



# JOHN SCOTTUS SECONDARY SCHOOL

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19<sup>th</sup> December 2014

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s),

We arrived at the end of a very eventful first term. Here are just a few the notices I would like to share with you.

### **Fastest growing fee-paying school in Dublin**

The John Scottus Secondary school has grown from 119 pupils in 2010/2011 to 136 in the year 2013/14. Please click the [Department of Education website](#) for details. This is a 13% growth in numbers, the fastest growth rate amongst all fee paying schools in Dublin.

### **Christmas Jumper Day**

On Thursday December 18<sup>th</sup>, two 6th year students Hannah Blackmore and Sophie Madden organised a Christmas jumper day in aid of Temple Street Children's hospital. It was a very colourful day. Well done Sophie and Hannah.

### **Catering/Bus**

There is a need in January for a part-time qualified Bus Driver and a part-time Catering Assistant. If you are interested or know anybody who may be please email [secondary@johnscottus.ie](mailto:secondary@johnscottus.ie).

### **Vision 2024**

The school is undertaking a consultative process to formulate a vision of the school. The process has initially started with teachers and will involve students and parents. If you would like to give your opinion on which direction the school should take please email me.

### **Speech Competition**

On Thursday Dec 4<sup>th</sup>, the secondary school held their Annual Speech Competition. The competition was divided into a senior and junior category and we invited a panel of external judges to adjudicate the event.

The speakers were selected from each year group and the speeches spanned from subjects such as The Secret to Success, How to conquer our fears, Awkward Moments, Vegetarianism and many more. They were engaging and the audience made up of students and teachers were entertained and mentally stimulated.

The winner of the senior competition was a Transition Year student Bobbie Hickey and second and third places went to Jack Condrón and Ben Murphy both of fifth year. The

standard was so high the judges also asked for fourth prize place to be shared by both Hannah Blackmore (our Head girl) and Kiya Ronaldson, our sixth year competitors.

First place in the Junior Competition went to second year student Emma Lohan with second place going to first year Willow Hannon.

Whilst the judges were making the difficult decision both competitions enjoyed a musical interval organised by Isabelle Mc Geough and performed by a number of students throughout the Secondary school.

This event is always a success and this year was no exception. Thank you to our judges Mrs Mary Telford, Mrs Valerie Mc Geough, Mrs Mary O'Connor and Ms Jessica Reynolds. Thanks to all staff and students who helped to make this event a triumph and a special thanks to all our speakers who were organised, informed and courageous.

Being able to present an argument and an informed opinion in a coherent and engaging manner is truly a skill that our wonderful students and especially our winners of the 2014 JSS Speech Competition have.

## **Debating**

The TY debating team have contested two Concern Debates, one in High School Rathgar and one in JSS against St Benildus. There are two more in the first round after Christmas. Concern Debates is a huge national organisation with hundreds of schools involved and the topics cover global issues such as disease, climate change, development and many others.

The debating experience opens our students up to big issues and encourages them to think critically and speak effectively. A lot of work goes into preparation which students looking back always consider very worthwhile. Our next debate on 8th January is another home one against St Killians. The motion is: 'The Ebola epidemic demonstrates the international community's indifference to Africa'.

The whole class shares in the experience of speech writing and delivery before we pick the team for the main debate which is then professionally adjudicated. It is a great learning experience.

## **Art**

Our 2nd Year student Aisling Spratt's Graphic Design bag project was spotted at the Christmas Fair by the company she based her project on (Lemon) and is now displayed on the company's official Facebook page with the school's name mentioned. Please click [here](#) for more details. Well done Aisling.

## **Sports Update**

The junior and senior cycle students have completed Physical Education modules in basketball, hockey and soccer in the past few weeks. Extra curricular JSS teams have also progressed very well in the in the Girls Leinster Hockey and Dublin Ultimate

Frisbee leagues. In addition basketball teams travelled to St. Andrews for a games day. Cross country training is continuing in preparation for the DCU invitational event in January.

Starting in January, students can look forward to Physical Education modules in swimming, indoor Ultimate Frisbee, dance, spinning, strength training, Gaelic Football and rugby.

In January we say a sad goodbye to Ms. Linda Broaders who will be moving to Trinidad after many years of great work in the Sports Department. We are lucky we have a great replacement in Ms. Sinead Sweeney.

### **Chess Club**

As the first term draws to a close we are very happy to report on how the JSS Senior and Junior Chess Clubs have been progressing. Our pupils been engaging their cognitive faculties in a challenging and rewarding way but perhaps more satisfying is the sense of community that is building in the chess club room on Tuesday evenings. We have the whole range of pupils from 5th class up to 5th year learning and communicating with a shared sense of purpose.

To-date in this first term of the re-introduction of the Chess Club we held two tournaments and look forward to a league, more tournaments and the opportunity to participate in the national CheckMate League in 2015. The Christmas Tournament final matches will take place during the first week back. We are very excited to see who will succeed and congratulate all for taking part.

A special mention must be made of Mr. Daniel Flynn for organising and running the chess club.

### **Literacy Week**

Literacy week was a fun filled week. Some of the activities included DEAR (Drop Everything and Read) every day for 15 minutes, speed book recommendations and having author Lee Dunne speaking to students at assembly. Please click [here](#) for more details.

### **Some statistics**

For those of you who like statistics, here are some that you may find interesting.

Of the cohort of students who sat English at all levels in the Leaving Certificate of 2014, 74 % got an honour (A, B or C) in higher level paper compared to the national average of 51%. Of the students who studied the higher level 87% got an A, B, C compared to the national average of 76%

Of the cohort of students who sat Geography at all levels in the Leaving Certificate of 2014, 76 % got an honour in higher level paper compared to the national average of 59 %. Of the students who studied the higher level, 100% got an A, B, C compared to the national average of 76%

Of the cohort of students who sat Maths at all levels in the Leaving Certificate of 2014, 36 % got an honour in higher level paper compared to the national average of 20 %. Of the students who studied the higher level 75%, got an A, B, C compared to the national average of 73%

### **Upcoming events**

- Parent-Class teacher meetings for all years will take place on Monday Jan 12<sup>th</sup>
- Philosophy Week will start on Jan 19<sup>th</sup>. The theme of the week is “Emotional Well Being: From Chaos to Calm”
- Transition Year’s will depart to India on Jan 22<sup>nd</sup> to begin the English Teaching program with Indian students·
- The school musical “Oliver” will take place on Jan 23<sup>rd</sup> and Jan 24<sup>th</sup>

### **A philosophical thought for the day**


Google have published their annual rankings for top searches. Interestingly, number 8 on the How To searches is “How To Meditate”. Please click [here](#) for details. The John Scottus school considers meditation as an invaluable practice in developing stillness and helping us realize our true essence of limitless brilliance. All students are invited to practice meditation on a daily basis.

Here is one explanation for the need for meditation:

“There are two aspects in drama. One is playing the part on the stage. Just behind the open stage, there is the back stage, where the actors are told what to do and how to do it. There they are dressed properly so as to play their part. But what is seen in the world is that people just go on playing their part. Their costumes become dirty, worn out, and their part becomes stale and repetitive. They do not know that they have also to go back stage and be prepared for the next part”

- Sri Shantanad Saraswati

Yours sincerely,



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