



Parents' Summer Newsletter 2013



Dear Parents/Guardians,

Welcome to our 2013 Summer Newsletter. It is hard to believe that another school year is at an end and that the summer holidays are upon us again. We are delighted to be able to fill you in on the many interesting, exciting activities and events that have taken place in St. Mary's since the Easter holidays. We hope you enjoy catching up on all of our latest news and please remember to visit us on our website www.holyfaith.ie to keep up to date. We would like to take this opportunity to wish all our students the best of luck in the State Examinations. Finally, we wish you and your families a relaxing and enjoyable summer break. We look forward to an equally successful 2013/2014 school year.

Transition Year News

Fighting Words: This year, Transition Year students had the opportunity to write their very own collection of short stories that was published in a book entitled 'Fighting Words'. Twenty three Transition Year students travelled each Thursday afternoon to attend a two hour workshop run by the famous author Roddy Doyle and Sean Love and a group of lesser known but very capable authors. The students wrote, edited, re-wrote, edited, re-wrote and edited! Eventually they came up with a collection of twenty three short stories of considerable quality. John Banville, a renowned Irish author, wrote the introduction to the book which was a huge honour. The book was launched in our school on Monday, May 20th which was attended by many dignitaries. Overall, having the opportunity to write and publish their own book was an amazing and unique opportunity, one which will live in the memory of the twenty three lucky students for a lifetime.

T.Y. Book Launch: "Blank Pages", the title of the book of 23 short stories from 23 T.Y. students was launched to much fanfare on the 20th of May last in our school. The book was written by T.Y. students in conjunction with "Fighting Words". It was attended by Roddy Doyle, the Booker Prize-winning author, who helped the girls throughout the year to shape, mould and edit their stories, which saw all 23 become published authors. The introduction to the book was written by John Banville, another Booker Prize -winning author, who stated in his introduction that, "the purpose of Fighting Words was to help and encourage the next generation of Irish writers." "If", he said, "the writers of St. Mary's were anything to go by; the tradition of storytelling and story writing is in safe hands." A great night of celebration and positivity was had by all; as Roddy Doyle himself said at the launch, we should all be very proud of our girls, if these 23 students were examples of those at our school. A final word of thanks is due to Mr. Power (T.Y. English teacher) who worked tirelessly throughout the year on this project.

Head Girl & Deputy Head Girl: We wish to congratulate our new Head Girl, Gemma Lambe and our new Deputy Head girl, Hannah Lynch on their recent appointments. We wish them the best of luck in their new roles. We would also like congratulate our outgoing head girl, Sarah Kearney and deputy head girl, Sarah Mlsek on their achievements this year. Thanks to the girls for all they have done and we wish them well-deserved success in the State Exams.

Transition Year Graduation 2013: The T.Y. class of 2012/13 graduated on the night of May 20th. It was a night of mixed emotions as the students celebrated a wonderful year. Some tears were shed as parting with friends is always tough. Achievements were rewarded as proud parents looked on with pride. Tales of the various trips and adventures proved very entertaining. A video of the year's highlights was also shown much to the amusement of all present. We wish the girls well over the summer holidays and hope to see them return in September ready for the challenges of Fifth Year.

Gaisce Awards: Gaisce is the national challenge award from the President for the young people of Ireland between 15 and 25 years of age. The word Gaisce means deed of valour, a proud moment or a challenge. The President Dr. Patrick Hillary established the award in 1985. There are 3 awards bronze silver and gold, reflecting different levels of time and commitment. To participate in the award there are 4 areas of activity; Community Involvement, Personal Skill, Physical Recreation and a Venture Project. The purpose of the award is to encourage young people to set and achieve a demanding challenge for themselves. No one individual has an advantage over another in earning the award. The award also recognizes the initiative, achievement and voluntary service of young people and encourages them to develop their skills and help their communities. Reaching the goals and getting the medal demands a lot of dedication and hard work each week and so I would like to congratulate the following students who have achieved the award; Clara Barry, Carla Hickey, Chantel Kelly, Nicola Maye, Vanessa Oltean, Ciara Roche, Joanna Siewierska, Ronete Siupinyte and Sylvia Wan. I would like to thank Ms Broderick, Ms McLoughlin, Ms McCormack, Ms Hart and the staff of St. Mary's for their help and support throughout the year (Kay Durkin - President's Award Leader).

Paired Reading 2013: Paired Reading is an initiative coordinated by the T.Y. English Department in conjunction with the Learning Support Department and aims to promote reading for pleasure and the improvement of reading skills. This year, 35 T.Y. students worked with almost 140 students from local Primary schools. The schools involved were; St. Brigid's, Scoil Chaitríona, St. Francis of Assisi and St. Francis S.N.S. The initiative ran over 6 weeks and culminated in a wonderful ceremony of celebration held in our school over 2 days. During the celebration the students were addressed by Ms. Broderick and each received a personal certificate of recognition. Many thanks are due to Ms. Thakarar and Mr. Boyle who kindly organised numerous sports activities with the Primary students, which the students loved. Finally, big congratulations are also due to the students who acted as Paired Reading Mentors. They did us and themselves proud and the teachers and principals involved had nothing but praise for them. Well done girls and roll on next year!!

School Fundraiser: On Friday, March 22nd, we held our annual school walk to help raise funds for our school. Unfortunately, the sun wasn't shining on us that day, at one point it looked like Noah's Ark would be needed to get the girls out on the walk! However, we were not put off by this and instead, with great help from all teachers, we ran a skip-a-thon and a céili. This proved very successful and students and staff alike had a fantastic day. The students were brilliant and helped to raise nearly €4,000. After the céili and skip-a-thon we had our raffle and we were delighted to see the girls win some fantastic prizes, although not everyone was as lucky as Sinéad Lundberg who won an iPad. A great day was had by all and well done to all our students for their fantastic contributions.

Sports Captains for 2013/2014: The sports captains for 2013/2014 were announced at the recent awards' ceremony. Ciara Mc Manus and Alex Cooling take over these duties. Well done and best of luck to the girls.

A Great Day at Sports day: The annual Sports day took place on Friday 17th May and for a change the weather was kind to us! A great day of enjoyment and participation was had by all students from 1st year to 6th year. On the day there were bouncy castles, an obstacle course, 100mtr races, egg and spoon races, wheel-barrow races, three-legged races and a teacher v student sumo wrestling challenge! The leaving 6th year students were in fancy dress and the participation of all students in very large numbers was great to see. Thanks to everyone who helped out on the day.

Rainbow's Celebrate Me Day: On May 15th, the Rainbows group had their 'Celebrate Me Day' in the school library. The 1st and 2nd year students who had participated in the Rainbows programme for the past 12 weeks were accompanied by their parents, Ms Kealy, Ms Mc Loughlin, Ms Broderick and facilitators; Lorna, Róisín, and the two Marys. The day was a great success and the girls really enjoyed making their 'Life's Little Emergency Kit', stuffing their faces at the pizza party and releasing all their worries along with their balloons. Any students that are interested in participating in the Rainbow's programme will be informed of the next session by their tutor.

Cycle Against Suicide: On 23 April 2013, the nationwide Cycle Against Suicide was launched. Our TY students left school at 8.30 and travelled by bus to Dominican College, Sion Hill, Blackrock for the launch event. We listened to several speakers on the topic of mental health and nutrition. Nicola Maye and Carla Hickey performed at the event singing their original song called DON'T CRY. They were outstanding and 5th year students Jessica Nangle and Alex Cooling were interviewed by RTE about their involvement in Cycle Against Suicide.



St. Mary's students with Bressie, Ryan Tubridy, Colm Hayes 2Fm, Rosanna Davidson and Cycle Against Suicide Founder Jim Breen

Then cyclists (Joanna Siewierska, Chantel Kelly and Ms Williams) were called aside to cycle 5 km to RTE for the start of the cycle. Once there, we registered and received our orange 'Cycle Against Suicide' Jerseys.

At 11.15 the cycle was launched live on Radio and 500 cyclists set off to Bray (16 km) for the first lunch stop. It was very exciting cycling with such a large group and a garda escort: many schools and well-wishers lined the route and cheered us on. Loreto Bray was our destination: this is at the top of a steep hill where we were cheered by local primary and secondary schools. Lunch was served there, followed by talks on mental health issues in the gym. These school talks were for both cyclists and the secondary school students. At 2 pm the cycle continued to Gorey, but we cycled to the Dart station and came home. The key messages of the Cycle are: ***It's ok not to feel ok and it's more than ok to ask for help there is help and that help is available locally.*** Well done to all who took part in this truly worthwhile event.

Debating Society: In April, the recently formed St. Mary's Holy Faith Secondary School Debating Society ventured into their first competitive debate, accompanied by their teachers Ms. Hughes and Ms. Martin. The competition took place in The Donahies Community School in memory of their former colleague and renowned debater, Carmel Walsh. St. Mary's had two teams participating and argued on the motion "This house believes that social networking sites are bad for young people". One team successfully made it to the final where they proposed the motion that "This house believes that the private lives of public people should be kept private". The team of Alina Ciobanu, Katie O'Connell and sub, Cody Gahan managed to defeat the strong opposition from The Donahies and take home the Carmel Walsh Memorial Cup, which was presented by Carmel's family. It was an honour for us to be the first winners of this competition, in memory of Carmel. Well done to the winning team and to Katie Doyle, Nicole Arkins and sub, Gabriele Grudyte who put up some great opposition on the night.

2013 First Years' Orientation Evening: On Thursday 6th June 2013, we hosted our Orientation Evening here in the school for all of our incoming 2013 First Year Students. As a new initiative, all girls were asked formally hand over their English, Irish and Maths homework copies on to us here in the school. This initiative will form part of our student tracking process for all First Year Students.

Time To Say Goodbye: We are sad to announce that at the end of this school year, four members of our teaching staff are moving on to pastures new. Those teachers are; Mr. Whyte, Ms. Kennelly, Ms. Horrigan and Ms. Muldoon. We would like to thank them for their hard work and commitment to our school and our students over the years. They will be sadly missed by students, staff and management and we wish them continued success in their careers.

Wishing all of our girls and parents an enjoyable and relaxing summer.

Ms. Ada Broderick
Principal

Ms. Evelyn McLoughlin
Deputy Principal