**D**ear Parents/Guardians,

**Welcome to our first newsletter of this school year.** I hope the first half term went well for everyone and that our first-year students are settling in nicely.

As we are in the second half of the first term now I am sure that everyone is starting to feel a little bit festive already with Christmas just around the corner. Despite how busy we all are I hope you will enjoy reading about all the news we have to share with you.

We have welcomed our new Principal Ms. Ann Cameron to the school. Ms. Cameron comes across as a very friendly, positive, enthusiastic and open-minded person who values personal interaction and who is committed to making the school an even better place for our daughters. I have met Ann on several occasions already and I believe that the school is in good hands.

We had our Sponsored Walk in September and it was a lovely happy occasion in the school. We raised **€5,793.33**, which will be put to great use around the school, as funds will be used to provide various educational resources. The girls all accessorized their uniforms with different colours for each year group and then headed out to walk the 3.7 km route. We even avoided the rain!!

The Parents’ Association held their AGM in October and the guest speaker from ‘Student Education Services’ gave a talk on ***“Helping your child to achieve academic success”.*** Parents who attended the talk found it very interesting and helpful. One of the quotes from the talk was ***“To install self-belief into someone is to change their life”*.** We as parents play an important role in raising confident children. The importance of developing self-esteem, self-belief and ambition cannot be overstated.

The Parents’ Association invest money each year to bring a guest speaker to the AGM. Invited guest speakers are always thoughtfully selected by the Parents’ Association to support parents in the raising of their children. They help parents/guardians to understand their children, even more and give them some guidance in these challenging digital times.

At this year’s AGM, the Parents’ Association elected two new representatives to the new Board of Management which changes every three years. Thank you to Amanda McGarry and Brian Doyle for taking on these roles.

In October the school organized an Open Night. Wow… what a successful night that was with well over one thousand people visiting the school. It was wonderful to see how well the school looked on the night.

We really do have an amazing school building and it was lovely to show visitors around on the night. Teachers, school staff and students worked hard preparing the school for this great occasion. The Parents’ Association members were truly impressed with this event and with the commitment from everyone. Classes were taught, games were played, languages were spoken, cakes were baked and there were so many different activities that it would be impossible to mention everything.

**Well done to St Dominic’s College!**

**C**AROL SERVICE- Yes, the best is yet to come!

One of the favourite events of the year in our school calendar is the Christmas Carol Service which starts off the festive season for everyone. It will be held on the 11th December at 7.30 pm in the School Chapel. As usual, this will be a magical night for students, parents, and teachers, so make sure to buy your tickets early as places in the chapel are limited!

After we hear the lovely Christmas carols and singing, the Parents’ Association invites you to their annual delicious mince pies and wine/soft drink occasion in the library. So, we are looking forward very much to seeing you on the 11th December 😊.

**A** very personal word about your Parents’ Association from your Chairperson. ‘’For the last six years, I have truly enjoyed being involved in PA and in the school’s life. We have a wonderful, strong team, with amazing, genuine people (I have met my new good friends there also). All the parents’ representatives want the best for the school always.

Our meetings are always productive, not too long, with lots of laughs and a great atmosphere. No one is ever forced to do anything as it is a group effort. Everything is planned and organised together for the best of the school. We offer our help when we have time and where we can make a difference. We understand that everyone has a busy schedule with work, life, and other commitments. However, all help, no matter how small is always greatly appreciated. Being a member of the Parents’ Association gives us all an insight into how the school operates and how the education system works in Ireland. Our biggest learning has been around the fact that schools need support from parents. We always welcome new parents to help out at different events even if they cannot commit to the committee.

Most importantly, my involvement helped me to build an even closer connection with my daughter, to support her and to understand her even more especially when she comes home and talks about her school life.

Please do not hesitate to come along to our meetings on the second Tuesday of each month at 7.30 pm in the school. I can guarantee you will not regret it 😊”.

**Social activities yet to come** organized by the Parents Association:

* **Christmas Carol** Service will be held in **December**
* First year **“Quiz Night”** which aims to help to support first year students and parents/guardians, to help them integrate into the school culture, to allow parents to meet other parents and to build a social relationship, will be held in **January 2020**
* **Meeting with the Student Council** on January 14th, to find out how the students are getting on in the school, to listen to their opinions and concerns.
* The **“Cash for Clobber”** in **May 2020.** Please remember about this day when you are decluttering your houses while changing from winter to spring/summer outfits and sorting your wardrobes/drawers. We will gladly take all unwanted re-usable clothes, bed linen, towels, curtains, paired shoes, handbags, and belts in May.

This fundraising event will help not only the school but also developing countries and the environment.

**THE LAST EIGHT YEARS** highlights of our achievements:

* *Raised €10,000 for educational resources in the school*
* *Improved the Courtyard for students*
* *Purchased new curtains for the stage in the St. Patrick’s Hall*
* *White coats were purchased for the Science Labs*
* *New fridge purchased for the Home Economics kitchen*
* *Installed demonstration kitchen*
* *Washing machine purchased for P.E. gear*
* *Books, dictionaries, posters purchased*
* *Library refurbishment*
* *Support was given to Mental health Day with guest speakers for parents and children*

*And much more….*

***“Believe in yourself and all that at you are. Know that there is something inside you that is greater than any obstacle”* *–***

***Christian D. Larson***

A special word of thanks goes to our PA liaising teacher, Ms. **Aine Edgely**, who helped us greatly during those years. We thank her for her energy and outstanding organizational skills.

Thank you also to Ms. McGarry and Ms. Shanley Blake for joining the Parents’ Association for the coming term. A special word of thanks to the PE department and Mr. Murphy for all the work organizing the sponsored walk.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

The parents’ committee meet once a month on the second Tuesday at 19.30 in the school. Please feel free to contact me directly at zralph@natrio.com or alternatively, you can email your comments/quires to our general email parentsassociation@stdominics.ie.

We are always looking for new members. There are no particular skills or talent required. We are happy when parents bring additional knowledge, experience and ideas to our meetings. This will help to build our team even stronger and help the school even more.

I hope to see you soon.

Yours sincerely,

*Zoya Ralph PA Chairperson*