

St. Dominic's College Newsletter March 2021

DEAR STUDENTS, PARENTS/ GUARDIANS

I hope that this newsletter finds you well. Living in these unprecedented times has been challenging and for many students and their families it remains so.

Sending out such a beautiful newsletter in the midst of a global pandemic would be also challenging were it not for the wonderful cooperation and submissions of articles by students, teachers and school staff. Many thanks to all the contributors. I would especially like to acknowledge the great leadership and hard work of our Deputy Principals, Year Heads, Teachers, Tutors, Learning and all school supports, Admin and Ancillary staff. This newsletter will give some pleasurable reading to those who spend time going through it, but I have no doubt that it will also become a social document in years to come that people will read over and it will describe school life through a mask! This newsletter gives a great insight into how the school community of St Dominic's College helped each other through the pandemic and through the tough dark days.

In many of the articles you will see the sheer determination of students and teachers to try and keep going with many of our annual events and activities. Well done to everyone. When lots of people share the same passion for their school it creates such a healthy, warm and happy environment. People often remember what they learnt at school, people sometimes remember their friends from secondary school long after they have left school, but one thing is for sure, we all remember how people made us feel while in school and I hope that this year will show that even in the depths of a pandemic that people cared very much about each other in this school community.

I would like to thank you the Parents for all the lovely emails, letters and calls thanking the school community. They certainly helped to sustain us when the road was difficult. Here's to more hopeful days ahead.

Ní neart go cur le chéile.

Le gach dea-ghuí.

Ms Ann Cameron



Congratulations to the TY girls who organised the Socktober fundraiser for SVP. A massive thank you to everyone who got involved and donated socks. Over 1000 pairs of socks were collected, a fantastic school effort.

A big thank you to all the little helpers that decorated the entire school with these beautiful handmade wreaths. The Christmas spirit was in full swing.



Christmas 2020, all Transition year students created handmade Christmas Cards which were sent to nursing homes all around Ireland. Each student got assigned a nursing home resident in which they could personally write to.

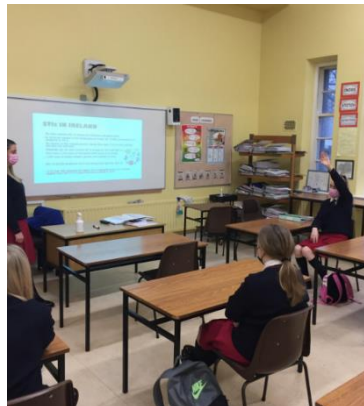


The students used the free postal service An Post had in place. This encouraged people to send Christmas cards to nursing homes in Ireland. All students created lovely cards, which sure put a smile on many people's faces this Christmas.

Ms. Goulding

Leaving Certificate Applied Social Education Tasks

The 6 Leaving Cert Applied class had a very busy term up to Christmas doing their Social Education Tasks. These tasks are part of their Leaving



Certificate. Each student chooses a contemporary issues topic to research and investigate and carry out an action project to raise awareness on their chosen topic. The girls chose topics such as Mental Health, STI's, Homelessness, Prison Life, Drug Addiction, Cancer Awareness and Domestic Violence. Lots of desk and field research was carried out in the computer room and analysing questionnaires, surveys, interviews from the school community and the wider community. Once the research was carried out the students decided on their action projects to raise awareness of their topics.

The class did a range of actions from posters, information leaflets, teaching the class about their topic,



inviting a guest speaker, Christmas jumper Day and doing a class 5km sponsored run in the Phoenix Park. Well done to all the class on doing their tasks.

There was real evidence of lots of key skills such as Managing Information and Thinking, Being Creative,



Using Digital Technologies, Communication Skills and Working with Others. The tasks are all printed now and the class are now awaiting interviews from the SEC where they will be interviewed about their research and action projects and credits



awarded for their Leaving Certificate. The girls would like to thank all of their teachers, tutor, LCA

Coordinator and YearHead for their support in carrying out these tasks, those who gave money to raise funds for FOCUS Ireland and Marie Keating Foundation, to the Office staff for printing their tasks and to Ms. Cameron for her support and treating the class to hot chocolates and pastries after their 5 km run in the Phoenix Park with Ms. McBrearty and Ms. McGowan.



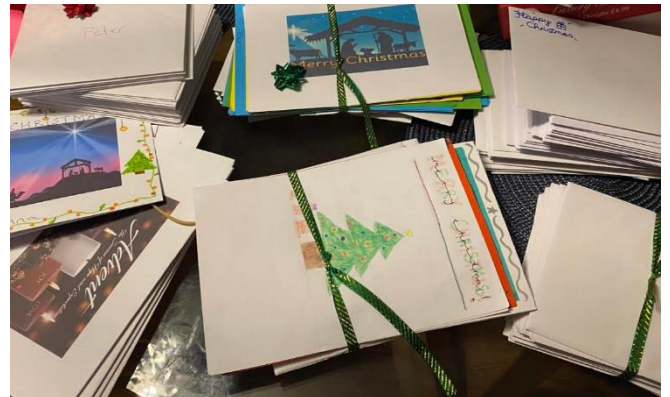


A big Thank You, to all of our students who kindly took the time to take part in our Christmas card appeal for Nursing Homes this year.

I am delighted to announce that we collected 260 Christmas and Advent cards for the residents of Santa Sabina House and Highfield Healthcare Alzheimer's care unit, Because of your small act of kindness each resident in these nursing homes received a special Christmas card letting them know that someone was thinking of them over Christmas. The nursing homes have given some great feedback and said that the residents were delighted to receive your cards and kind messages. Thank you all for spreading a little kindness during these uncertain times to elderly people in our community. ***Even the smallest act of Kindness can make the biggest impact.***

Message from the Student Council:

As the voice of the students, we are constantly looking for new and innovative ways to connect and communicate with the school community. We had never previously explored social media as a means of communication so after some careful consideration about what we would post and the type of page we wanted to be set up we launched the official Instagram page of St.Dominic's College Cabra's student council. We felt it was important that students were aware of all the great work that is constantly being done in the background to enhance our school as a happy, positive and inclusive learning environment. We now post about school activities and fundraisers such as the St. Vincent De Paul Hamper Appeal, bring awareness to topics we as a student council are passionate about such as "Stand Up Week" as well as promoting the work we do on the council such as our annual art projects. We are excited for the future of our page and hope to grow it further to increase student engagement. Please follow us @sdcstudentcouncil.



Fifth Year Ifunanya Ogochukwu publishes novel for teens

It's not every day a School Library gets to host a published author, so it was an especially huge deal when this author was our own fifth year student Ifunanya Ogochukwu. Some of us had heard snippets of Ifunanya's writing before – she has been reading stories and small excerpts from her story to the school's Creative Writing group for two years – but nobody had seen or heard the finished piece, a novel for young people which she self-published this summer. It's called *The Source*, it's about two young people, their memories gone, with special powers and a hidden past. And it's brilliant!! Ifunanya may only be fifteen years old, there is no doubt that she is a writer.

The Library was dark this lunchtime and students were spread out, as per social distancing rules. The event – billed as a Book Reading, but serving as the launch of Ifunanya's debut novel – was a ticketed event. Students had applied for tickets via email, and the lucky attendees sat two metres apart at desks around the study hall. The event was run by an efficient team of Library Prefects, who looked after the guest list, the room layout and hygiene, the staging, media and electronics, as well as art and promotion.

As Ifunanya sat at the front of the Library on 3rd December, students from all years waited for her reading to start. Her parents and sister sat in the front row as guests of honour, and School Principal Ms Cameron introduced her with a speech congratulating Ifunanya and encouraging those around to see her as an inspiration.

Before Ifunanya started reading, a short film began to play on the screen above her head. She had created this herself, as a trailer for *The Source*. When it finished, and after a small battle with a faulty microphone, she was introduced by the Librarian and opened her book to read.

'The girl with no memories strolled through the forest...'

Ifunanya read on for ten minutes. At the end of the first chapter, she had time for a few questions before students returned to class.

When did you start writing *The Source*?

*"I started writing this book about five years ago. That was in fifth class, when I was ten. It actually started out as a short story. There was a competition in school that we had every year – a short story competition. I entered this [*The Source*] but it was shorter. So, yeah, I won that [laughs]. That's how it started."*

What is the hardest part of writing a book?

"The hardest part is to keep motivated, because some days you look at your work and you are like "wow, this is a masterpiece!" and then other days you kind of looked at it and you saw all the flaws and you couldn't look at anything else. There are other days when I'm busy and I just couldn't write. And there are other days when I'm just too lazy, you know."



Do you have any advice to offer anyone who loves writing and might be thinking about following in your footsteps?

"The best advice that I can give you is that you can't be a writer if you don't read. That's really big. I read a whole lot in primary school. I was the girl who would get out fourteen books in the library. Also, the second piece of advice is: you have to write. So, write often (but not too often if you're busy – just for practice). Say you're writing a long draft, it might be hard, because you want to make everything perfect. I'd say, just write ahead. You're going to be able to edit it at the end."

And finally, are you working on anything else?

"Well yes, this is actually the first book in a series. So there will be more."

We look forward to reading many more books from this talented young writer in the future.

The Source, self-published by Ifunanya C. Ogochukwu N., is available directly from the author or [via Amazon](#).

A number of copies are available in the School Library. Email library@stdominics.ie to put your name on the reserve list.

A Tribute to Margaret MacCurtain, OP

Margaret MacCurtain, OP – Sr Margaret, or ‘Sister Ben’ to many who knew her – died before Christmas in Santa Sabina House at the great age of 91. However, she was never old. She was always, as we would now say, ahead of the curve: a passionate social reformer, a great scholar, and a courageous advocate for the protection of children and the advancement of women.

Sister Ben never lost her radical instincts, but it was the warmth of her infectious personality and her generous sometimes mischievous spirit that won over a great many to her lifelong causes. More than any one she ensured that corporal punishment was banished from Irish schools, and more than any other professional historian she brought to light the hidden role of women in Irish history. She will be fondly remembered by the thousands who knew her in the Dominican Order, in UCD, and in Irish public life at large.

Deepest sympathies to her family and to the Dominican community who have lost such a wonderful friend.

– D.D.

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a hanam dílis



Second Year Shona Gogarty wins MFL Digital Story Award

One of our second year students, Shona Gogarty (2 Crocus), has been awarded one of seven inaugural prizes as part of the Modern Foreign Languages Digital Story Awards.

When asked about the process of entering the competition, Shona replied:

"Ms McCarthy told our class about the opportunity, and I decided to try it. I created an animation in German, using coding skills I had learned in primary school. I began working on it in first year, then during Lockdown I had lots of time to complete it!"

Shona attended a Zoom ceremony in St Dominic's College in December with her German teacher, Ms Kate McCarthy. Ms McCarthy presented her with her well-deserved prize - an iPad, which she can use to make many more digital creations!

Shona has said she will be teaching first and second years how to animate through German after the Christmas holidays.

Shona's video can be found here:

<https://youtu.be/uL1s-gsgZwA>

The Story Award page is here:

<https://www.whatsyourstoryshowcase.ie/>

Stand Up Awareness Week in St Dominic's College, Cabra.



Stand Up Week

In November, schools all over Ireland celebrated Stand Up! Awareness Week. This is an annual week where we "stand up" to homophobic and transphobic bullying. We also show our support for members of the LGBTQIA+ community within our school. This year we focused on the language and vocabulary of LGBTQIA+ issues.

Thank you to Ms Dowling for co-ordinating the week across the school, Ms Goulding and the Transition Years who have decorated the school with flags and informative posters, and also to Ms Dickson who has been showcasing LGBTQIA+ authors and books in the library and on Twitter.

[Find out more about Stand Up! Awareness Week.](#)
[BelongTo.org](#) (Supporting Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender young people in Ireland)



Christmas Cards

4Y took part in the Pen Pal Project in December. They signed up and received a name and address of a resident in an Iris Nursing Home. The girls handmade Christmas Cards. Some included gifts like Chocolate Bars, Scratch Cards, Book Marks and Drawings. They all walked as a class to the post box in Cabra. They posted their letters before the Christmas holidays.



Geography: Who needs Met Éireann when you have St Dominic's students?

Here's a small update about how some of our students are learning from home.

Ms. Goulding's second year geographers in 2 Allium got to work creating weather instruments using recycled materials in a sustainable way. See below how some of the students created rain gauges and weather vanes using water bottles, cardboard and plastic.

Rain gauges are weather instruments which measure rain fall. Wind vanes show us the direction of the wind. We are sure their creativity will come in useful with our changeable Spring weather!

Thank you to Ms Goulding for sharing her class photos.



Rain Gauge



Wind Vane



Wind Vane



Rain Gauge



Rain Gauge

Our Lockdown School Library

For those wondering what a virtual library might look like, we thought we would give you a few examples of some of the activities our own school library has been running since the new year.

Ever since the first Lockdown, the School Library has had a virtual base on Google Classroom.

Students have been able to find resources, communicate directly with the librarian, find out about national and international events such as Ireland Reads, World Book Day, and the Great Reads Award, and chat to each other about their favourite books, podcasts and hobbies.

The virtual library is a great place to go to find information about where to locate eBooks, audiobooks and other online resources. There is information about how to join your local public library, what workshops are available, and how to sign up to journals, classes and other fun activities.

Lunchtime in the Library: Every Wednesday and Thursday at lunchtime, students can drop in to Google Meet and hang out in the virtual library with the school librarian and other students. On Wednesdays we have book trivia on Kahoot, as well as general book-related chat. On Thursdays, we have our book club. We have been discussing the Harry Potter series and we are now on to the fifth book in the series.

Thursday Teasers: On Thursdays, Ms Dickson posts a Teaser in the form of a quiz, riddle, logic puzzle or mathematical head-scratcher. Students post their responses during the week, including the reasoning behind their answers.

Other events: The Library has also run Black History Week and Safer Internet Day virtually, and recently joined forces with the English Department in running Literacy Week.

The virtual library has been a great source of community spirit during the Lockdown. Students have been positive and engaged, as well as being polite and respectful. While we look forward to seeing everyone in person once things return to normal, the virtual library will continue in the background.

Literacy Week

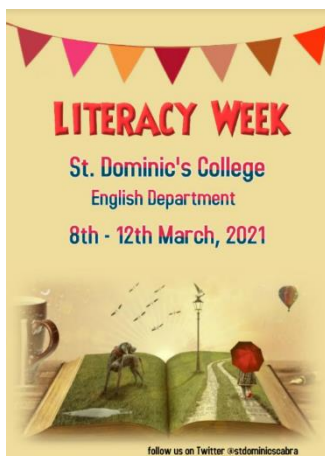
Literacy Week ran from Monday 8th March to Friday 12th. It was run by the School Library and the English Department. This was the first time the week was run entirely online. There were a number of competitions, including two poetry contests, a poster competition and a book quiz. Students and teachers gave book recommendations to their English teachers and the School Librarian. These were posted on Twitter and the school website.

All posts from the events as well as details of the winners are available on the event's dedicated page on the website, which is available at the following link:

<https://stdominics.ie/academic/literacy-week>

Thank you to everyone who took part in Literacy Week events and competitions. It was a great success and most enjoyable for all involved.

All competition winners will receive Easter Eggs during the first week back after the holidays.



The English Department and School Library celebrated Literacy Week this year online. Students took parts in competitions in quizzes and were rewarded with Easter eggs for their efforts!!



Seachtain na Gaeilge

Seachtain na Gaeilge was celebrated online this year with students taking part in a variety of competitions and quizzes. We missed our usual céilí agus Tráth na gCeist, but hopefully we'll be back together for Ionsaí na hInse again next year. 'Labhair í agus Mairfidh sí.'

TY Inter Class Debates

TY Inter Class Debates took place in December where the girls argued passionately about motions such as 'Vaccines should be compulsory', 'Schools should remain open during the pandemic' and 'Public transport should be free for students'.



First Year Hospice Coffee Morning



A coffee morning was held on Thursday 24th September to support the local hospice in Blanchardstown. First Years were split into different groups to allow for social distancing. There was

a lovely atmosphere around the morning as this was the first opportunity the girls had to see friends and chat over a cup of coffee or hot chocolate with their friends (be it at a distance!). The Transition Year students organised the event and demonstrated their wonderful organisational skills and Dominican spirit! A total of €870 was raised for the charity, €300 of which came from the First Years and the balance was made up of staff contributions.

M. Woods



St. Vincent de Paul Hamper Appeal

The annual St. Vincent de Paul appeal was launched in mid-November culminating in Yellow Day on Friday 4th December. Due to Covid -19 restrictions the usual events could not take place. Unfortunately, we were unable to run the *Teacher V Pupil* basketball match for First and Second Year students but we managed to mark the occasion with a 'movie' afternoon. The Lima corridors were transformed into a Multiplex Cinema for the afternoon with different movies in every room! Students and all staff members contributed to the food appeal. We succeeded in making sixty food hampers this year. A total of €1,613.50 was raised throughout the school for the appeal and this allowed for every hamper to receive a meat voucher.

A sincere thank you to all who contributed, without your generosity this would not be possible every year.

M. Woods



Student activity was notable in the Virtual Library (a Google Classroom run by the School Librarian), and this cross-year group platform was used to pose a question to students early in the term. ‘What are your Lockdown hobbies and pastimes?’ Students did not disappoint in the range of answers they provided. 73 students responded altogether.

Thank you to all respondents for taking part in this survey, and for giving us this glimpse into your Lockdown lives.



Geography Trip

As a part of the Leaving Certificate Geography class, the 6th years were required to examine a landscape and examine the effect of hydraulic action and elevation on a beach of a selected coastal area. We as a class, went on a field trip to Balcadden Bay located in Howth, to complete the required activities. This trip took place on the 22nd of September on a Tuesday. Many students met up in Dublin City Centre, then took the train from Connolly Station to Howth. The collection of students all gathered at Howth where they were met with other geography students who had made their way and the geography teachers by 8am. The weather was mild at Howth with some sunny spells and winds.

Once we reached the beach we were split into groups of sixes in order to complete every exercise efficiently while maintaining the COVID-19 guidelines and regulations made by the HSE at the time. We were met with another geography class group from a different school, to which we were assigned a particular region of the beach to ensure minimal contact. We carried out many activities which included: calculating wave frequency, examining the beach profile and recording the curvature of rocks to dictate the effects of erosion on the beach. All equipment's were wiped down with disinfectant wipes and students ensured to use a generous amount of hand sanitizer to ensure safety. By around 1:30pm we had completed our analysis and made our way back home.

By Christina Biju, Maria Byrne, Adeola Akintonde

Young Social Innovators

4Y have been taking part in the Young Social Innovators programme since early this year. The YSI programme promotes '*The practice of using creativity to develop solutions which improve the wellbeing of people and society*' and it is the first time it has been completed at St. Dominic's College. 4Y created a booklet entitled #BEHINDYOURMIND which aims to promote wellbeing during lockdown in an interactive, creative and fun way, created by students for students. They will now move forward in the programme by taking part in this year's 'Speak Out Virtual Tour' by sharing a video they created which explores their project, as well as hearing from other Young Social Innovators across the country. Well done 4Y #BEHINDYOURMIND.

The newsletter is a collaborative work with lots of articles submitted by teachers and students. We welcome any articles from Parents/ Guardians who would like to contribute to the St. Dominic's newsletter and we will let you know when we are gathering information for the next newsletter in 2021/2022.



Happy Easter 2021!