



# MUCKROSS PARK PARENTS' ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Winter 2013/2014

## A note from the Principal:

As we start a new year, I would like to extend a warm welcome back to all our students and staff members who contribute to making Dominican College Muckross Park the vibrant centre of intellectual, spiritual, cultural and sporting activity which it is all year round.

Our school benefits greatly from the involvement of parents through our Parents Association. As you will see from this Winter Newsletter, the P.A. provides an invaluable service to the school and, on behalf of the Board of Management, I would like to thank them for their time and dedication.

Our staff is eager to work closely with you as partners in your daughter's continuing education, growth and development. If you have any questions or concerns throughout the year, please do not hesitate to contact us as we believe that communication is the key to building a strong home-school relationship. A new year always brings with it a sense of renewal – a renewal of purpose and collective commitment to excellence in teaching, learning and becoming the best that we can be. With this commitment comes the firm resolution to achieve desired results and I wish the State Examinations' students the very best in the upcoming months as they prepare for the June examinations. I would also like to wish the class of 2013 who celebrated their 'Debs' on Nov 5th every success in their selected college courses.

In the words of the American poet Edith Lovejoy Pierce, 'We will open the book. Its pages are blank. We are going to put words on them ourselves. The book is called *Opportunity* and its first chapter is New Year's Day'. Let us resolve to fill our own book with great opportunities and experiences as we seize each day (*Carpe Diem*) as a gift from God. I wish you all a wonderful New Year and God's Blessing from our community here in Muckross.

Sincerely, Caroline Lundy, Principal

The Class of 2013 in all their finery at their Debs in the Shelbourne Hotel



## Dear Parents and Guardians

We wish you all the best for the new year. Last term was a busy one. In October, the PA organised a very successful 1<sup>st</sup> Year Parents Evening where the new girls were able to show their parents around the school and introduce them to their new friends and their parents. Refreshments were enjoyed by all afterwards in the school hall.

A very interesting talk on the subject of Alcohol and Teenagers by Sgt Vanessa O'Keefe and a CAO information evening for 6<sup>th</sup> years and their parents by Brian Howard were also organised and funded by the PA.

The role of the PA is to represent the views of the parents to the principal and the board of management, to organise educational evenings and social events for parents, to fundraise in order to improve the facilities available to our daughters in the school and to help out at school events when requested.

Any issues that parents have can be addressed to the PA's Gmail account ([muckrosspa@gmail.com](mailto:muckrosspa@gmail.com)) and we will bring those concerns or issues to the

principal and we will respond to your queries as swiftly as possible. We also organise coffee mornings and social evenings for parents each term.

Our Class Reps have organised a database of parents email addresses for quick and efficient communication with the parent body.

If you would like to be on this list and have not already submitted your details please send them to [muckrosspa@gmail.com](mailto:muckrosspa@gmail.com) including your daughter's name and year.

We always welcome new members so if you have not yet joined the Parents Association and would like to we would appreciate your support.

The annual subscription is €30 per family.

**Parents' Association**

## OPENING OF SCHOOL YEAR MASS



### 1st Year News ...

... Tempus Fugit! It only feels like yesterday when last September there was crying, gnashing of teeth, screaming (and that was only the parents) when the first years joined Muckross.

Each class has been named after a tree; Birch, Oak, Elm and Ash. It is the intention to plant each of these trees in the school later in the year.

The Parents Night in early October was a great success and this gave the girls a chance to show off their new school. The wonderful cakes were made by the home economics classes. The girls en-

joyed their first mid-term end with a Halloween party where they showed marvellous creativity in dressing up with the Disney theme.



A scene more akin to 'I'm a celebrity.....get me out of here' was experienced, when 'Jungle Dave' brought in a large collection of alligators, iguanas, lizards, snakes and other reptiles to the

school. This is a wonderful example, of seeing practical examples of biology, rather than just from pictures in a book.

A 'buddy' system is in place with the 5<sup>th</sup> years in order to ease the girls into their new secondary school and all the changes that this involves – new building, new teachers, new subjects, new sports, mountains of books etc. The 1<sup>st</sup> years joined each 'Buddy' for their Advent Ceremony on the 2<sup>nd</sup> December, where traditionally the youngest member of the school, lights the Advent wreath.

The girls have joined in with many of the activities on offer including basketball; hockey; orchestra and Book Club and we hope they are all well settled in at this stage. Many thanks to all those who have assisted this process!

### Science Week November 2013

The whole school got involved in Science Week. 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> years were brought to see Dave's Jungle. 3<sup>rd</sup> years were split into two groups, two classes visited The Natural History Museum and the other two visited the Science Gallery.

A Science Quiz was held for Transition Year students. 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Year physics students accompanied by Mr Fitsimons, Mr O'Farrell and Ms Mee were brought to Dunsink Observatory. The girls viewed celestial objects through the historic Grubb Telescope and two smaller telescopes.



### 2nd Year News ...

As usual second years spent the first few days of term just being thrilled not to be the new girls anymore! The highlight of the first term was the trip to Ferrycarrig, Co Wexford to visit the Irish National Heritage Park. A guide showed the girls around, bringing the years of history to life.

Thanks to the history teachers Mr Hodgins, Mr Breslin, Ms Tuite, Ms Treanor and Ms Mac Mathúna for taking such good care of the girls on the trip. It was a great day out, educational and fun and of course it was a no-uniform day which is always popular. The other no-uniform day – but this time for the whole school - was in December, a fundraiser to support relief work in the Philippines.

Sgt Vanessa O'Keefe talked to the girls on bullying with particular emphasis on cyberbullying.

For dress-up day on Halloween, possibly the giddiest day in the school calendar, the girls in second year embraced the theme of food whole-heartedly, with St Thomas really excelling by doing the food pyramid. Alison Farrell won for her humorous horse meat costume!

This year the girls' lockers are down near the canteen so many more girls are enjoying the lunches and snacks on offer. Three new girls joined the year and everyone made them feel welcome.



### 3rd Year News ...

The third years have been very busy since returning to school in September. As part of Science Week in November, Achill and Rathlin visited the National History Museum with Tory and Valentia visiting the Science Gallery. In conjunction with Science Week a series of interesting experiments were completed during class time. Thank you science teachers! Tory also enjoyed a trip to the cinema to see a production of *Romeo and Juliet*. Thanks to the religion teachers for organising the third year retreat. There was plenty of singing, talking and time to reflect on life. The girls really enjoyed the day.

The mock exams are fast approaching starting February 3rd. The CSPE action project and religion journal are completed, with submission for home economics and music well underway. Titles for science course work B are being considered by students. Despite their busy schedule the girls are still involved in extra school activities such as basketball, hockey, cross-country running, book club and choir. Over all the girls have had a good term and are well on their way to taking the Junior Cert in their stride. We wish them the best of luck in their exams.



Muckross girls join in the RTÉ 2fm Toy Appeal with Operation Santa - helping to raise awareness and toys for St Vincent De Paul this Christmas. Good work girls!

### TY News ...

... We started the school year by choosing our options. We had a difficult choice between puppeteering, herbology, yearbook, fitness, Avoca cookery and international cookery. We also got the chance to start our ECDL, Gaisce award and SEA project, which are all difficult but rewarding.

We have had many interesting guest speakers including an ex-Australian police officer, a barrister and representatives from many charities.

We also did a Team Hope Shoebox Appeal and took part in an appeal for food to fill hampers for St Vincent de Paul. Many girls have volunteered to raise money for some of the charities that have spoken to us.

Sophie Lynch, Amy Booth, Emma Eustace and Lara Brennan are travelling to Kenya to help build houses and they have been fundraising to raise enough money to travel and help there.

We got the chance to take part in some work experience in November. Everyone had such interesting and diverse work placements. It was a great experience to be in a workplace and it has really helped us in deciding our future.

We are having such a great time in Transition Year. We are all learning so much and maturing. We are very excited for the next half of the year.



### Gaisce Hike November 2013

- by Sophie MacDonald and Anna Martyn

On November 8th, 16 Muckross girls from both 5th and 6th year went on a 56km hike to complete the bronze and silver Gaisce Award.

A bus collected us from the school and with the help of Ms Tuite, Ms Cruz and Ms Walsh we began our hike from Roundwood, Co Wicklow. After 14km we finally reached Glendalough Lodge. We then hiked another 7 km and returned, where we all helped in making dinner. After dinner everyone played games in the common room and we all had a great sleep that night.

Day 2: We woke up at 7am and after a hearty bowl of porridge set out on the next 14km of our hike. After hours of uphill hiking, we reached the summit. On our return to the lodge, we had lunch and completed another 7km. Thankfully a bus came to drop us to our next destination; a youth hostel in Glenmalur. With no electricity or running water, we gathered around a fire and shared stories. Four volunteers made dinner and the aubergine curry was indescribable!

Day 3: Ms Tuite let us sleep in until 8am. A daunting 17km hike was to be completed and we eventually made it back to the bus.

Our bodies ached like never before but we had finally completed our Gaisce bronze and silver award.

Thank you so much to Ms Tuite for organising this trip and to Ms Cruz and Ms Walsh - we couldn't have done it without them!

## 5th Year News ...

5th years returned to school this year ready to get stuck into some serious study! They are working hard and are enjoying the structure after the more flexible nature of TY. The President's Gaisce Awards were presented in September and some of the girls are continuing on the programme in order to obtain a silver medal. The girls have also been assigned as buddies

to 1st year girls – hopefully giving some guidance and example to the new girls. On the 1st year parents night, 5th years helped out giving tours and welcoming parents. A number of the girls have joined the Glee Club run by Ms Forde and they completed two performances – one at the Halloween dress-up day and one at the “Remember in November” service. Auditions took place for the Gonzaga musical “Oklahoma” which will take place early in 2014. Muckcross girls

have secured a few main parts and parts in the chorus. Eight 5th year girls also attended the Dominican Youth Forum which was held in Dominican Convent, Cabra. They met girls from other Dominican schools and participated in workshops.

The ski trip for 5th years at the February mid-term break is being organised with many thanks to Ms Mee. The girls who will be travelling are really looking forward to the trip.

## Grease is the Word !

On November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2013, Marion College opened its doors to

excited parents, TY students and teachers, all of whom had been waiting in anticipation for the production of Grease in Marion College. Hannah Collins played the lead female, Sandy Dumbrowski, Sally Hennessey became Rizzo, the leader of the Pink Ladies, followed by Neasa Barnes, Elizabeth McKeon and Suzanne Flynn who played the roles of Marty, Jan and Frenchy. Lara Brennan was cast as Patty Simcox and Carrie Dayman was given the role of Ms Lynch.

Rehearsals started almost immediately after the summer holidays, and the auditions took place for the chorus and before we knew it, we had a cast!

We rehearsed three times a week, singing long into the night, and mastering those difficult dance moves while making friends and having fun the whole way through.

The first night was a huge success and the following nights ran just as smoothly with the cast receiving a huge round of applause each night.

We couldn't hold back the tears as we stood singing “We go together” at the top of our lungs one last time on the final night.

The Marion Musical in association with Muckcross was one of the best experiences I've ever had - we like to think that it was Friggin' A!

by Suzanne Flynn



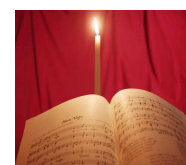
## Christmas Carol Service 2013

The annual Christmas Carol service took place on December 10<sup>th</sup> in the Convent Chapel, opening with a candlelit procession by 6th year prefects while the chamber choir, conducted by Ms Rosell, sung The Wexford Carol.

It's a very special night of the year. Ms Breda O'Brien designed the service with Ms Mee creating the candlelit atmosphere. Head girl Jenny Kennedy gave an uplifting, welcoming speech and deputy head girl Ailbhe Bergin gave a thoughtful reflection on the power of silence. Aside from being a very festive and moving event, it's also an opportunity for the choir singers and musicians in the school to show their many talents. Soloists Maria McGuinness and Sally Crowe gave a beautiful rendition of *O Holy Night*, accompanied by Sophie Farnan on flute and Claire Cashman on cello.

The school orchestra conducted by Ms Fox played with verve and spirit, and The Glee Club under the watchful eye of Ms Forde provided a lively interlude. Anna McGinley from first year recited *Oiche Nollaig*. Molly Sheridan, Ruth Shaw, Anna O Duffy and Ciara Wallace recited the prayers while there was a reading from the gospel of St Luke by Sr Norah O'Connor, the chaplain.

Ms Lundy, the principal, gave a heartfelt speech praising the quality of the performances and the dedication of the girls and also the hard work of the teachers who worked with them to make the night such a success. Ms Lundy remarked how strong the music department is and how the orchestra is going from strength to strength and how a range of talents is being supported and encouraged. She also thanked the Dominican Sisters and wished the assembled audience a very Happy Christmas. Afterwards everyone came back to the school for a spicy hot drink and mince pies, hosted by the Parents Association, a very social end to a lovely evening.





## 6th Year News ...

August saw the 6<sup>th</sup> year girls returning to school in their new black jumpers ready to face the challenging year ahead. However it hasn't been all hard work— they have had plenty of distractions to keep their minds off the books!

For the first time in a number of years the girls went on an overnight retreat to Newgrange. The girls had an opportunity to reflect on their years in Muckross and what their future might hold. It was their last chance to be away as a group together and the night ended with singing, dancing and lots of laughs. The next morning they were all up early and had a long walk to Dowth before returning on Saturday afternoon. This was considered the highlight of the term so far.

In October, the biology students went on two field trips to the Wicklow Mountains National Park to undertake an ecological study. Unfortunately the weather on both days wasn't kind but the girls managed to complete their study and enjoy the day away.

Rousseau organised a Cake Sale in aid of The Aisling Appeal. Lots of delicious cakes and treats were sold and an amazing amount of almost €1,000 was raised. This money will go towards the refurbishment of St John's Ward in Crumlin Hospital for Sick Children.

During the term the girls attended open days in various colleges together with the Higher Options event in the RDS. Brian Howard, guidance counsellor also gave a very informative talk to the girls and their parents regarding the CAO.

The girls welcomed mid-term and celebrated just a little by attending their pre-debs. This was organised by the Debs Committee and a great night was had by all.

### Lourdes Dublin Diocesan Pilgrimage 2013

The week we spent in Lourdes was a time we will all remember and treasure for the rest of our lives. After weeks of fundraising involving coffee mornings, cakes sales and Easter egg hunts we were ready to go.



In September, six 6<sup>th</sup> years, Amy O'Farrell Tyler, Aoife Mulvagh, Emily Costello, Jenny Kennedy, Molly Burke and me, Anna O'Duffy,

accompanied by Ms Hoban, flew to Lourdes to join 180 sick pilgrims who were settling in to the Accueil, the main hospital just across the river from the Grotto in Lourdes.

None of us had any idea of what to expect, but it didn't take us long for us to find our feet and gain confidence in our new roles as either Ward Girls, helping in the hospital, or Flag Girls, leading the processions.

I learnt how to do a Wheelchair Waltz, I experienced the Baths at the Grotto, I picked up sign language, and I learned *all* the words to "The Fields of Athenry"— a popular request at the many singsongs!! All of us Muckross girls found many past pupils of Muckross, helpers and pilgrims alike. Badges were exchanged in these new friendships, a tradition in Lourdes.

It was incredible to be in such a happy atmosphere and environment. A massive thank you must go to Ms Hoban. She was just fantastic on this trip - always nearby and willing to lend a hand or a listening ear. We would never have made it to Lourdes without her.

Finally, thank you to everybody who contributed to or facilitated our fundraising efforts- you made some pilgrims very, very happy!

- by Anna O'Duffy

### Sports Department Term One

The last 13 weeks have been very productive for the sports department. The PE Department did fantastic work co-ordinating all of the sporting activities—it's a huge task given the range of sports on offer. We have had teams and pupils competing in hockey, basketball, rugby, cross-country, swimming, rowing and GAA competitions since coming back to school. We are doing exceptionally well in all leagues, cups and races and are in with a shout to bring home silverware!

### Rugby

The Railway Unions Junior and Senior Schoolgirls rugby blitz took place in Railway Union RC on Friday, October 28th. We had a junior and a senior team take part in the blitz.

The girls played brilliantly with both teams coming third in their respective competitions. Best of luck to the girls going forward into the Spring Blitz!





Senior basketball team win  
Dublin League

### Basketball

Basketball is continuing to go from strength to strength within the school. The Cadet basketball team are playing incredibly well and the Senior Basketball Team are having one of the best seasons in recent memory. The team under the command of Ed Randolph, are into the semi-final of the All-Ireland Cup against St Genevieve's High School which will take place after the Christmas break. The Senior Team also made it to the final of the South Dublin League C Division and won in an exciting match in the Oblate in Inchicore, bringing home an impressive trophy.

The first and second year teams have been enjoying training and Saturday morning basketball blitz's for the last few weeks and their leagues will kick off in the New Year. Congratulations to Aisling McCann in 5<sup>th</sup> year who won the Evening Herald Player of the Week in late October!

Well done and again best of luck to all the teams and their coaches for the New Year.

### Hockey

The 2013-2014 hockey season is



going exceptionally well. We have 18 teams playing Leinster League and 3 teams in Cup competitions. All teams are still very much in their leagues and we expect to have most teams out of their groups in January and through to quarter/semi final stages! The Senior Premier team are doing very well in the league and have yet to start their Cup campaign. The Junior Premier



team had a fantastic term as did the Minor A team. The 1<sup>st</sup> Years are having a great introduction to hockey with the Extreme 8s League. We have about 80 first



years playing hockey and they are thoroughly enjoying their Friday and Saturday activities.

### Cross Country

The cross country have had a great start to the year with medals being won at 2 practice races in Santry and Blackrock. The senior team won silver and bronze medals in the team events. Congratulations to Niamh Staunton of Tory (3<sup>rd</sup> Year) who came second in the cross country in Blackrock. We would like to wish the girls the very best of luck in the East Leinster races which are taking place at the end of January 2014.

### Rowing

In September 5<sup>th</sup> years and 4<sup>th</sup> years entered the Plaradell Paddling Regatta at the Grand Canal. The 5<sup>th</sup> years joined forces with St Michael's to form the 'M&Ms' while the 4<sup>th</sup> years were known as the 'Green Machine'. There were two races and the 'M&Ms' came in 1st place in the schools competition. Well done to all involved!



### Dates for your diaries

### Understanding the Emotional Well Being of your Teenagers by Dr Fergus Heffernan

28th January, 2014

The psychologist and educationalist draws upon his years of experience to give an engaging talk full of practical advice on understanding the emotional wellbeing of teenagers. Keep an eye on your email for the time.

**This talk is free and all are welcome. Organised and funded by the Parents' Association.**