



# SANCTA MARIA COLLEGE

## Newsletter 2014

Louisburgh Co. Mayo



### *Season's Greetings to all of you.*

Please take the time to enjoy our newsletter. It is as always action packed, bright and colourful and full of students and staff involvement in Sancta Maria. Thanks to all who participated in such a wide range of events and all who contributed to this newsletter.

The holistic development of our students remains of the utmost importance to us. Nevertheless we must stand tall and be proud of the wonderful achievement of our school which now ranks as one of the top feeder schools in the country to third level colleges and second in Mayo.

It is also that time of year when we look back at what has passed and forward to a new year and new beginnings. I personally wish to acknowledge the passing of a very special colleague and friend Vincent O'Loughlin my predecessor as principal of our school. Vincent was the first lay principal of the school in 1994. As a man with great vision he introduced many new initiatives including adult education and Transition year. He was a person who appreciated the arts and introduced the renowned annual school musical which is now in its 20th year. When he retired in 2007 he had been principal for 13 years. He had shaped the education of many young and not so young lives in the area. His legacy is enormous and his memory will never be forgotten.

Yours sincerely  
Pauline Moran



Pictured are 1st year students at Sancta Maria last September.



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Pictured are 1st year students at Sancta Maria last September.



## TY ART PROJECTS



### CAROL SERVICE

On 11TH December a carol service took place in the parish church attended by all the school community as part of our spiritual preparation for Christmas.

### SPONSORSHIP

The school wishes to thank all who have so generously contributed to all the activities throughout the school year. Your contribution is much appreciated.

## SYMPATHY

We extend our condolences to members of our school community who have been bereaved this year. We especially wish to acknowledge the passing of 2 former Principals of the school in the past number of months. Sr. Gregory Lohan (RIP) served as a member of staff and as Principal from 1962 to 1982. From 1994 to 2007, Vincent O'Loughlin (RIP) was the first lay Principal of the school having served as Vice-Principal and teacher from 1970. Both Sr. Gregory and Vincent shaped the education and lives of many young people in the area. They have left a lasting legacy on all of us. Go dtuga Dia suaimhneas dá n-anamacha.



# STUDENT OF THE MONTH



The students of the month for the year so far were

September  
Alan Walsh  
Leaving Cert

October  
Caoimhe  
McNally 1st year

November  
Nicole O'Malley  
5th year

## STUDENT COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES 2014-2015

(1st year) Conor Calvey, Conor Clarke, Bronagh Rogers,  
(2nd year) Thomas Gibbons, Sinead Ní Nuallain, Finn O'Brien  
(3rd year) Luke Power, Ryan O'Grady  
(TY) Patrick Hoban, Aoife Conway  
(5th year) Brendan Staunton, Emma Caufield  
(6th year) Lisa O'Toole, Robyn O'Toole.

The student council along with their staff representative Mrs Rennick held a bake sale to raise vital funds for SVP for the less fortunate this Christmas.

The student council are working together throughout the year as a communication link between students and staff with any issues that may arise.



## The Staff of Sancta Maria College



## RUGBY LEGENDS VISIT

Why me? Why does it have to be me? Those were the heartbreaking thoughts that rang in Donal Walsh's mind when he was faced with the dreaded mountain of terminal cancer 6 years ago. On Tuesday 9th September the student body and staff members of Sancta Maria College were privileged to have been chosen as only one of two schools along the route from Mizen to Malin Head for Mr. Fionnbar Walsh (father of the late Donal Walsh) and the Rugby Legends to visit.

The legends were embarking on Stage 4 of their cycle from Galway to Westport in aid of cancer research as part of the Viviscal CROSS charity.

**The town of Louisburgh was brought to life** in the hazy sunshine as staff and students lined the streets waving Connacht Rugby flags and cheering on the approaching Peleton. The very energetic and amicable atmosphere was complimented by the sea of cyclists who sped down Long Street and spontaneously engaged with the supportive crowd on their entrance.

This continued into the school gym where the rugby legends spoke about the cycle experience to date, charting the various trials and tribulations along the way and thanking us for the support and hospitality. We were thrilled to be sharing the same room as Liam Toland, the Wallace brothers who all represented Ireland, Phil Kearns who won a World Cup with Australia and John Smit who captained South Africa to their Rugby World Cup win in 2007. Mr. Alain Rolland who has refereed countless Six Nations matches and a Rugby World Cup Final was also in attendance.





We were treated to a heartbreaking but ultimately inspirational talk from Mr. Fionnbar Walsh quoting his son Donal's words, to make sure to go out and live life. He emphasised that suicide should not be the only option for young people to escape harsh conditions in their lives, that there is help out there. "Donal didn't have a choice" says Fionnbar, "but you do." Fionnbar received a standing ovation from the students, staff and parents present for his meaningful, thought provoking speech. In his generosity Fionnbar donated a copy of his book "Donal's Mountain" to every student and member of staff. Donal's legacy had been truly instilled in our minds about the beauty that surrounds us in our own lives and the importance of leading an active and healthy life through sports and activities. The Legends then opened our new re-developed Football Pitch and our new multi-sport facility along with raising the CEIST flag.

After the speeches, interaction and photographs, a number of us students had the opportunity to cycle with the Legends to Westport. Along the picturesque route we got to interact with some extraordinary people who informed us of their own personal reasons for partaking in the cycle. Our cycle and day finished at the Octagon in Westport having left a lasting impression on everyone present as Donal Walsh's legacy continues to grow. This event inspires hope for the future and hope for further developments in the crusade against cancer. Overall, it was a fantastic event for the school and an inspiration to many of us. By Maura Gibbons (Leaving Cert) and Peter Carty (3rd year)



The Rugby Legends are pictured at Sancta Maria where they officially opened the newly developed all-weather football pitch as part of their recent visit to the school. The facility can now cater for Gaelic Football, Soccer and Rugby all year round.

# TRIP TO STRASBOURG



Congratulations to Liam Mac Reamann who has won a trip to the European Parliament in Strasbourg, France. All TY students nationwide entered an online competition earlier this year. Liam was one of 24 winners nationally to be chosen to travel to France.

## TY FIRST AID COURSE

Sincere thanks to Marie Lyons who delivered a first aid course to all our Transition Year students this year. The students learned many very important first aid skills over the 2 days.





# BUILD A BANK CHALLENGE

Transition years are busy serving the financial needs of the school community again this year as part of the Build a Bank Challenge schools competition.

The AIB Build a Bank Challenge is an enjoyable and exciting way for Transition Year students to run their own School Bank, with the support of AIB, learning many vital business skills through managing their own business. All transition years had the opportunity to interview for the six positions on the team. Well done to all and congratulations to the team selected: Natalie Prendergast, Eugenia O'Malley, Joseph Dawson, Lorraine Mc Nally, Liam Mac Reamann and Amy Kerrigan.



Mark Gibbons, Nicola O'Leary, Laura McCabe Aishling Hastings and Amy Hastings pictured enjoying the facilities at the newly developed multi-sport arena in Sancta Maria.



Patrick Kiitterick (2nd year) has his eye on the ball as he is lifted by 2 of the Rugby legends.

# STUDENT ENTERPRISE AWARDS

The search is on for Louisburgh's next Junior Entrepreneur. Second year and Transition year Business students have taken the challenge to set up and run their own student business as part of the Student Enterprise Awards competition. The Student Enterprise Awards (SEAs) is the biggest enterprise competition for students in Ireland. It helps students to grasp real life skills associated with running a real enterprise including working as part of a team, managing production and finances, organising a sales and marketing campaign and liaising directly with customers, judges and the media. Best of luck to all the teams involved.



# MATHS WEEK

Congratulations to Brianna Bruton (A2) and John Anthony Heaney (TY2) who were overall winners of the Brainteaser Competition for Maths Week 2014 organised by Mr. McGreal. Well done to all who took part.



# CAREER ADVICE

It's that time of year again when as a Leaving Cert student you will be required to make decisions about your future. It is vital that you make informed decisions and there is a wealth of information out there to help you.

The majority of students will apply to a third level college in Ireland and this is done through the CAO system. It is an on-line application and the closing date is the 1st February. However, if you apply before the 20th January there is a discount. Students will register and indicate some courses they are interested in.

They will be able to change these choices again in May when it reopens. Just be careful though as some courses are restricted and cannot be included after the February 1st deadline. We are proud of the fact that 100% of our students who sat the Leaving Certificate examination in June 2014 were accepted onto a 3rd level course. UCAS is the system for applying in the UK and the deadline is January 15TH. Other courses such as PLC's and training courses can be applied for later in the year. In school there are plenty of career resources, good access to IT facilities and a Career Guidance counsellor. We would encourage both parents and students to make the best use of these resources.

The key thing is that the student feels supported in this decision making process and makes informed choices. This will give the student the best chance of success and can ease the transition to the next stage of Education. Mr Berkeley is the Guidance Counsellor and is available in school if you need any support.

# GREEN SCHOOLS

Below are the results of the latest Green Schools survey. They're very positive; car usage has dropped by 15%, walking and bus usage has increased and when asked how pupils would prefer to travel to school the car is now only preferred by 15% in comparison to the bike at 40%. Another interesting result is that 75% of pupils cycle their bike at home. These results can be viewed on our award winning website [www.sanctamaria.ie](http://www.sanctamaria.ie).



# THANK YOU FOR THE MUSIC!

The school waited with bated breath for the announcement of this year's musical and they were not disappointed, with the Abba Musical 'Thank You for the Music' being announced, and being very well received by all! This year is especially important in SMC with it being the 20th Anniversary of the musical, since 'Joseph' was produced by Ms Marina Rice in 1995.

'Thank You for the Music' is a re- make of the popular 'Mamma Mia' musical, which gained world-wide fame through the movie of the same name starring Meryl Streep and Pierce Brosnan. It tells the story of a young girl Sophie who has invited her Dad to her wedding...however she doesn't know who out of three possible men (Sam, Harry or Bill) is her real Dad! The drama unfolds as we add in a stressed single mother Donna, her two old bandmates (Rosie and Tanya) a loyal fiancé (Sky) as well as many more interesting characters who make this a show to remember.

The show is sure to be another huge crowd-pleaser with a vast array of popular Abba songs such as 'Dancing Queen', 'Chiquita', 'Mamma Mia' and many more sure to have young and old singing along! The musical will take place on Thursday January 29th - Saturday January 31st with people advised to once again get their tickets early! Best of luck to the talented cast, who begin rehearsals with fervour in the New Year.

## Cast of 'Thank you for the Music' 2015

Donna- Monica Bourke Rosie- Laura McCabe Tanya- Anna O Toole Sam- Luke Noone Bill- Myles Billington Harry- Pearce O Malley Sophie- Rachael Cabot Sky- Seamus McEvoy Ali- Caoilfhinn McLeod Lisa- Bebhinn Askin Pepper- Liam MacReamann Eddie- Patrick Hoban

Minister- Seoirse Swanton

Singers for Voulez Vous/ Gimme, Gimme, Gimme:

Naoise McCabe Jennifer Prendergast Caera Grady  
Natalie Prendergast Aoife Conway Elaine Needham  
Emily Downes



## ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

The Transition year students formed a St. Vincent de Paul society here in school. This international society is based on working together to help people in need. We invited the help of the youth development officer Rebecca Gallagher to guide us on the running of the society. We are now registered as part of the National SVP Youth Network. The aim of Young SVP is to 'provide opportunities for young people to engage in social action in their own communities, encouraging personal and social development'. Since September various fundraising events have taken place.

The Innocent big knit is a project aimed at keeping older people in Ireland warm this winter. We sent a message out to the community through the students of SMC to knit tiny woolly hats of all colours to put on the lids of Innocent smoothie bottles. For each one sold 30c goes to age action to help heat the homes of the elderly in Ireland. To date 130 hats with bobbles have been knitted by the young and old of our community. All donations welcome and greatly appreciated.

SVP have also raised money for the Donal Walsh foundation. € 150 was raised by running a first and 2nd year football league on October the 7th last and a mini nail bar organised during lunch times.

The annual fundraiser TRICK OR TREAT FOR TEMPLE STREET took place for Halloween on the 23rd of October. All of the TY1 class held a cake sale which raised €200 which went towards ward and hospital redevelopment and patient and parental support. The work of young SVP continues in Sancta Maria.

### GAISCE AWARDS

Congratulations to Maura Gibbons and Caera Grady who won Bronze Gaisce President's awards recently. The Gaisce award is a challenge from the President of Ireland to young people aged between 15 and 25. Maura and Caera had to participate in four main sections in order to win the award – community involvement, physical recreation, personal skill and adventure project. Currently a number of our students are participating in the Gaisce challenge.



Congratulations to Anthony Gibbons who as a high achiever in Mathematics in the 2014 Junior Certificate Examination was selected by the State Examinations Commission to compete in the 'Bebras international' – an online international computational thinking challenge for primary and second level students. Anthony was also presented with an award from NUIG for achieving a grade A in his Junior Certificate Business Studies exams last June. The award was presented at a ceremony in NUIG recently.

## PUBLIC SPEAKING

Well done to Megan O'Brien, Nicole O'Malley and Stephanie Nicholson who took part in a recent public speaking competition in Castlebar hosted by the Soroptimist International organisation.

The Soroptimist International is a global volunteer movement working together to transform the lives of women and girls. There is a network of around 80,000 club members in 130 countries working at a local, national and international level to educate, empower and enable opportunities for women and girls.

A number of schools from around Mayo took part in this all female event. The girls addressed the crowd with confidence and clarity on the issues of co-education and health care for the elderly. It was a hugely inspirational day and thoroughly enjoyed by all in attendance.

The girls put a lot of hard work and effort into preparing the speeches and that is to be commended. They were fantastic representatives for the school. They have been invited to speak at a function in GMIT in the New Year.





## TRIP TO LITTLE KILLARY

The Transition Year students commenced their year with a trip to Little Killary Adventure Centre for an overnight stay last September.



## SURFING AT CARROWNISKEY BEACH

As part of the 1st year induction programme all students participated in surfing lessons at Carrowniskey beach in early September.



## TY TRIP TO DUBLIN

The TY group on a recent tour of Croke Park stadium and museum.



## RAISING OF CEIST FLAG



Pictured is Mr. Fionnbarr Walsh (father of the late Donal Walsh) from Co. Kerry raising the Ceist Flag on his recent visit to the school as part of the Rugby Legends Tour. Included in the photo is Ms. Pauline Moran, Principal, Michael Davitt, Deputy Principal and a group of students from the school





## COOL SCHOOLS PROGRAMME

Our 1st year students participated in the Cool Schools Anti-Bullying Programme in November. Students learned what constitutes bullying behaviour, how to support students who are being bullied and encouraging a student to tell parents and teachers if they think someone is being bullied. Students were clearly informed about our anti-bullying policy and how bullying is dealt with in school. Students were encouraged to use positive, respectful and mannerly behaviour at all times.

The SPHE department will be following up on the work done so far by concentrating on cyber bullying. The Cool Schools Programme was delivered by class tutors and many students found this programme to be very useful.

## LATE LATE SHOW APPEARANCE

Well done to Ailbhe Hanks, Dylan O'Toole and Ms. Walsh who appeared on the Late Late Show on Friday December 12th last as members of the Clew Bay Pipe Band performing alongside Imelda May with their newly released single; 'Tears of Clew Bay'.

## WILLIAM MCNAMARA AWARD

Congratulations to Tom Dawson who achieved the highest Leaving Certificate result in 2014. Ms.

Ann McNamara presented the award to Tom. Congratulations to all our Junior and Leaving Certificate students on their achievements.



The TY students pictured outside **Leinster House** in Dublin alongside Mayo TDs Michelle Mulhern, Dara Calleary and Minister of State, Michael Ring TD. Also included in the photo are teachers Ms. O'Boyle and Ms. McEvilly.





## SPIKEBALL

Three first year teams and two second year teams have participated in two Spikeball tournaments held in the Sacred Heart School, Westport. Ms Mc Dermott together with five transition year students have been coaching the girls for the past number of weeks. They have competed against Charlestown, Westport, Balla and Crossmolina. The girls have progressed to the knockout stages which will commence after Christmas. We wish them the very best of Luck.

## GIRLS GAELIC FOOTBALL

Girls Gaelic Football is growing all the time here in SMC. This year for the first time ever we have 3 teams. We have an U14 team, U16 team and a senior team. All three teams have done well so far. The U14's are top of their group and the U16's have qualified for the Connacht QF. We are looking forward to 2015

## FUTSAL

Our first year Futsal team were out to defend their Mayo schools title this year in Davitt College Castlebar. They eased into the semi final before going down to Kiltimagh A in the last four. The boys played very well beating Achill and Kiltimagh B along the way

The girls 1st year Futsal team defeated Swinford, Kiltimagh and Davitt College, Castlebar in the recent Futsal competition held in Castlebar. They were defeated in the semi-final by Ballinrobe who went on to win the competition.

## BOYS GAELIC FOOTBALL

Well done to the Senior Boys Gaelic Team who finished 1st in their league qualifiers defeating Achill, Ballymote and Ballisodare and racking up some impressive scores along the way whilst conceding only 13 points in the 3 games. They are currently looking forward to the quarter finals of the Connacht league and the 1st round of the All-Ireland Schools Championship which starts up in the New Year. Meanwhile the Juvenile Boys Team have also had a very successful year so far defeating Davitt College, Castlebar before losing narrowly to Belmullet in the Mayo Final in October. Since then they have defeated Lacken in the first round of the Connacht league. Our 1st year boy's team competed successfully in 3 blitz tournaments in Ballyhaunis during the 1st term.



## ACADEMIC AND SPORTING SUCCESS

Congratulations to a number of our students who have excelled both academically and sporting over the past number of months in our community. There was huge success in GAA, boxing, kick-boxing, soccer, rugby, cycling, music and talent competitions and the community games credit union quiz.

