



MUCKROSS PARK PARENTS' ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

January 2015



'Happy New Year' from the Principal's Desk

A new year is always a time for reflection on the old and a plan for the new. We start a new calendar year right in the middle of a school year which is quite useful really when you think of it! We can revisit resolutions we made in September (and have probably forgotten about) and we can start over with a new list in January. Some of us draw our inspiration from prominent world leaders such as Pope John XXIII who said: *'Consult not your fears but your hopes and your dreams. Think not about your frustrations, but about your unfulfilled potential. Concern yourself not with what you tried and failed in, but with what it is still possible for you to do'.*

Frank Capra's movie 'It's A Wonderful Life' the all-time Christmas favourite, hears Clarence the angel say to George Bailey *'Strange, isn't it? Each man's life touches so many other lives. When he isn't around he leaves an awful hole, doesn't he?'* Wouldn't it be wonderful if we all appreciated what we have right now and paused to give thanks to those who love us, care for us and serve us in so many ways?

I personally, would like to thank you the parents of our wonderful students for all of the support you give to us

here in Muckross both from home and at a committee level.

I would like to thank the wonderful staff here, both teaching and ancillary for their commitment, dedication and hard work. They give generously beyond any contract and really care about your daughters and their continued wellbeing.

I express my deepest appreciation to my Deputy Principal, Ms Mee for her professionalism, inspiration and friendship throughout the year. I'd like to say a special 'Thank You' to Sr Norah OP who has been, and continues to be, a superb witness and reminder of what it is we are about in this great Dominican school.

'Thank You' to all of the students, both past and present, for being exemplary role models for Dominican College Muckross Park. The achievements throughout the past term are documented in the following pages of this newsletter and I know that you will enjoy reading about them. I hope that this year will bring you all that is good and the strength and courage to tackle any challenges which may arise.

Finally and most importantly I thank God our heavenly father for giving us all this wonderful life!

Happy New Year to all.

Caroline Lundy, Principal

Dear Parents / Guardians

The Muckross Parents' Association Committee would like to wish you, your Families and the community of Dominican College Muckross Park a very Happy New Year. We have had a busy and enjoyable first term and all the members continue to work hard to represent the 270 plus families that make up the Parents Association. If you have a requirement to discuss any matter regarding the issues dealt with by the PA, please contact us on muckrosspa@gmail.com.

In October, the PA in conjunction with the school, coordinated the annual 1st Years Parent evening. This was again a great success and the new girls proudly showed their parents around the school and introduced them to their new friends. Refreshments were provided in the hall. Also during first term, a very interesting talk was provided by Dr. Claire Hayes, Clinical Psychologist & Clinical Director of Aware on "Supporting Parents to Support their Adolescents"! This was a very informative talk and well-received by over 100 parents who attended on the night. The PA also organised a talk that Mr. Core, the school's Career Guidance Counsellor, delivered to 6th Year parents on the CAO process.

We offer a huge thank you to Ms. Lundy for taking the time to attend our regular PA meetings, and listening to and responding to the queries raised by our parents and their families.

As always it is your support, whether through membership (€30 per family for the year) contribution or your time or attendance at events, that makes the Muckross Parents' Association so vibrant and effective. Thank you.

Muckross Parents' Association

1st Year News

Firstly there was the trip to O'Farrell's school and sports shop. The skirt was too long, the shoes were too big and the jacket was too wide. At last the day we had waited for finally arrived. Everything seemed so big and daunting in comparison to the small schools most of us had come from. A sea of green advanced towards our new home. Soon things began to settle down. If only the lockers were bigger.

The annual School Mass, held in the Sacred Heart Church Donnybrook, was the first event where all students came together in one place outside the school. First years seemed so small as we filed in and looked in wonder at the older girls. There was a feeling of community and pride for our new school.

The visit to the school of Dave's jungle was unforgettable. He came armed with Snakes, Scorpions, Tarantulas and Iguanas and lots more. Let's hope he didn't leave anything behind!

The First Year parent night was full of chatter and friendly introductions. This was a great way for first years to meet their friend's parents and for parents to meet their daughter's new friends.

For Halloween each year was allowed to dress up. There was one prize for the best costume from First year, Second Year or Third year. Christina McEvoy, Tara, took the prize with her great Jungle themed costume.

During Maths and Science weeks we enjoyed many quizzes and experiments.



We learnt many new things and found out lots we didn't know before.

Alison McGee from Knock made us very

proud as she led the Ireland rugby team into the Aviva for the Ireland v Australia encounter. We eagerly watched Alison on the television and were delighted when Ireland won.

Kez Higgins, Knock, sang beautifully on the Late Late Toy Show this year.

We also had a great day when we met our 5th year buddies. We played games in the canteen and enjoyed biscuits and drinks.

Our buddies, along with other students, teachers and of course our new friends have made us all feel very welcome and part of the Muckcross family.



2nd Year News

Second Year continues the development of the girls through Muckcross. No longer the new girls, and not quite the established group; the girls have however settled in really well and are a lively group.

The highlight for the first term was the visit by bus to the W5, Science and Discovery Centre in the Odyssey Belfast. There are 250 interactive exhibits for education, health, hygiene, geology, electric circuits and flight.

There was an interactive area featuring nature and biodiversity and further active areas for design & build structures, bringing robots to life and playing virtual sports. By all accounts it was a great day out.

Halloween was another highlight. The girls showed great imagination and flair with their costumes. This year Oak with the 'I'm a celebrity – get me out of here' theme won first team prize.

The spirit of this year was encapsulated with the experience on the bus returning from a great hockey win against Kings Hospital. Apparently the whole bus was singing Christmas Carols to Mr. McCarthy's chagrin. He said they were better Hockey Players than singers and there are no candidates for the X-Factor!

Helen Stapleton and Maeve O'Keefe, 2nd year Birch inform us that 2nd year class Birch have decided to focus their CSPE action project on the reduction of paper.

They concluded that the following are some ways in which you can save paper at home that will save money and paper.

- Use a cloth or sponge to clean up spills instead of kitchen roll or paper towels.
- Use reusable shopping bags instead of paper bags.
- When using the printer, use the Century Gothic font as it uses 30% less ink. You can also reduce margin size to narrow and if possible print on both sides of the page.
- Where possible re-use envelopes, wrapping paper and gift bags.
- Put a 'no junk mail' sign up on your door if you have no interest in reading it



3rd Year News

The 3rd year girls have had a very busy start to their year so far. The term began with a Retreat organised by the Religion Department. This was held in the school and the girls reflected on life – their own and those of others. They also sang and played games during the day.

The girls who study German went to a German movie called 'Sputnik' in the Irish Film Institute in Temple Bar. They joined 4th and 5th years and found the movie enjoyable and beneficial in broadening their vocabulary and in preparation for their upcoming aural.

Sadhbh Lynch, Catherine McNulty, Sarah Gibbons and Caroline Costello represented Muckross at the inter schools debating team in Irish and are progressing very successfully

through this competition. We wish them continued success in 2015.

Science week was enjoyed by all the girls who took part in various experiments and activities and there was great competition and fun between the groups.

Mock exams are starting on the 2nd of February and the girls are studying hard for these. Religion journals and projects have been completed together with their CSPE action projects. The girls have also now been given their Titles for course work B in science and they are busy researching these titles.

The girls have had an action packed first term and we wish them every success in their upcoming exams.

VOX POP

Congratulations to Niamh Keane, 4th year Valentia, who won the Under 18 Irish National Taekwondo Title in the technical class and came 2nd in the sparring category.

Well done to Molly Simmons, 4th year, who took part in the horse riding hunt in 2014.

The 4th year cross country team of Niamh Staunton, Muireann Neville, Orla Walsh came 1st in the schools invitational race in October.

A fantastic achievement by Orla Walsh, 4th year Achill, who came 3rd in the Liffey Swim.

Further success in the swimming pool by Kate Morris, 4th yr Valentia who was in 4 finals and won 3 medals in the Leinster Winter Championship

Congratulations to Isabelle Banks 6th year, who not only played on the Irish U19 Waterpolo team which won The North Sea Cup in Swansea in November, but she also captained the side.

Well done to Julie Byrne 5th year who continues to make huge progress in tennis as she played on The Irish Women's Federation Cup team. She won her first ITF tournament in Malta this year and is currently in Paris competing in a college tournament.



TY News

The girls are really enjoying their journey through Transition Year and are getting the opportunity to try lots of new subjects and activities.

A number of activities have been offered to the girls on a Friday after school, including sailing, guitar lessons, Zumba and Pilates. All the modules are very popular, particularly Basic Cookery and Craft.

In September, half of the year went by bus for three nights to Achill. Ms McCarthy and Mr McCarthy kept the girls very busy with lots of great activities.

They cycled the Green Way, surfed, kayaked, went on a hike and had a barbecue on the beach. The girls all really enjoyed the trip. Erica Jones, Sarah Bennett and Sophie Holden-Halpen as part of their SEA business project got hoodies made with the girls sur-

name on the back and Achill 2014 on the front to mark the trip. These have proved really popular with the girls who went on the trip.

The rest of the year, who opted to stay in Dublin, kayaked on the Liffey, did the Bray to Greystones walk and went for a cycle in the Phoenix Park.



A large number of girls from the year auditioned for parts in the musical Fame, which was run by Marian College. It was a really fantastic show, which took place over three nights to big audiences. There are lots of very talented actors and singers in Transition Year.



5th Year News

Where did TY go? It went in a flash. The girls are now fully back in the school concentrating on their studies.

During Science week the 5th and 6th year Physics classes went to Dunsink Observatory, located near Castleknock. The building was built in 1795 and was the first of its kind in Ireland built specifically for scientific research and astronomical observation. The Chemistry classes did fun experiments outside and the Biology classes made parachutes during the visit.



The French debating team took part in an excellent debate against St Michaels, but unfortunately

'perdu' on the night.

Many congratulations to the Irish debating team, who have argued their way through 2 rounds and are looking forward to the next topic.

Well done to Nicola O'Corrbui, Suzanne Stapleton, Kate O'Connell and Amy Gormally Taylor who represented the School so well in the English Public Speaking competition in the Mansion House.

The Lourdes committee are actively fundraising for the pilgrimage to Lourdes in September 2015, to date fundraising activities have included a table quiz, which proved a great success.

8 Muckcross girls participated in the Dominican youth forum on November 26 held in Dominican Convent, Cabra.

26 girls will be taking part in the Gonzaga 5th Year Musical 'BUGSY MALONE'. This is due to be held in January 2015 and is a date for the diary.

6th Year News

Sixth year started with a bang, with many College guest speakers from Trinity College, DIT, and NUI, to name but a few, addressing the girls.

We also held the CAO Higher Options day where students got a small insight into College life through the many prospectus' handed out by enthusiastic College representatives.

On 1st October, the 6th year geography students headed off to Shanganagh beach with their teachers Ms. Ní Bhraonain, Ms. Rosell and Mr. Feeney.

The excitement was palpable! Their task was to prove that coastal erosion occurs in this area.

All day, they measured, sketched and recorded their results and they were able to see the coastal features, that they had studied. The students really enjoyed their day out and luckily the weather was kind to us too.

The retreat to Glendalough took place in mid-November. The girls had fun, laughter and tears sharing their experiences in the quiet, safe haven away from their daily study environments.



They enjoyed beautiful walks around St. Kevin's Monastery and talked till the early hours of the morning.

A well needed break that was thoroughly enjoyed by the staff and students.



Christmas Carol Service 2014

The annual carol service took place on the 9th of December this year in the Convent Chapel and it was really magical. A candlelight procession by 6th years really set the Christmas mood while Winter Song was sung by the choir and Glee club. Accompaniment was provided by Emma Kinney, Sorchá O'Rourke and Claire Cashman in 6th year. Ms. Breda O'Brien designed the service while Ms. Mee created a wonderful candlelight setting.

Head girl Rachel Sparrow gave everyone a warm welcome, while Deputy Head girl Laura Crowley gave a reflection on the spiritual aspect of the Christmas season. Many students took the opportunity to display their musical talents. Particular congratulations to Ally Courtney (6th yr) who was our soloist for O Holy Night accompanied by Sophie and Laura Farnan on flute, Claire Cashman on cello and Caoimhe O'Brien on piano. Also, Niamh O'Neill (5th yr) played the exceptionally beautiful oboe melody in Gabriel's Oboe, accompanied by the orchestra. The sixth years had a moment to shine in their acapella performance of Carol of the Bells.

Mia Hickey (1st yr) gave a lovely recital of Oíche Nollaig followed by a reading of the Gospel of St. Luke by Sr. Norah O'Connor, our school chaplain. Ms. Lundy concluded the service with warm thanks to the staff choir and students for their dedication and hard work, mentioning in particular the school orchestra which is going from strength to strength under the baton of Ms. Ruby Ashley. She gave very special thanks to Ms. Rosell and Ms. Cunningham for all their hard work with the choir and Glee club. The Parents Association invited everyone to the school for festive hot drinks and mince pies to end a delightful evening.



Music Events

The music department has been really busy since the start of the school year. Our school mass took centre stage in September where the chamber choir and traditional Irish group filled Donnybrook Church with glorious sounds. Our new first year parents arrived for a Parent Evening in October. The two first year choirs sang Titanium and Sing beautifully for their proud parents.

In November, the school gathered to hold a Remembrance Service for the Dead. Our soloists Megan Duffy (harp), Emilie McDonagh (violin), Anna Clune (tin whistle), Ella McGrane (piano), Sally Hennessy and



Lara Brennan (vocals) enriched the occasion with their exceptional performances. The first year choir performed Light the Advent Candle, and O Come Emmanuel at an Advent service led by Fr. Jim.

We celebrated a school mass on 8th December where our talented musicians shone once more. Lily Bradley accompanied the first year choir, followed by Elizabeth McKeon and Maura Daly (5th yr) singing Panis Angelicus beautifully. Megan Duffy (harp) led the offertory and Nicole Slattery performed a superb duet with Ms. Cunningham on piano and vocals.

Our school carol service took place on 9th December in the

Convent Chapel and was repeated the next day in the school hall to great applause. Our staff choir received the greatest cheer!

Finally, the school closed on 19th December to the sound of Christmas songs and great festive cheer, led by Ms. Cunningham and the Glee club.



Hockey

With more girls than ever playing hockey in Muckross the season started on a frantic note with 5 or 6 squads training daily and 102 first years turning out on Fridays for their session. Muckross welcomed 5 new coaches including past pupils Clare O'Connor and Laura Hanlon, 2 senior international players, Katie Mullan and Gillian Pinder and our goalie coach Mark Ingram who just got his 1st international cap for our men's national side.



All teams have done the school proud this term with some terrific performances and results. The senior 1 team are hoping to make the premier league semi-finals with 5 matches played. The other senior teams are all in contention to qualify from their groups.

The Junior A's were unlucky to lose to Wesley in the cup quarter final in the dreaded penalty shoot-out but are unbeaten in their league as are the junior B's, C1s, and C2. Both teams in the D league are also well placed.

The Minor A's are unbeaten and again the other 4 minor teams are battling away with notable results.

Our new first years are definitely a force to be reckoned with as they are committed, skilful and competitive. They have won



almost every game they have played so far. Long may it last.

Our top goal scorer com-

petition is being keenly followed each week by all teams as is our player of the match award given after each match. Top goal scorer at the moment is Sophie Courtney 3rd Yr and Junior B. Well done to our 4th year students who are running this competition.

16 TY students attended the Introduction to Coaching Hockey course run by the Irish Hockey Association in early October. These girls are now in a position to coach in their clubs or with the 1st years here in school.

Muckross Club, one of the oldest ladies hockey clubs in the country, returned to Muckross Park this September and now

use the excellent pitch and facilities for their training and matches. From 8.30am to 5pm every Saturday and Sunday Muckross Park is alive with matches and training for all age groups from U8 to veterans with numerous past and present pupils involved. It is also the home of the Leinster School's development programme which brings the top schoolgirl players together on Friday nights for training sessions under Leinster Schools.

Congratulations to Niamh Shaw 3rd yr who was a reserve on the Leinster U16 team this year and good luck to Lelia O Byrne, Ellie Fitzgerald and Karen Duddy, 2nd Yrs who are in the Leinster Development squads.

Finally best of luck to all the teams in the second half of the season as they face cup battles and league play-offs. We know they will do themselves, their school and their parents proud.

Another year heralded the start of another hectic extra-curricular sporting programme at Muckross Park! Late August had all the hockey teams and the U16 and senior basketball teams back training and selection for teams had to be made by mid-September as the school leagues began. Cross-country and Frisbee events also began before we could draw breath. But as usual the Muckross girls settled down to training and were well prepared for the competitive events when they started.

Basketball

Many congratulations to the Muckross Senior A U/19 Basketball team who are the 2015 All Ireland Schools Cup Champions with their epic win against Jesus & Mary Gortnor Abbey, Mayo who put up a great fight.

They had a tough away win against Colaiste Treasa, Kanturk, Co. Cork, a super



home win versus FCJ Bunclody, Co. Wexford and comprehensive win against Aloysius, Co. Kerry before winning

the final 54-46.

Muckross	46	Colaiste Treasa	32
Muckross	57	FCJ Bunclody	27
Muckross	53	St Aloysius	20
Muckross	54	Gortnor Abbey	46

Both the U16 and U19 teams are progressing well in the Dublin Leagues. The U16 Cup team was very unlucky when they lost away to St. Nathy's, Co. Mayo by 2pts in the All Ireland Cup!

We look forward to our excellent U14 team and our new first years playing their leagues and cups.

Frisbee

Under the excellent guidance of our very own frisbee specialist Daniel Farrell both junior and senior teams have participated in school leagues and have won all their games to date. Frisbee is growing in popularity in Muckross with all years now involved.

Cross-country

We have had teams participate in the Clonliffe Harriers Invitational Race in Santry and the Blackrock Invitational Race. Our intermediate team did us proud in Santry winning the event with Niamh Staunton 4th yr leading that team. The junior team won bronze at the same event, while our 1st year team were the proud winners of the bronze team medal in Blackrock. All runners are looking forward to the East Leinster Championships which will take place in January.