



**St Mary's Secondary School,  
New Ross, Co. Wexford  
NEWSLETTER  
11<sup>th</sup> November 2011**

*Principal's  
Update*

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**'In November we Remember'**

Today's unusual date 11/11/11 marks a very important occasion – it is the 170<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Venerable Catherine McAuley, Foundress of the Sisters of Mercy. As we remember the work she and the Sisters of Mercy have done to promote education let us also remember all our deceased loved ones during the month of November. We especially remember Sr. Rosarii Fortune who passed away this week. May we cherish all the happy memories our loved ones have brought us, acknowledge how they have helped shape who we are and remember how we carry on many of their traditions and fulfil many of their dreams.

Today also marks the inauguration of our new President, Michael D. Higgins. In these times of change

may we confront all our challenges with determination and may we always work together in a spirit of community to live our present and to create our future.

Our newsletter captures some of the positive energy and exuberance of our school. The many activities outlined below are testament to the dedication of our staff to provide an excellent education for our students, the commitment of our students to becoming involved in school life and the support of our Parents Council, Board of Management and local community in making us a welcoming and dynamic school.

**Parent Teacher Meetings**

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Year Parent Teacher Meeting will take place on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> November 4.15-6.45 For other years groups please see the enclosed calendar.

**Awards Night**

Congratulations to all our award winners who received their awards at our ceremony on 21<sup>st</sup> October. A summary of the award winners is enclosed. A special word of thanks is extended to Ms. Catriona Kinsella who co-ordinated the event.

**Parents Council**

A new Parents Council has been elected following the AGM. The members are

The Parents Council would like to thank all those who helped with the Church Gate Collection and all who helped with the very successful Cookery Demonstration night on 13<sup>th</sup> October.

## **Board of Management**

A new Board of Management commenced its term recently. Congratulations are extended to the new Trustee Rep Ms. Mary Browne and the new Teacher rep Mr Paul Deavy. A thank you is extended to the Board members of the last Board who have remained on the committee: Mr Mark Minihan, Chairperson, Ms May Holden and Mr. Declan Joyce Trustee Reps, Ms Hazel Meaney and Mr Michael Whelan Parents Reps and Ms Kathleen Woodcock Teacher Rep. Thanks is also extended to outgoing board members, Mr PJ Mc Grath Trustee Rep, Ms Anne Marie Goulding Teacher Rep and Mr. Gene O Sullivan Secretary to the Board.

## **Subject News**

### **Guidance**

The Guidance & Counselling Department has been very busy since we started back in September. 6<sup>th</sup> years have already attended the Higher Options on Sept. 17<sup>th</sup> and on Friday Oct 14 6<sup>th</sup> years attended the U.L. Open Day. Ms Ryan & Ms Kennedy accompanied the girls. Students who were interested in Mary Immaculate College and Limerick Institute of Technology were able to visit these also as shuttle buses were provided in U.L. The trip was a great success for all involved. On Wed. Oct 19<sup>th</sup> Ms Ryan held a talk for 6<sup>th</sup> year parents on CAO and Further Education Options in Lantern Hall. All sixth year students are currently attending 1 – 1 meetings with the

Guidance Counsellors Ms Kennedy + Ms Ryan. The CAO applications system will open on Nov 3<sup>rd</sup> 2011.

6<sup>th</sup> Year Trip to Higher Options  
On the 16<sup>th</sup> September many of our 6<sup>th</sup> year students attended the Higher Options Conference in the RDS along with Guidance Counsellors Ms Kennedy and Ms Ryan. This is a national event hosted on 3 separate days and is viewed as being an excellent starting point for those 6<sup>th</sup> year students who are considering their options for further study and education at third level. The event is also attended by representatives from the Armed Forces, the Garda Síochána and also by many colleges and universities from the U.K. The 6<sup>th</sup> years of St Mary's set off early in the morning at 7.00 a.m. and returned at 5.00 p.m. Overall, it was a very successful day for the students who were able to talk to college representatives and attend lectures on the CAO and UCAS options.

### **French**

Beinvenue À Marion  
We would like to extend a warm welcome to Marion Agullo from Brittany, France. Marion will be with us for the school year working as a French Language Assistant. Marion will be primarily working with our Senior Cycle Students and we are delighted to be in a position to benefit from her expertise.

### **Irish**

An Triail

Chuir an comhlacht 'Fibín! An drama 'an Triail' ar Stáitse san Amharclann George Bernard Shaw

Í gCeatharlach le déanaí. Chuaigh 37 dalta an seú bliain in éineacht lena múinteoirí Gaeilge chun an drama a fheicéail. Bhain gach éinne an-taitneamh as an lá agus bhí an drama go h-iontach ar fad.

Speed Dating! Dáta Tapaidh! Chuaigh cailíní ón gcúigiú bliain go Coláiste na dea Comhairle le déanaí chun dul ag speed dating!!

Bhain gach éinne an-taitneamh as an ócáid. Bhí an-spóirt ag na bucahailí agus na cailíní go léir.

### **Business Studies**

The following students were awarded Certificates of Excellence in Junior Cert Business Studies at a Ceremony co-hosted by the Business Studies Teachers' Association of Ireland and Waterford Institute of Technology. They were among over 250 students from the South East. The Awards were presented by the President of the BSTAI Ms Mary O'Sullivan and the President of W.I.T.

Mairead Barnwell, Niamh Barry, Joanne Brennan, Laura Doyle, Carol Dunphy, Ellen Fitzpatrick, Christine Lyng, Stacey O'Connor, Orlaith Whelan, Aoife Barron-Byrne, Niamh Connick, Eimear Flynn, Niamh Walkden, Jessica Burford, Keryn Duggan, Caroline Furlong, Aoidin Kiely, Kate O'Neill, Kirstin Patterson, Hannah Murphy, Ellen O'Brien, Grace Tubritt. Congratulations to all.

### **Art**

3<sup>rd</sup> year Art students are currently working on their Art Projects, which accounts for 75% of their total grade. This is a great opportunity

for all students to excel and we wish them well in their individual pursuits.

### **Design & Communication Graphics**

6<sup>th</sup> Year Design and Communication Graphics students are currently working hard on their projects which are worth 40% of Leaving Cert Grade. Extra sessions are being run in the DCG room after school at the moment. Thank you to the parents who are supervising.

### **LCVP**

LCVP Trip to Camphill, Jerpoint, Thomastown, Co. Kilkenny  
On Thursday, September 22<sup>nd</sup> our 6<sup>th</sup> year LCVP class along with our teacher Ms Ryan visited the Camphill Community in Thomastown, Co Kilkenny. This trip was organised to fulfil a requirement of our LCVP Portfolio where we must plan a trip and write a report on it. The Association of Camphill Communities is an international charitable organisation which offers one of the largest support networks for children and adults with learning disabilities, mental health problems and other support needs. When we arrived at the Jerpoint Camphill Community we were met by the Community Co-ordinator Ms Inge Lange. We were surprised and fascinated by the stories Ms Lange told about the fantastic work being done in Camphill, Thomastown. The Jerpoint Community is set on a beautiful stretch of land close to the river Nore. There are a number of beautiful old buildings on the grounds which serve a variety of functions namely housing for the

residents and volunteer workers and also there are a number of work shops where the residents can work on different projects. We met some of the residents and volunteer workers on our tour of Camphill and we were also treated to some wonderful refreshments all homemade in the Community. The Community is relatively self-sufficient with its own vegetable and herb garden, bakery and cheese making facility. The residents of Camphill are encouraged to take up meaningful work and some of the Jerpoint residents work in the Watergarden Café in Thomastown. We found the visit to Camphill very interesting and even uplifting in a sense. We were made feel very welcome by Ms Inge Lange and the other people at Camphill. We learned a lot about the important work that goes on in Camphill Community, the majority of it unnoticed by the rest of society and we hope now to raise money for this excellent organisation. Overall, this trip was a very big success.

## **Religion**

Students in 3<sup>rd</sup> year, Transition year and 6<sup>th</sup> year relaxed and became revitalised during their retreats as part of their Faith Development. Due to the closure of many retreat centres we decided to host the days in our own beautiful Lantern Hall and prayer room. Both the retreat team of Nuala, Sheila and Lisa and the students agreed that it was a great success. Here are just some of the girls' comments: "I loved the meditation. It was relaxing and gave us an opportunity for self-reflection which we NEVER have time for in our busy lives"

"Overall, I thought the retreat was brilliant. It really helped my self-confidence"

"It was a fun day and a welcome break from all the hard work of 3<sup>rd</sup> year. You got to say what you liked and the lovely part was that EVERYBODY listened"

"I talked to girls who I didn't really know and we had a great time"

"It was amazing! We did the Hokie Pokie to waken us up.... And it definitely was an interesting start to the day!

"My favourite part was the Art Workshop. It took us on a journey and taught me that I'm important in the world and that I'm loved"

"Overall, I thought the retreat was brilliant. It really helped my self-confidence"

Mass for Deceased relatives and friends will occur on November 11<sup>th</sup>

## **New IT Facilities**

A new computer room came into operation is St Mary's during this term. The state of the art 'multi-seat' format computer room is located in the career guidance room. The new facility greatly expands student IT amenities in the school and brings to three the number of IT rooms available in to students. There is also IT facilities available in the library which include a full class set of laptop computers. The new computer room will function as a general IT room for students to do online research, IT studies, e-learning and the produce their own work.

Multi-seat computer configuration consists of a single computer which supports multiple independent

users at the same time. In essence the terms refer to multiple users using one personal computer, each with their own console, consisting of a keyboard a mouse, a monitor, and headphones. In the case of our new IT room there are six such personal computers with five consoles attached to each. There is also a single computer for the teacher and this is connected to a 42in touch-screen display mounted at the front of the classroom. The advantage of the multi-seat system stems from the increased capacity and processing power of personal computers which can now perform significant numbers of tasks simultaneously without slowing down. However, using standard computer configurations, only one user is able to use the computer at a time, limiting the effectiveness of the system as it remains idle a lot of the time. With a multi-terminal system, a lot of users can share the same computer, so more of its total capacity is going to be used. This works well for most purposes which require little computer resources; however for gaming and other resource intense software such a system would not be ideal.

Multi-seats systems are also more cost-effective, environmentally friendly and cheaper to run and take up a lot less space.

Funds for the installation of this room came from an IT grant provided by the Dept. of Education to schools for general upgrade of school IT facilities. The grant has also been used to help provide other IT facilities such data projectors which have now been installed in all classrooms.

The new room will be on display to the public on the open night (17<sup>th</sup> November) and all are invited to come along and see the facility.

## ***Transition Year News***

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### **Glendalough**

On Fri. 1<sup>st</sup> of Sept. the Transition Years went on the first of their trips. They did the Heritage trail of St. Kevin following a guided tour of the Monastic site. They then completed the scenic and inspirational Spin trail in record time and with great enthusiasm!! Back to the Hostel for a "home cooked" dinner and entertainment for the night provided by the girls from each room. Great talent!! The following day, Saturday, was less challenging, and shorter, much to everyone's delight. The entire expedition was to fulfil the adventure part of the Bronze Gaisce challenge. Many thanks to Ms. Shannon, Mrs. Larkin, Mr. Fogarty and Ms. Woodcock for accompanying the girls in their challenge.

### **Law Education**

The 4/2 Transition Year group had a very interesting day on 24<sup>th</sup> Oct when Ms. Kate Hedigan, Solicitor, gave them a great insight into the legal profession, how to become a Solicitor or a Barrister and the roles undertaken by each. She also brought the law that affects us all into perspective, focusing on how the law can impinge on the lives of teenagers.

### **Lá Gaeilge i Loch Gorman**

Ar an 27<sup>ú</sup> lá de Dheireadh Fómhair, chuaigh na cailíní ón Idirbhliain ar thuras lae go Loch Gorman. I

dtosach, fuair na cailíní turas siúil timpeall an bhaile le treoraí trí mheán na Gaeilge. Bhí uair go leith ag na cailíní ansin chun dul ag spaisteoireacht timpeall an bhaile ag féachaint ar na taispeántais ealaíne a bhí ar siúl i rith an bhféile. Ansin chuamar amach go dtí an Pháirc Oidhreachta, le haghaidh turais eile. Bhlaiseamar bia ón bhFulacht Fia. D'aontaigh gach éinne go raibh an 'Bágún' an-bhlasta ar fad. Bhain gach éinne sult agus tairbhe as an lá. Míle buíochas do na múinteoirí Ms. Stafford agus Ms. Woodcock

### **First Aid**

The TY classes did an afternoon of First Aid with Mr. Pat O'Carroll and learned the importance of being confident enough to provide First Aid to victims in case of emergency, which could save someone's life.

### **Community Care**

The New Ross Day care centre visited St.Mary's on Tuesday October 18<sup>th</sup> for afternoon tea. The event was hosted in the school library by Transition Year students of St. Mary's Secondary school and Good Counsel College as part of their Community Care Module. It was a lovely afternoon where young and old shared a cup of tea and a chat, swapping stories about school days and discussing local news. The "generation gap" seemed to disappear as everybody chatted happily and enjoyed some entertainment provide by Grace Tubritt and Ellen O' Brien on the piano. This event hopes to strengthen the bonds between young and old in our community, bringing them closer together and forging friendships for the future.

## **Teaching TY students the skills of Public Speaking**

### **Goals:**

To learn the arts of speaking, listening and thinking – vital skills that promote self-actualization, enhance leadership potential, foster human understanding, and contribute to the betterment of mankind.

### **How the PUBLIC SPEAKING class is conducted:**

Last September the Transition Year students in St Mary's Secondary School, New Ross were introduced to a public speaking program. One class per week is allotted to this program. Each student is encouraged, motivated and cajoled to engage in the programme, which involves each TY student giving 10 speeches to the class throughout the course of the year. Each speech has different objectives. For example, the objectives of the first speech are to begin speaking before an audience, to control nervousness and to help you understand what areas require improvement. While the objectives of the 9<sup>th</sup> speech are to present a talk that persuades the audience to accept your viewpoint and to achieve this persuasive effect by appealing to the audience for agreement, and arousing emotional commitment to your cause.

### **CLASS STRUCTURE**

Each class period involves 4 students making a speech. At the start of the class the chairman (student) appoints a Grammarian, an Ah Counter and a Time-Keeper. The **GRAMMARIAN** introduces new words to students; she selects a "Word of the day" and encourages the speakers to

incorporate this word into their speech. The **AH COUNTER** counts and notes words and sounds used as a "crutch" or "pause filler" by anyone who speaks during the meeting. Sounds such as "ah, um, er. The **TIME-KEEPER** records the time & rings a bell if the speaker goes over the allocated time. Then the Chairman calls on Speaker 1 to deliver her speech. After the speech there is a pause during which time is taken for the teacher to fill out an evaluation sheet of the speech. The entire speech is evaluated using a specific evaluation guideline for that specific speech. What is important is that the speaker's strengths are highlighted with one or two recommendations given. Then the Grammarian, Ah counter and Time-keeper report on the speech. After the 4 speeches and evaluations are delivered, a "table topics" session may take place, time permitting.

#### **TABLE TOPICS SESSION**

The "table topics" portion of the class was developed to enable students develop the ability to "think and speak" on their feet. These are important skills that will help students become successful. The students learn how to present their thoughts in a clear, organized manner with a minimum of preparation. The table topics portion of the program is conducted by an appointed student, who arrives to class with a list of topical current affairs issues. The Topics master (student) announces a topic and calls on students, one at a time, who give impromptu one to two minute talks on the topic. Or the Topic Master may assign students individually. The following are comments the students made regarding the class: "I have gained confidence"

"I have learned how to make a speech"

"I have become more confident at speaking in front of a crowd of people"

"Because of public speaking class I find it easier to talk to people at work experience"

"I have gained confidence and acquired research skills"

"I find it easier to talk in front of people"

This entire program is based on the Toastmasters International Program. Details can be obtained on [www.toastmasters.org](http://www.toastmasters.org)

### ***School Initiatives***

#### **RIGHT BITES HEALTHY EATING**

Since the Right Bites Healthy Eating was set up last year it has been very successful in helping to promote healthy eating in St Mary's. At the end of the 2010/11 school year the group launched their Cook Book which was full of easy to prepare healthy meals. This Cook Book was a great achievement and was highly commended by renowned Chef Kevin Dundon.

So far this year the group have been involved in choosing lower fat lower calorie snacks for the vending machines. The group is also working on a "healthy living" section for the School Magazine, The Mayfly. There are also plans in the pipeline for a "healthy living week" in early February which aims to raise awareness of the importance of exercise and making good food choices. Many thanks to all involved for their

continuous hard work and new members are always welcome.

### **Credit Union**

St Mary's in association with New Ross Credit Union Ltd runs a Branch in the school. The school branch is run by 6<sup>th</sup> year students Sarah O'Neill and Shauna O'Dowd and is open every Thursday at 1.20 p.m. in the Pastoral Care Room.

An initial minimum deposit of €7 is required to open an account; students may then save any amount per week from €0.50 upwards. Students will be issued with a Credit Union Account Book in their own name. Savers can also make lodgements and withdrawals at the Offices of New Ross Credit Union, 26 South Street at any time. This school venture is supervised by Ms Colette Tinnelly and we would welcome your support for this initiative to encourage young people to take responsibility for their own savings and to reap the benefits of saving with the Credit Union.

### ***Sports Forum***

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#### **Junior Football Team**

Well done to our Junior Football Team who have now qualified for the Leinster Quarter Final. The girls were convincing winners of their Group, with victories over Presentation Carlow and FCJ Bunclody. We wish them well in their next match.

#### **Lunch Time Sports Activities: 1.15 p.m. – 1.50 p.m.**

Mon. 2<sup>nd</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> year Volley Ball – Sports Hall  
Wed. Badminton – Sports Hall  
Thur. 1<sup>st</sup> year Basketball – Sports Hall

Fri. 1<sup>st</sup> year Football Training

### **Camogie News**

Congratulation to the Junior Camogie panel who are through to Leinster semi-final having comfortably won their matches against Colaiste Bhríde Enniscorthy, Loreto Wexford and FCJ Bunclody. All panel members need to purchase a navy scoirt and school socks before Leinster semi. These will shortly be available from Mr McDonald. Senior panel are still playing matches. In school 7-a-side League starting shortly for all 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year players.

### **Equestrian News**

Show jumping teams have participated in events in Warrington and Barnadown. If there are any students who would like to take part in inter-school equestrian events please contact Mr. McDonald.



