

Parent's Easter Newsletter – April 2014



Transition Year News: TY students have had an action packed couple of months. January saw the beginning of full scale rehearsals with the boys of Channel College for the musical 'Guys and Dolls'. This was a great success and proved to be a fantastic learning experience for all involved. The students have also benefited from a number of outings with Ms. Williams to visit places of historical interest around Dublin. A road safety talk presented to the students gave the hard facts on road fatalities and hopefully opened their eyes regarding the need for care and vigilance when using the road. In addition, Ms. Maher and 40 TY students visited the Learnovate Centre based in Trinity College Dublin in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the I-LEARN immersive learning environment for problem-based collaborative learning. iLearn is an immersive learning environment designed to support problem-based, collaborative learning. The students were set a problem based on retrofitting an energy inefficient house and had to work as a team to improve the overall energy inefficiency of the street on which the houses were situated. iLearn is designed to foster and track the development of key 21st century skills such as collaborative problem-solving and we are delighted to say that our TY students received the highest amount of points than any other school that was involved in this project! The T.Y Paired Reading 2014 is also well under way this year. The programme is in it's fifth year and this year seven schools in the local areas are involved. St. Brigids, Our Lady of Consolation, Scoil Íde, St. Francis Senior School, Our Lady of Immaculate, St. Francis NS Belmayne and Belmayne Educate Together. This programme is a success year after year because of the dedication and commitment of St.Mary's T.Y Students. The girls bring an enthusiasm and joy for reading making the programme enjoyable for all involved. The feedback from teachers, students and parents involved this year had been FANTASTIC! Over 200 Primary School Students will attend St.Mary's for a Celebration and Awards Event hosted by the T.Y Students and Teachers on the 12th and 13th of May. Thanks to Ms. Dreeling and Ms. Gallagher and the School's SNAs Roisin Timmons, Laura O'Higgins and Linda Kavanagh for co-ordinating this year's programme.

Guidance Department News: We have come to the end of a very busy period in the Guidance Department calendar. After many months of research, Open Days, and information talks from several of the Universities and Institutes of Technology our 6th Year students have made their applications to the CAO outlining their choices for their Third Level studies. Some students have also applied to the Colleges of Further Education to pursue some of the Post Leaving Certificate courses they offer. The last few weeks have been busy for these students as many of the Colleges of Further Education held their interview days for these courses. Congratulations to the students who have already received notification of their successful applications and best of luck to those students still awaiting news. On 13th and 14th of March, ten 5th year students represented the school at DCU Access Services Student Shadowing Day. These students had the opportunity to shadow some current DCU students as they attended lectures and went about a typical day in the life of a 1st year student. The girls had a great day and got to sit in on lectures for some of the courses they are interested in pursuing after their Leaving Certificate. They also got to sample the daily activities of a College campus. Recently the Defence Forces contacted the Guidance Department as part of their current campaign to highlight the positives of military life as a career for females. On May 2nd 2014 a representative of the Defence Forces will speak with the 5th year students as part of its Equality and Diversity policy. The object of the current campaign is to highlight the positives of military life as a career for females and to appeal to the adventurous nature of individuals who would appreciate an alternative to the more traditional female career paths.

Emmanuel 2014: A number of our students recently attended the Emanuel Concert in the Helix, D.C.U. Emmanuel is an initiative, run by the Dublin Diocese to promote the performance of quality liturgical music in our post-primary schools. This is St. Mary's 4th year of being involved and the concert was a huge success. The students had an enjoyable experience and inspired all present with their energetic and joyful performance. Thanks are also due to the Music and Religion Departments, who worked hard to prepare the students for the concert.

Student Council: Our Student Council is a group of enthusiastic and energetic students who meet every Wednesday evening with Ms. Noone. They are the voice of the students whose aim is to play an active role in continuing to help St. Mary's to be the best possible school for all of our students. Suggestions received from our students are very important as they make the work of the Council more effective and therefore, all suggestions are very welcome. Students can use the Student Council suggestion box to leave their suggestions in.

Le Chéile Conference: Our school is a member of the Le Chéile Trust. The aim of the Trust is to carry on the legal, financial and inspirational role of trusteeship that has, up to now, been done by individual congregations. The annual Le Chéile Conference recently took place from January 31st to February 1st. The theme of this year's conference was *'To Live is to Change'*. Fr Michael Paul Gallagher SJ (Jesuit Priest) and Anne Looney of the NCCA were guest speakers. Two of our Transition Year students, Rebecca McDonough and Alice Dunne represented our school with great pride.

EUFolio Project: St Mary's Holy Faith has been chosen to be part of a pilot schools' project with 20 other Irish secondary schools as part of a Department of Education and Skills pilot project in using e-Portfolios with First Year students as part of the new Junior Cycle Framework and the study of English. Two of our English teachers, Ms. Cooke and Ms. Dreeling have attended training workshops regarding the use of e-Portfolios and are currently using the e-Portfolios with their First Year English students. Well done to all of the students who have made use of their English class e-Portfolio sites.

Smile Week: This new initiative took place during the week of March 31st to April 4th in order to promote positive mental health and was organised by a number of our Fifth Year students. This was an awareness campaign for our school and the topics of mental health, cyber safety and being physically active were promoted. Lots of activities and competitions took place for our students in order to raise awareness about these issues.

Schools' Spin: Congratulations to the *Cycle Against Suicide Student Leaders* who organised an awareness cycle and turned the northside orange to promote the message that ***'it's ok not to feel ok and absolutely ok to ask for help.'*** The girls invited two other schools, Manor House and Pobalscoil Neasain to join them on the day as they cycled 5k to raise awareness for positive mental health. 65 students and teachers took part in the Cycle in the pouring rain. Well done all!

Best of luck: The staff would like to take this opportunity to wish all the Junior and Leaving Certificate students every success as they take their Oral and Practical Examinations. Effective study will only result if students have a good study plan in place. We would encourage students experiencing difficulties with their study to be aware that they can make an appointment with the Guidance Counsellor to help them plan their study over the next few important weeks.

Upcoming Dates:

April Monday 28 th	School re-opens for all students
May Monday 5 th	Bank Holiday – School closed
Wednesday 7 th	L.C.V.P. Link Modules (6 th Year) – State Examination
Thursday 15 th	Thanksgiving / Award Ceremony (2pm)
Friday May 16 th	Sports' Day (11am)
Monday 19 th	Transition Year Graduation Ceremony (7.30pm)
Tuesday 20 th	LC2 Graduation (2pm)
Thursday 22 nd – Friday May 30 th	House Examinations commence
Thursday 29 th	Induction Evening for 2014 First Years (7pm)
Friday 30 th	School closes for Summer Break
June Wednesday 4 th	Junior & Leaving Certificate Examinations commence

Wishing all of our girls and parents a peaceful Easter.

Ms. Ada Broderick,
Principal.

Ms. Evelyn McLoughlin,
Deputy Principal.