bonner 3D. Representatives elected from 2nd year include Holly Davis 2A Eimear Osborne 2B, Andrea Flynn 2C, Kate McGuinn 2D Yasmin Connolly 2E. In 1st year Grainne Mitchell 1A, Sophie Phillips 1B, Laura Denver 1C and Sarah Oates 1D were elected. We wish the girls the best in the year ahead.

Hockey

It has been a mixed year in hockey for Ursuline College so far. The senior and U16 teams travelled to Galway for all of their matches this year. The senior hockey team were unfortunate not to win any matches against the very successful Galway schools and were narrowly defeated by the Sligo Grammar. The U16 hockey teams beat Sligo Grammar, drew their match against the highly favoured Jes team and lost to Solerno.

The first year teams presently coached by Ms. Lynch and 5th year hockey players begin their matches after Christmas. The U15 leagues will also begin in the New Year.

Basketball News

The senior basketball team played Colaiste Iosagan in the cup. They played really well but unfortunately lost by one point. They are preparing for the all-Ireland Playoffs which are scheduled for the 31st January 2015

The U 16 cadette team have qualified for the 2nd round of the cup. They had a great win over Our Lady's school Castleblaney. However they came up against tough competition in round two and were defeated by Colaiste Chiarain Leixlip.

The first years started the season with a Blitz in Ballyshannon. They defeated Abbey Vocational school Donegal, Ballyshannon Secondary school and St. Catherine's Vocational school Killybegs. They are now looking forward to a good season in the New Year.

Gaelic Football news

U14 Gaelic team defeated Nathy's College Ballaghaderreen and Balinamore Community School. However they lost to Mercy College Roscommon. They are looking forward to playing St. Clare's Comprehensive School Manorhamilton and hopefully qualifying for the semi-finals.

Soccer News

The U19 soccer team remained undefeated all year. They have qualified for the final of the Connaught League. Their next match is against Taylors Hill Galway who are the current All - Ireland champions. As their previous coach Mr. O' Loinsigh in now coaching our senior teams, this should be a very exciting match.

In the U19 cup, the senior team defeated Swinford 3-2 in the Connaught quarter final. They now proceed to the semi - final. Their next match is against Davitt College on January 13th in the I.T. Sligo. The U19 team is presently captained by Yvonne Hedigan.

The U17 team also remain undefeated. They have qualified for the U17 Connaught semi - final which will be played in January 2015.

The senior teams have trained very hard all year. Both teams have new kits this year which have been kindly sponsored by Jako sports. They also got new training tops which were part sponsored by A.I.B. The girls held various fund raising events to raise the remainder.

Well done to the 1st year Futsal Soccer Team who were crowned Sligo County Champions in November. They represented Sligo in the Connaught Finals which were held in the I. T. Sligo

Science Quiz

The annual Post Primary schools' science quiz took place on the 15th November during science week. There were 21 teams from Sligo, Mayo and Leitrim. All participants were drawn from the senior science classes. Three teams entered from the school. The three teams consisted of the following sixth year: Cara Osborne, Cliona Hanley Niamh Mc Morrow, Jennifer Mahon, Sinead McKenna, Stacy Kerr, Fiona Gallagher, Doireann Lawless and Aoife Keaney. Though not placed all teams performed well.

Gaisce Ceremony

The Gaisce ceremony was held in the Sligo I. T. on Tues 23rd September. The Masters of Ceremonies were Michael Collins and Hugh MacConville Development Officers for the North West. The ceremony started on a melodious note with music from the Sligo based group Rock house Pilfer, a Blue Grass and American Roots band. They set the scene for a very successful ceremony. Fifty six students received Bronze Awards and three received Silver. The Silver Awards were presented to Shona Keaveney, Chantelle Devaney and Aine Kilfeather. The chairman of Sligo GAA Joe Taaffe presented the Awards. After the presentation, Lee Jones, one of the members of Rock house Pilfer spoke. He is at present completing his Gold Award. He spoke of the doors Gaisce had opened for him through the various activities he has undertaken to date particularly the canoeing trip to Estonia. He encouraged the participants to continue on to Silver and Gold sections of the programme.

Delphi trip

With spirits high and an abundance of bags destined for a week rather than an overnight, the Transition Years students embarked on a journey to Delphi. The group got a great welcome from the instructors. Everyone threw themselves whole heartedly into all the activities. TYs raft building, rock climbing and team building abilities were definitely put to the test. The night time bog walk exceeded expectations when some of the brave volunteers found their feet were unable to move in the quick sand of the bog. Others enjoyed a cosy little campfire (quite different to our trek through the unknown!). With dropping eye lids and a head full of memories, the group made its way back to Sligo. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the experiences, and a big thank you to all the teachers who accompanied the TYs to Delphi.

Retreats

Retreats have taken place in October for 2nd and 3rd year students in Knock. These were organised by Sr. Dorothy. The TYs also completed a day long retreat with Gerald Keegan. He uses the power of music combined with words to convey his message - that each one of them is unique and special in their own way, and he asked them to listen with their hearts and guts and not with their minds.

Science Olympiad

Congratulations to Aoife Kearins, Marian Ahmed, Alissa Hrustsova and Emer Harte who has been identified by the State Examination Commission as High Achievers in Maths and Science in the 2014 Junior Certificate Examination. They go forward to compete in the Irish European Union Maths and Science Olympiad to be held on Saturday 1st November in DCU.

Inter school Show jumping

This year's UCS Show took place at Cavan International Equestrian Centre on Sat Nov 29th. The team consisted of Jennifer Burke, Emily Burke, Isabel Burke and Elisa O'Connor. 16 teams lined up for the Open competition. The course took its toll resulting in only four of the 16 teams making it through to the jump-off. Three out of four teams got clear rounds. However Newbridge were half a second faster than UCS and achieved the coveted first place while UCS got second.

The action packed weekend of jumping continued at Claremorris Equestrian Centre on Sun Nov 30th and the UCS team were back in action. On this occasion 4 teams lined up for the Open competition. Recording a team score of zero faults, they breezed through to the jump-off. This time UCS and Claremorris recorded clear rounds but UCS had a faster time. Finally, first place. This was a sweet success for the victorious Ursuline team.

Piano Concerto Finalist

Tiffani Qui 2nd year won the junior concerto competition in the Royal Irish Academy of Music. There were four players in the final. The judges remarked on the very high standard presented by all candidates. Tiffany will have the opportunity to perform with the RIAM Symphony Orchestra in March. A fantastic achievement Tiffany!

Public Speaking

The 1st round of the Soroptimist Public Speaking competition took place in Saturday 6th in the Clarion Hotel Sligo. Etain Sweeney represented Ursuline College and qualified for the regional final which will take place in Ballinasloe in January 2015. 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?' We wish her well in the next round.

TY Class 4C Commemorate the Holocaust

On Wednesday October 22nd, 4C History class participated in the HETI Crocus project. This project has been run in Ireland since 2005. Katie Murtagh gave an introductory speech before each member of 4C planted a crocus in memory of the child victims of the Holocaust. Lucy Clarke organised the planting. Jade Doyle was the photographer and Niamh Keaveney concluded the event with a poetry reading. It was a moving and thought providing ceremony.

The Big Bang revisited

Last year a newly composed work entitled 'The Big Bang', consisting of works composed by Brian Irvine and five young composers, three of whom attend Ursuline College was unveiled in the Hawkeswell Theatre. Niamh Feeney, Alice Purcell and Ciara Murphy supported by members of the Sligo Academy of Music orchestra and a choir drawn from Ursuline College Junior Choir, St. Mary's Community Choir and Grange Post primary School, got the opportunity to have their compositions performed last November. This was supported and funded by Sligo's Music Generation.

This year, Music Generation arranged for all composers to have their works performed in the National Concert Hall Dublin. Students from other Music Generation programmes were invited to hear these unique compositions. President Higgins and Mrs Higgins were in attendance and the students got the chance to meet them afterwards. It was a wonderful opportunity to showcase the creativity and musicianship from Sligo. A big thank you to Ms Murray for all her work and involvement in the programme.

Beogacht

Once again, Beogacht a traditional Irish group, have been working very hard to qualify for the Siansa Gael Linn music competition under the direction of Ms. Prendergast. This year's group consists of Emily Acheson, Sinead Ni Bhroin, Enya Curley, Alice Purcell, Caitlin Connolly, Niamh Keaveney and Niamh McKenna and Donal Burke. The group are required to create a ten – twelve minute recording of jigs, reels and hornpipes and song. If successful, the students will participate in a performance and workshop which takes place in February. We wish them the best of luck.

Girls active

20 second year students have been taking part in the Girl's Active programme. This takes place on Thursday lunchtimes. This programme is directed to students who do not participate in school sports programme. So far they have completed programmes in Hip Hop dancing and Gymnastics.

60 second short Film production

A group of TYs took part in the making of a 60 second short film with the help from Gerry Kelly's Film School. The film focuses on protecting the environment and the benefits of using sustainable modes of transport. The title of the short film is 'The environment is not a game'. The workshop took place over two days and was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

LCVP Talk

6th year LCVP students organised a guest speaker from the North West Simon Community. The talk was very informative. The students were surprised and amazed to learn how easy it is for ordinary people to become homeless especially those over 18 years. They were encouraged to volunteer as there is always a need for volunteers.

Career Guidance

This year, Ursuline College saw the retirement of Ms. Brid Kelly and the arrival of Mr. Alan O' Loinsigh, our new Career Guidance Counsellor.

It has been a very busy year so far. On September 9th, Mrs Mitchell from Maynooth College spoke to the Leaving Certificate group. She spoke about new developments in Maynooth, course requirements, scholarships, the transition from 6th year to third level and the importance of research as a vital ingredient for success at 3rd level.

On September 18th and 19th, a group of 6th year students attended the Higher Options in Dublin accompanied by Mr. O' Loinsigh. Students found it very beneficial and all current 5th years will attend it next year.

A group of students travelled to National University of Ireland Galway to attend the open day on Saturday 4th. It is a very popular destination for Ursuline students. 20 students took up undergraduate places in 2014. It was very successful open day. Information packs were brought back for students who could not attend.

On Wednesday October 8th, eight students from 5th and 6th year attended a seminar on Nursing and Midwifery. Due to its success, another three students will attend the next seminar in early January.

On October 23rd, sixth year students attended open days at Sligo I.T., St Angela's College and Ballinode College P.L.C. Students were very impressed by the courses offered by Sligo I.T. Thirty one students went there last year.

On 12th November, Mr. O Loinsigh attended the C.A.O conference in Galway. Quite a number of new course changes were announced.

On November 19, U.C.D came and addressed the 5th and 6th year students regarding the facilities in the College and its courses. This was extremely well attended.

Future talks planned for January 2015 are NUIG - January 14th; St Angela's College - January 12th; Nursing as a career - 9th January 2015 and GMTI - December 15th.

Important dates for 6th year students:
CAO closing dates February 1st 2015 and UCAS closing date is January 15th 2015.
Dropbox: guidance@ucs@gmail.com
Username: ursuline2014 - password

High Achiever Award

Sarah Watters 3rd year was awarded a Higher Achiever's Award in violin this year. This was presented to Sarah at the High Achievers concert held in National University of Ireland Galway. The Higher Achievers Awards recognises outstanding students who show potential in instrumental and vocal categories.

School Self Evaluation

The school is engaged in the on-going process of self-evaluation which focuses at present on the key areas of literacy and numeracy skills and the revision of school policies. The **Self Evaluation Report 2014** and the **School Improvement Plan for Literacy 2014-2015** are available on the school website, www.ursulinecollegesligo.com. The literacy plan focuses attention on developing reading for enjoyment among students and this year all students were given a "Writing Wheel" to help foster and advance the fundamental skills of writing. The Transition Year students have been set a challenge to read at least five books this year and to help promote this culture of reading the "Book in the Bag" project has been launched. This year the school has begun its focus on expanding and progressing the student's numeracy skills. We would encourage all parents to discuss these strategies with their daughters and we welcome any feedback that you might have.

Mini Company comes to first year

This year the school brought the 'Mini Company' Programme to the first year group. They began their programme in earlier October with 44 very eager volunteers. The students first formed groups and used brainstorming techniques to arrive at possible business ventures. These were finalised and fine tuned by November with the help of Brian Dolan from the Enterprise Board. He gave them advice, tips and support in how to set up their businesses and sell their products. Currently the companies are selling their products in school and in local markets around Sligo.

After Christmas, the students will be preparing a business plan for the Student Enterprise Awards on the 12th March 2014. We wish them luck. A big Thank you to Ms.Tighe for facilitating this programme.

Transition year

Transition year have been very busy this term. Aside from the continuation of core subjects and the experience of many other modular subjects, Transition years have been involved in Poetry workshops, beauty courses, ECDL, John Paul 2 Awards, Public Access to the Law workshops and mini company programme. They visited Delphi for their overnight trip. TYs also attended a Mental Health day in Sligo Tennis Club. They have also completed the swimming module in P.E. A number of students have taken part in Ocean FM Radio workshops. All TYs completed two weeks of work experience. Some students have been involved in A.I.B 'Build a Bank' project. Several students have been visiting the M.S. centre on the first sea road

after school and also Nazareth House on a weekly basis.

For the Gaisce programme TYs have been involved in baking courses, sign language classes, writing courses and yoga. These classes operate in the evening and have been very enjoyable and well attended. These courses continue in January.

The week before Christmas, TYs were brought Ice Skating in Dundrum and this year a visit to the Japanese Embassy was also included in the schedule.

Coffee Morning for the Hospice

A coffee morning was held in the staff room in November to raise funds for Sligo Hospice. The 6th years also held a coffee morning organised by Sinead Lynch and 6D for the Hospice. Thank you to the staff and 6th year students who supported this cause so generously. A cheque was forwarded to the North West Hospice.

Carol Service

Our annual carol service took place on Wednesday 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 Aoife Keaney 6th Year. Etain Sweeney Keogh 5th year sang 'Wonder Child' and 'Silent Night' was sung by Alice Purcell in German and Ellen Given in English. There was a WW1 commemoration entitled 'Christmas Truce' and a power point presentation compiled by Fiona Kelly accompanied by the well-known song 'Feed the World'. We hope that this service helps each of us to appreciate the true meaning of Christmas.

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 Wednesday 17th December. Melodious sounds were heard up and down the length of the arcade. People were very generous and substantial amount was raised. This has been sent to the local branch of the St. Vincent de Paul. Many thanks to Ms. Clarke and Ms. McGriskin 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 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.

Singing for Simon

Carol singing by the Junior Choir accompanied by Ms Murray will take place in town on Saturday, December 19 in aid of the Simon community. Happy caroling!

Shoe Box Appeal

Students responded very enthusiastically to this year's Shoe Box Appeal which took place in November. Over 235 shoe boxes were collected this year. Ms O' Neill and her 6th year group set up a 'Shoe Boxometer' around the pole inside the yellow doors. This proved extremely successful. An initiative called #shooboxbuddies was also introduced. This encouraged students to work in pairs and fill one shoe box between two. They were also assisted by the Student Council. These shoe boxes are sent to less well off children in other countries. Many thanks to Ms O' Neill's 6D class and the Student Council who helped co-ordinate this year's campaign.

Lyric FM Broadcast

As part of the 'Choirs for Christmas Competition', the 6th year choir was featured on Niall Carroll's

Classical Daytime on the 12th December. They sang a lovely song entitled 'The Bells of Christmas Medley'. This song features a selection of some well known Christmas carols. Well done girls. A great achievement.

Rotary Christmas Memory Tree

Many thanks to the Transition year students who volunteered to help the Rotary Club with their Christmas Memory Tree in O' Connell St. Proceeds from this will go to St Vincent de Paul and North West Hospice.

Carol singing for Christmas - Student Council:

The student council visited Nazareth House Nursing Home on Tuesday December 16th to visit residents and sing carols. The girls were delighted to be able to do this and enjoyed the afternoon immensely.

Retirement

The school community sends best wishes to Brid Kelly on her retirement from teaching. The board of management wishes to acknowledge Brid's many years of dedicated service to the students of Ursuline college through Career Guidance and her significant contribution to the life of the school. The board wishes Brid every happiness in her retirement.

Message from the Parents' Council.

There will be an introductory social evening and AGM of the Parents' Council in the New Year. We would encourage all parents and guardians who are interested to come along and have a chat and a cup of tea. Parents/Guardians of First years are especially encouraged to attend.

Astro-turf project

Ursuline College received a grant under the Sports Capital Programme 2014 for the construction of an Astro-turf facility for the school in conjunction with Yeats Hockey Club. The school will begin fund raising in the new year so that the Astro-turf will be ready for use by September 2014. We ask everyone to support our fund-raising efforts over the coming months. Thank you.

Family contribution

The board of management thanks you very sincerely for family contributions received this year. Should anyone have overlooked this, we would be very happy to receive contributions as the year progresses. Thank you.

Holidays

Holidays begin on Friday, December 19th at 12.10. School resumes on Monday, January 5th at 8.55. I wish you all a happy and peace - filled Christmas and every blessing for the new year.



Se Mairéad O'Brien

Reflection for Christmas

And is it true? And is it true?
This most tremendous tale of all,
Seen in a stained-glass window's hue,
A Baby in an ox's stall?
The Maker of the stars and sea
Became a child on earth for me.