



ST. JOSEPH OF CLUNY  
CONVENT NOV 2010

# St. Joseph of Cluny S.S.

ISSUE 1

DECEMBER 2011

## SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Leaving Cert Results 2011 & Destinations
- Open Evening Moments
- Sports News
- Library News
- Opening of the Year Address by Head Girl
- TY trip to Recess

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

From the Principal's Desk	3
Gaisce 2011-2012 in St. Joseph of Cluny	8
6th Year Retreat	9
Student Council Report	10
Important lessons we can learn from the developing world	11
Sailing	14
Soroptimist International	15
Italy—5th Year Trip	18
Blackrock Radio	19
International Cookery	20

## Senior Prefects 2011/12 & Trinity Entrance Awards



## Recent Events captured on Camera: Cluny Debs, Open Evening, Charity Dress-up; TY celebrated Junior Cert success at Recess



# Christmas Carol Service



St. Joseph of Cluny Secondary School cordially  
invite you to the

Annual Christmas Carol Service

on

Tuesday 20th December at 7.30p.m.

in the School Concert Hall

Refreshments will be served by the  
Parents Association following the performance.

All welcome.





*'We were very pleased at the success of our most recent Sixth Year group who did so well in their Leaving Certificate 2011.'*



## From the Principal's Desk: Nov 2011

Greetings everyone. You are all welcome to the December 2011 issue of our Newsletter. It has been a very busy autumn term so far which you can see reflected in this edition. The students will update you here on all the activities which they have organized themselves or have participated in since last August. The highlights include our first Open Evening in September, the wonderful Fifth year trip to Italy in October, our Halloween fundraising dress-up day, our special guest at the Parents Association A.G.M. this year, our Debs Reception and Careers Evening, astroturf developments, success in school sport, new developments in the Library and of course a favourite feature of our Newsletter i.e. student prize winners! More on these as we proceed.

Earlier this term we were very pleased at the success of our most recent Sixth Year group who did so well in their Leaving Certificate 2011. A number of the girls have scooped up some significant awards in their new Universities and well done to all of them. Firstly Olivia Corless was awarded an Entrance Scholars award by Maynooth and she receives free residency for the year as a result. This award recognises students who received over 500 points in their new faculty in Maynooth. The most recent awards were in Trinity College where four of our girls received Entrance Awards this year i.e. Emma Coogan (Head Girl 2011), Nicola Davis, Siofra Dempsey and Jennifer Lennon. These Entrance Exhibition Awards are presented to students who received over 560 points in the Leaving Cert of 2011. It was wonderful to see so many Cluny award winners represented in Trinity on the night.

Unfortunately U.C.D. have cancelled their Entrance Awards this year. Hopefully this will be short term as Cluny has been very well represented in the entrance awards in U.C.D over

the years. I wish all of our students of 2011 in whatever College faculty or course of study or training they have undertaken a wonderful few years of study and fun ahead. The same group were all in fine form and resplendent for the Parents Association Debs reception earlier this term. How they negotiate the stairs in those gravity-defying shoes is remarkable!

Our new Sixth Years have linked up with their new 'Buddies' with great enthusiasm. The First Years have had special Breakfasts and Table Quizzes and the Sixth Years have been minding them during their First Year tests this month. Hallowe'en dress up was a very colourful day in October and the House Captains did great work organising a 'Best Costume' Fashion Show during lunch. Zombies, Vampires, a Daisy Chain, a Facebook page and other wonderful manifestations appeared on the day! Well done to Ms. Seymour and the House Captains for raising over 800 euro for the Cluny Mission Houses. It was also great to see so many First Years winning prizes for their costumes. Anna Thorp 6C (Deputy Head Girl) along with Aisling Murphy 6N(Head Girl) are heading up this year's Student Council chosen



# From the Principal's Desk continued

school Charity i.e. St. Johns Cancer Ward in Our Lady's Childrens Hospital Crumlin.

Part of this dedication is to honour Hannah Bryan R.I.P who died in October having fought a long battle with cancer. Hannah was due to join T.Y. this year and should have been enjoying all of the challenges and fun that the year presents. She had made great efforts to keep up with her studies as a patient in Crumlin hospital last year while receiving her treatment. She had hoped to sit some of the J.C. exams but it was not to be. Her friends in T.Y. and in other years have contributed to a lovely Book of Condolences from the school for her sister Stephanie and her parents. We wish them peace and the consoling and healing grace of God at this difficult time. May Hannah rest in peace.

Fr. Peter McVerry brought very good attendance to the Parents Association A.G.M. on 6th October this year. He is a compelling speaker and challenges us on our social responsibilities and our priorities as a society and on the issue of homelessness. It is all the more compelling as Fr. McVerry of course lives his mission with a fierce dedication and compassion for those who find themselves alone and on the streets. He has promised to return to speak to the girls in the future and hopefully we can assist in the school with some fundraising for the McVerry Trust.

The Parents Association in conjunction with Ms. McPhillips ran a very successful Careers Evening on 14th November for T.Y and Fifth Years. It was great to see a quota of our past pupils returning to assist with the evening and to discuss their study and careers with the girls. We had a large number of significant careers represented on the night also. Well done to Mrs. Janet O Doherty, Chairperson and many thanks to Mrs Denise Blennerhasset who acted as Secretary for the last few years. This year Mrs. Paula Crotty will act as Secretary for Janet . Welcome also to all new members of the Committee.

The staff and students are very happy to welcome our new Librarian to the school, Ms. Andrea Dillon. The book clubs have

started in earnest again and Ms. Dillon has organised multiple copies of new titles for teenagers, with each year group in mind, to get the reading clubs up and running. Please see the Library update in this edition. We look forward to the events she is planning for the students

over the next few months and wish her well in her new role. The latest acquisition in the Library of the new mobile laptop unit is getting great usage and is a popular alternative to the Computer room.

Work on the development of the hockey astroturf has been gaining momentum this autumn. All aspects of the planning stages are completed now including the plans for the astroturf and the new traffic management system on the grounds. This will consist of a new traffic circulatory system which will both enter and exit onto Avondale Road. I'm sure parents will be relieved to know that a better traffic system is due to be implemented shortly, as the hold-ups have continued unabated this term. The astroturf designs and layout are available for parents to view in the school at any time. The school Board of Management has lodged the planning application now and we are hopeful of a successful outcome in 2012.

Congratulations to our seasonal debaters, all of whom have done very well this year. Four Sixth Year students represented the school in the Soroptomist Public Speaking Competition in the Mansion House on 19th November last i.e Aisling Murphy 6N (Head Girl), Katie Wolahan 6N , Aideen Cooney 6N and Sophie O Reilly 6N(sub). Katie won out on the day and will go through to the regional finals in the New Year. Two Sixth year students participated in the Leinster Schools Senior Debates in U.C.D i.e Cathering McDonnell 6N and Lauren O'Driscoll 6N and both won through this round. Well done girls! In the



***'The latest acquisition in the Library of the new mobile laptop unit is getting great usage and is a popular alternative to the Computer room.'***



**Soroptomist Public Speakers**



# From the Principal's desk continued



Art work on display  
on Open Evening

'On the Open  
Evening we  
showcased our  
new gym  
equipment  
which is for  
senior students  
and our 'new  
look' Canteen.'



Leinster Schools Debating two Fifth Year students also represented Cluny in U.C.D, Fiona Craddock 5C and Megan Ross 5C. Eleanor McSweeney 5L and Eleanor O'Mahony 5L represented the school in TCD. Congrats to Eleanor McSweeney who won best individual speaker. Congrats also to the Concern Debate students who won their first round of debates i.e. Aine Flanagan 5C, Lorna Carroll 5C, Sadhbh Frison-Roche 5L and Niamh Casey 5N. They also won through on their first round against Loreto Dalkey. Since then, six students attended an awards ceremony for their essay selection in the 2011 Concern Writing Competition held in Earlsfort Terrace. They were Sarah McNabb and Niamh Fahy from Fifth year, Niamh Doyle, Sophie Rhattigan Walsh and Kate Doorly from Third Year and Second Year Hazel Nolan. Well done to the T.Y. students who took part in the Mental Health debates i.e. Jessica O'Sullivan 4N, Rebaccah Dunne 4N, Therese Hussey 4C and Sophie Walsh 4N. Well done to eleven T.Y. students who were involved in recording a programme for radio in Blackrock College recently. Congratulations to Mr. Byrne and Ms. McEvoy for all the hard work and to all the student debaters who have represented the school so well this term.

Basketball, Hockey and Badminton have had some excellent wins this term. November brought some great matches in all the sports. The Senior A team in Basketball have got us into the papers with their defeat of Loreto Abbey Dalkey in the U/19 Cup this month. This has brought the girls through to a semi-final which will be played in January. Congrats to Mr. Randolph and good luck to the Senior A team. We have also had some great team wins in the Hockey Leagues this term with the Junior A's and B's doing particularly well on the wins. Well done also to Ms. Somers who is bring-

ing the girls out in great numbers to the new Cluny Swimming Club very early on Monday mornings and Thursday evenings in Castle Park. It is great to see the girls keeping up their commitment to this new addition to Cluny team sports.

Hope you got to join us for our Open Evening in September. Congratulations to students and teachers both on the beautiful displays, in particular the students' sewing and craft displays and the great Art work on show. We have added to the Art display recently with a great framed display of Junior Cycle Art on the main corridor. Well done to all the student artists involved. On the Open Evening we showcased our new gym equipment which is for senior students and our 'new look' Canteen which has had a nice makeover. Many thanks to the Parents Association for their contribution towards the purchase of the new equipment. We are very grateful as always, to the hard working Mrs. Bernie Power who keeps the Canteen supplied and running so efficiently during term time. We extend our sincere sympathies to her on the recent loss of her younger brother Paul R.I.P. Ar dheis De go raibh a hanam.

Advent has begun and the Christmas season is getting closer. Rehearsals are well on the way for our Carol Service which will take place on Tuesday 20 December. Hope you will all be able to join us and Ms. Mahon for this very special Christmas event, especially as the snow prevented us from enjoying the service last year. We are staying optimistic for this year! Enjoy the month of December and all of the festivities and every good wish for the Christmas season ahead.

M.White

# Leaving Certificate Results 2011 & Destinations: 64 Students

<u>Points</u>	<u>550-600</u>	<u>500-550</u>	<u>450-500</u>	<u>400-450</u>	<u>350-400</u>	<u>300-350</u>	<u>&lt; 300</u>
<u>No of students attaining</u>	7	8	12	12	10	8	7

<u>Honours</u>	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Pass
<u>Numbers attaining</u>	6	23	13	7	6	4	3	2

## University College Dublin

Science	3
Commerce	2
Commerce International	1
International Spanish	1
International Languages	1
Psychology	2
Human Nutrition	1
Engineering	1
Arts	5
General Nursing	1

## Trinity College Dublin

Computer Science and Business	2
Business Studies and German	1
Midwifery	1
Psychology	1
Occupational Therapy	1
Human Health and Disease	1
Science	1
Arts	2
Music	1
Engineering	1
Law	1
Law and Political Science	1

## NUI Maynooth

Biological and Biomedical Sciences	1
Arts	

## University of Limerick

Equine Science	1
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## Dublin City University

Genetics and Cell Biology	1
Sports Science and Health Science	1

## Dublin Institute of Technology

Science	1
Neutraceuticals in Health and Nutrition	2
Business Studies	1
Business and Management	2
Marketing	2
Retail Management and Marketing 1	
Culinary Arts	1

## IADT Dun Laoghaire

Applied Psychology	2
English, media and cultural studies	2

## Shannon College of Hotel Management

International Hotel Management	1
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## St. Nicolas Montessori College

Montessori Education	1
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## Dublin Business School

Media and Communications	1
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## Tallaght IT

Social Care Practice	1
Marketing	1

## Post Leaving Cert Courses

Hair and Beauty	2
Social Studies	1
Nursing Studies	1
Fashion Industry Practice	1

## University of Edinburgh

Arts	1
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<u>Working/Repeating</u>	2
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*Congratulations to all students who sat their Leaving Certificate this year. We are extremely proud of them and wish them happiness and success in their chosen careers.*







**Art on Display at Open Day**

**Our Open Evening was a huge success with hostesses run off their feet giving guided tours of the school and assisting teachers in the classrooms!**

**Hostess Committee 2011/12**

## Mrs Lambert, Deputy Principal's Diary

Thank you to all the Parents of First Year who attended The Parents Evening recently. The girls made excellent presentations and sang and performed beautifully. We loved their tea cakes afterwards! The Parents Association assisted with refreshments which we really appreciated. The second years had an excellent presentation from our Guest Speaker on *Awareness Around The Use of Facebook*. It gave us great insight into the challenges posed for young people by Facebook.

Our Open Evening was a huge success with hostesses run off their feet giving guided tours of the school and assisting teachers in the classrooms! While we were all busy that afternoon, volunteers from the Houses 'worked out' in our lovely new Gym to raise money for the House Charities & guests at the Opening Evening donated 200 euro in total. Well done girls!

Great fun was had by all at the Buddy Quiz recently. Well done to the 6<sup>th</sup> Yrs and Ms Dullaghan for all their hard work in making it a success. The first years were delighted and really enjoyed themselves.

Our Merit League is up and running and I want to congratulate all the classes who won boxes of chocolates in the League up to Halloween. The next league results will be available in/ around Dec 10<sup>th</sup> so keep up the good work and keep an eye on the League Table that Ruth Slamon puts up at the student entrance.

We are very lucky to have such a wonderful team of Hostesses this year for our Parent Teachers Meetings. (See Photo) My thanks to Holly Daly who had trained in all the 'newbie's' this year and we look forward to meeting the next group at the 6<sup>th</sup> yr PTM. We really appreciate that they give up their free time to do the *Sign In* and to serve refreshments.

Our Santa Boxes are on their way to children in war-torn countries. We look forward to a visit from The Samaritan Purse who will show the girls a DVD & talk to them about the difference their Santa Boxes make.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish all your family a happy and peaceful Christmas.



**Open Evening Science Lab & Green Schools Assistants**

# Physics & Chemistry Open Evening

For Open Day, 5<sup>th</sup> year physics and chemistry students became the teachers. We set up experiments, put on our white coats and goggles and got into action. The lab was mad with people. Bunsens were blazing, flame tests were flaming, motion sensors sensing. Even Einstein would have been impressed

We did our best to show that girls are great at science, and that girls are great...! It was a hectic evening filled with Star Wars and cars, marbles and motion, performance and possibilities.

We hope that anybody who entered through the black hole enjoyed their time on the other side...

Niamh Fahy 5N, Eleanor McSweeney 5L, Alana Jones 5N, Nicole O'Hara 5C, Heather Rainey 5C, Siobhan Bradshaw 5C, Anastasia Blinova 5C.

## Open Evening 2011 Moments



## Gaisce 2011-2012 in St. Joseph of Cluny

**49 Transition year students (current 5<sup>th</sup> years)** successfully completed the Bronze Award challenges in 2010-2011. 30 of these received their award at the Transition Year evening in the school in May 2011. A further 19 students received their award at the Beginning of Year assembly on October 5<sup>th</sup> 2011. Mr John Murphy from Gaisce presented the awards.

**16 fifth year students (current 6<sup>th</sup> years)** successfully completed the Silver Award challenges in 2010-2011. They will receive their award in Trinity College on the **15<sup>th</sup> December 2011**

### 2011-2012 Gaisce participants

- **66 transition year students** have started the Bronze Gaisce challenges and are now up and running with their various activities.
- **31 fifth year students** have started the challenges for the Silver Gaisce Award

Well done to everybody and good luck to this years participants  
Mrs. B. Wolahan  
(President Award Leader)







*'...the chance to  
take a break from  
our daily routine  
and to be thankful  
for the little things,  
which are sometimes  
overlooked.'*

## St. Vincent de Paul Christmas Collection

This year Cluny are doing their annual Christmas food appeal in aid of Saint Vincent De Paul. Like every year, we are participating in the Christmas Food Appeal by donating non-perishable festive food items. You'll be helping families and individuals enjoy a special Christmas meal, to ensure that everyone gets the Christmas treats that we all love to have during the festive period.

Boxes have been distributed to each classroom for each year group, during the 1<sup>st</sup> week in December. Students are asked to kindly participate by bringing in food donations during the weeks running up to Christmas. Please ensure foods donated are non-perishable items and that expiry dates are well into the next year. Foods can include;

### **Treats:**

Christmas Cake/Pudding

Christmas Selection boxes

Biscuits

Chocolate

Mince Pies

Crisps

Popcorn

Sweets

### **Tinned Foods:**

Tinned Fruit eg, fruit cocktail/

Tinned Vegetables

Custard

Packet/ Tinned Soup

Tinned Spaghetti and Baked Beans

Tinned Tuna/ Fish

### **Beverages:**

Tea and Coffee

Sugar

### **Cereals & Carbohydrates:**

Breakfast Cereals and Muesli

Noodles, Rice and Pasta

Muesli Bars

Any donations would be greatly appreciated.

## 6th Year Retreat to Glendalough

On a cold, cloudy Tuesday morning, the 6<sup>th</sup> years left their many books in their lockers, the white shirts at home and arrived at school in their tracksuits, ready for the much anticipated retreat to the wilds of Glendalough. Accompanied by Mr Larkin, Ms Lambert and of course, the much loved Basketball mascot, Flashy, we set off with our fingers crossed that the rain would hold off. After a long bus journey, with some customary sing alongs, we reached the beautiful Glendalough, and were met by Fr Michael Rogers, the man who was going to be leading our retreat. Although we were nervous about the events of the day, we were immediately put at ease and quickly started in to our first activity of the day. We enthusiastically sang

and danced together, reaching down to touch the grass and leaping up to the sky, which resulted in some strange looks from passersby. However, the retreat was not all about showing off our wonderful musical skills and we soon began some "quiet time"- a concept which is hard to understand for some of the 6<sup>th</sup> years. Inner reflection was an important part of the day, contemplating things in your life, while also enjoying the beautiful sounds and sights of nature. I can safely say that although difficult at times, this time allowed us to escape from the stresses of the Leaving Cert. and was truly appreciated by all. The retreat provided us with the chance to take a break from our daily routine and to be thankful for the little things, which are sometimes overlooked. After providing the local cafe with some very good



**Mass in the chapel ruins  
in Glendalough**

# Student Council Report—Nov 2011

It's been a busy term for the Student Council! We kicked off the new school year by introducing a new election system – whereby three representatives from 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> Year are to be elected every year – and while the process was not without its minor difficulties, it proved to be a great success in the end. The following girls were elected to represent their classes on the council this year:

1W – Kirstin Higgins  
 1X – Eva Tiernan  
 1Y – Jane Byrne  
 2W – Hannah Foster-Ryan  
 2X – Cara McConnell  
 2Y – Maya O'Connell  
 3W – Sophie Grehan  
 3X – Orlaith Meehan  
 3Y – Gemma Lynch  
 4C – Fiona Deegan  
 4L – Ayodele Arogundade  
 4N – Rebecca Dunne

They join the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Year representatives, as well as the Deputy Head Girl and Head Girl, on the Council. The Council is headed up by Ms. Torpey and co-chaired by Jennifer Crotty and Lauren Coleman. The Council and meets every Wednesday at lunchtime in the Sewing Room.

The Student Council have ambitious plans for this school year. We have already set-up subcommittees to deal with issues surrounding uniform, the cafeteria, the vending ma-

chine and student travel cards. At the moment we are looking into making provisions for communication via the school website in the event of snow days, and improving attitudes towards classroom cleaning in all years.

The Student Council are always looking to hear from all students in the school. Issues can be brought up with class representatives, written down and put in the Student Council box (located in the foyer), or voiced at **Monthly Open Meetings** – the next of which will be held **Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> of December** in the Sewing Room. These meetings are a great opportunity for all students to have their voices heard, and to see how Student Council really works.

Don't forget to keep an eye on the SC Noticeboard for announcements and updates on what we're getting up to during the year! The Student Council

*'meetings are  
 a great  
 opportunity  
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 students to  
 have their  
 voices heard..'*



## 6th Year Retreat continued

business at lunchtime, we finished our day with a Mass, during which we contemplated how we go through different stages in life, and how we cope with these changes. Not only did this tie in with the school theme for this year, direction, it also concluded the retreat appropriately since it was a day that we had spent travelling through the beautiful countryside of Glendalough. Despite the occasional spatter of rain, a territorial swan and some very friendly wasps, the retreat

was truly enjoyed by all, and had given us a lot to think about. For this wonderful experience, the 6<sup>th</sup> years would like to thank Mr Larkin and Ms Lambert, for accompanying us on a day which will be remembered by all.

**Aisling Murphy, 6N**





## Important Lessons We Can Learn From The Developing World



Haiti after the earthquake

*'Looking out at these old, destroyed streets and comparing them to the beautiful coast with sparkling clear water, golden soft sand and delicious colourful fruit.'*

Haiti coastline



I look through the dusty, dirty window, to see destroyed buildings, mounds of rubbish, scrawny dogs and dismayed people surrounding me. I am in a 'taxi', for want of a better word, driving through the streets of Port-au-Prince, the capital of the West Indies island of Haiti in the Caribbean.

The taxi driver is friendly and happy, but he has little English and his attempt to tell me about the city isn't going very well. I could see that he was trying to tell me that Haiti was always poor, but never this decrepit and crowded.

Despite its natural beauty, vibrant culture and tropical climate, Haiti remains the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere.

Looking out at these old, destroyed streets and comparing them to the beautiful coast with sparkling clear water, golden soft sand and delicious colourful fruit, it seems like a different world.

The reason for my visit is to see a young boy and his little sister who really impressed my good friend and Concern worker, John O'Neill, who helped them rebuild their village and their lives after their world was turned upside down after the earthquake.

We leave the crowded city and come to a stop in a village on the outskirts of Port-au-Prince. This is where Lisa, a Haitian national who works with Concern, is meeting me. I thank my taxi driver and begin walking to a small wooden building, which looks new in comparison to the dwellings in the city. I am greeted by a plump, busty woman, with a lovely smile and sparkling eyes. She embraces me

and thanks me for coming out here.

She has perfect English with an accent that makes her sound so mellow and laid back. She gestures for me to follow her to Emmanuel's home, the boy whom I am meeting with. She says that he is a very smart boy and knows some English, but she will help me understand him.

The village we are walking through is quite big, but very plain and slightly shabby. Everyone comes out of their houses to see me. Some just stare at my unfamiliar face but the children run up and hug me, playing with my clothes and laughing 'Blanca!'

I see groups of women mending clothes and chatting, men and their children all playing together and mothers doting over their babies. Seeing how close and friendly this community was to each other made me realise how most of us in Ireland don't even know our next door neighbour, let alone our whole community. We should really take a leaf out of their book and get to know our neighbours and make an effort to create a closer, friendlier, more open community.

I come to a stop outside a small tin building, made of scraps of corrugated iron, much like the other homes here. A young, happy, lanky boy comes out and greets me with a friendly smile and a slightly awkward hug.

"Hello Lisa, and Sarah yes?" he asks in broken English.

I nod and introduce myself.

"You are welcome inside my home, come, I will give you some dinner"

As soon as he enters the room, a small girl of no more than five with long dark hair and glowing skin, rushes straight to him and hides behind him.

## Important Lessons We Can Learn From The Developing World (continued)



**Haiti earthquake images**

"This is my sister, Martina. Say hello to Sarah, Martina!"  
 She peeks out between his body and arm and gives me a shy smile and a small wave. I smile back and Emmanuel beckons for myself and Lisa to sit down as he goes over to the stove and begins cooking.  
 I look around the small, dimly lit room. It's almost empty other than a mattress and the straw bed that we're sitting on, a basin, a washer, a stove and a few pots. Emmanuel takes great pride in his home. The floor is swept completely clean and the pots are gleaming - a lesson for us lazy folk!  
 Emmanuel hands myself and Lisa a bowl of rice and sits down with us. Even though this may be all the food Emmanuel will have for the day, he is still generous enough to give some to us.  
 "So" Emmanuel says.  
 "What would you like to know about us?"  
 This is Emmanuel's story.  
 Emmanuel and Martina Montase lived with their father, a farmer, and their mother, the most caring and kind lady you'll ever meet. They didn't have much money, but they were very happy.  
 On the 12th of January 2010, while Emmanuel and Martina were in school, the earth-

quake struck. No one was hurt but this was a different story in their village. They arrived back to find their village was a huge mound of rubble, metal and earth. Some lucky survivors were pulled from the wreckage, Emmanuel's parents were not so fortunate.

Fourteen year old Emmanuel was left orphaned, distraught, scared and the new guardian to his little sister, all in the space of a day.

He battled through four tough months, homeless, hungry and frightened, barely surviving every day.

Things improved when Concern came to their village and helped them turn their lives around.

He now has a home and some food, but as the sole earner in his family, Emmanuel was forced to leave school and work at a nearby farm.

He gets up at five am every morning, takes a forty minute bus journey to the farm and works nine hours straight in the blaring heat, with no breaks. All for \$2.20 a day. He says that when he is tired, he thinks of Martina at home, hungry, and knows that he has to work or she won't be fed.

Emmanuel is very intelligent and optimistic and he hopes that when Martina is older and more independent, that he will be able to go back to school and train to become a doctor.

So, the next time you complain about that stew for dinner, put yourself in Emmanuel's shoes for five minutes...

Sarah McNabb 5N

*'They arrived  
 back to find their  
 village was a  
 huge mound of  
 rubble, metal  
 and earth. Some  
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 the wreckage,  
 Emmanuel's  
 parents were not  
 so fortunate.'*





# Sports in Cluny—Basketball



*'The girls got a chance to live with American host families and sample the American way of life.'*

Evening Herald  
24 November 2011

Another season has started. Everyone is back training after a long summer full of travel for some and hard work for others! A group of our Sixth & Fifth Years travelled to the New England area to play a little basketball, visit the Basketball Hall of Fame in Springfield, Massachusetts and hang-out for a day at Six Flags, New England! The girls got a chance to live with American host families and sample the American way of life. Yes, that's right T.G. I. Fridays, Applebee's, Malls, Outlets, Beaches, Pizza and yes of course more retail therapy! Followed by going back to the beach or someone's house who had a pool. The girls from Cluny, however, did themselves and their club team Dublin Raiders proud. The girls who travelled over were the two Senior A Captains Aoife Boylan & Ciara O'Dowd, Sarah Gaynor, Melanie Hogan, Lauren Flannagan, Nicole Dunne, Aisling Matthews, Ruth Slamon, Emma Lennon & Orla Schutte. It was hard work but well worth it. While some of the girls were playing some Ball there, a couple of the students decided to go to Basketball camp for a week. Jemma Matthews, Hannah Forster-Ryan, & Ciara Crotty spent a week out at a Basketball Camp called Rip and Run and you can see that they have improved while also meeting kids from Dublin and from all over the country. Keep working on getting better girls!

We have 10 teams altogether this year; 3 Senior teams (U/19), 2 Cadette teams (U/16), 3 Junior teams (U/15) and 2 Minor teams (U/14). We are looking for students to come out for a little non-competitive or recreational basketball after the Christmas break, so please keep your eyes on

the basketball notice board in the main corridor.

League games are underway and there is hope that teams can push for play-off places and try for a top four place. The top four teams qualify for semi-finals so GOOD LUCK TO ALL OUR TEAMS.

We would like to recognize some of our players who have had man of the match performances so far this season:

**Emma Lennon**- Sr. A for her 16pts tally in the season opener against Cashteknock Community School.

**Ciara McKeown, Caoimhe NI Bhrion, & Jemma Matthews**- for their outstanding play for the U/16 Cad. A team Cluny vs. Holy Family, Newbridge.

**Emma McSweeney** Cad. B-- for her scoring 18 of the teams 26 points against Holy Child, Killiney

**Ciara O'Dowd, Aisling Matthews** Sr. A---very consistent outside shooting against Holy Family, Newbridge & Portmarnock Community school.

**Nicole Dunne** Sr. A -10 pts in the fourth quarter against Gortnor Abbey in the U/19 Cup

**Sarah Gaynor** Sr A—22 pts in Cluny vs. Mercy Coolock win.

We salute you all and keep up the good work when you wear the Cluny Blue.

Our First Year and Second Year seasons have not started yet. They are playing friendly matches. The First Yrs look good so we have to wait and see. The Second Yr. teams will look to match last year's play by making it to two finals, while the other team had a disappointing semi-final loss against Sion Hill.

Ed. Randolph



# Sport in Cluny—Hockey

The hockey season as always, is very busy at this time of the year with the leagues well underway at this stage. Practice starts for all teams as soon as school reopens after the summer break in preparation for the leagues that follow shortly afterwards. Similar to last year, we practiced on the astroturf in Castlepark until the midterm break in October, and our Seniors and Minors continue to practice in Newpark once a week under the flood-lights there.

We have three Senior teams this year, each having played two league games so far with mixed results. The As showed some early promise but found the opposition from Santa Sabina and Mount Temple a little too strong. However, with two home games to come, hopefully they can turn things around. Likewise the Bs found their opponents from Wesley College and Holy Faith Clontarf too good but some positive results from remaining matches could make a big difference.

The Senior Cs have started very well with two victories from two against Sancta Maria and Alexandra College and this puts them in a very strong position so far.

Both Junior teams have started the season very well, with each recording two victories from two games played. The As have beaten Mt Anville and Santa Sabina 3-0 and 1-0 respectively, while the Bs scored victories over John Scottus and Loreto Stephens Green.

Our Minor group are progressing well and displaying great enthusiasm and commitment towards their teams. The As began very well and were unlucky to concede a goal against St Andrews having been 1-0 up and dominating the game. They unfortunately suffered the same misfortune in their next game against Teresians, Cluny scoring first but Teresians managed to score two in quick succession.

The Minor Bs have been very unlucky in their games so far. They played very well against a strong St Gerards team, also giving very good displays against Loreto Dalkey and Holy Child Killiney. They are due a victory very soon.

The First Years are showing lots of potential in training and in their practice matches so far, having beaten Loreto Dalkey and St Raphaelas and are eagerly awaiting their first league games which will be coming up soon.

Commitment to practice and to your team is essential if one is to progress, and as a sports person once said “There is no glory in practice, but without practice, there is no glory”. I would like to wish all our teams well for the remainder of the season.

Ms Seymour



***“There is no  
glory in  
practice, but  
without  
practice, there  
is no glory”.***

# Sailing

This year for the first time we entered a team into the All-Ireland Inter-Schools Sailing Event which was hosted by Sutton Dinghy Club on the first weekend in October.

Cluny was represented by Clodagh Hinkson, Maeve Rafferty and Emer Rafferty.

Thirty six schools were represented and one hundred and seventy five sailors competed over two days. Unfortunately the weather was a bit unkind with little or no wind on the Sunday, making sailing conditions diffi-

cult. Nevertheless the girls acquitted themselves very well with Emer winning a prize in the Optimist class. Well done to all.

Congratulations also to another Cluny Sailor - Amy Lambert who has been selected to represent Ireland in the Laser class in Austria next summer.

Ms M Seymour



# Cluny Extra-Curricular Swimming



September saw the introduction to a new sporting extra-curricular activity to the school, Swimming. With over 50 students currently enrolled, the girls are working hard at improving their fitness, developing techniques, and for some – preparing for the Leinster Championships in May. The Swim Club is a mix of two types of swimmers, competitive and non-competitive. The sessions are designed to cater for both types, so if you would like to attend just for fitness and fun, students are more than welcome. The competitive sessions are planned to focus on refining techniques including – stroke techniques, starts, turns, aerobic and anaerobic fitness, and improving race times.

The non-competitive sessions are specifically designed to develop stroke technique, strength, and fitness levels. We train on Monday mornings at 6:30am and on Thursday evenings at 7pm at Castle Park Swim Academy in Dalkey. It is envisaged in January that more evening training sessions will be available. Swimmers can attend one or two sessions a week. If you would like to receive an information pack, or would like to talk about enrolling in the club, please contact Ms Somers at [somers.ms@gmail.com](mailto:somers.ms@gmail.com) as soon as possible, as spaces are limited.

Thank you, Ms. Somers.

*'...their outstanding performance in the Soroptimist International Public Speaking Competition. All three were commended and did the school proud.'*

## Soroptimist International

Congratulations to Aisling Murphy, Katie Wolahan and Aideen Cooney on their outstanding performance in the Soroptimist International Public Speaking Competition in the Oak Room of the Mansion House on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup>. November. All three were commended and did the school proud.

Aisling spoke on the topic: "Nature provides a free lunch, but only if we control our appetites."

Aideen tackled Civil Rights and the Status of Women under the title : "It is only when you get a critical mass of women in politics that you get women's issues attacked"

A special word of congratulations goes to Katie who won the event and was selected to go forward to the Re-

gional Finals in February.

She spoke eloquently on the topic: "Indifference in NOT an option – we are the ones who make sure that human rights are in place and maintained".



**Katie Wolahan, Aisling Murphy & Aideen Cooney.**



# Library Re-Opens Under New Administration

Greetings,

Firstly I would like to introduce myself. My name is Andrea Dillon and I am the new school librarian at St. Joseph of Cluny. I started my career working in Marketing and I then moved on to study Law. In between this I have lived for a couple of years in France. I decided to become a librarian and completed a Master's Degree in Information and Library Studies at University College Dublin. I wanted to become a librarian because I believe libraries can make a very positive contribution to reading and learning for young people and adults alike. I am also very interested in literacy development and I am a volunteer tutor for the VEC Adult Literacy Scheme.

My overall goal for the library is that it is a safe environment that stimulates reading and learning among students. To help me achieve this I am continuing and introducing a number of activities in the library. Some of these activities are:

**A weekly reading time:** This will take place every Thursday at lunch time to cater for students who wish to read and study quietly. During this time no group work or access to computers will be allowed to ensure students will be offered a tranquil reading environment.

**Recommend to a friend:** Students might be more interested in reading books that are recommended by their peers. Students now have the opportunity to write down the book they love for anyone who comes into the library to see.

**Green Schools:** Green School meetings have been held in the library and each month details and some facts about the Bird of the Month will be posted up in the library.

**Online Resources:** The School Library is now a member of Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Libraries. This means the school has free access to the following online resources

- **Encyclopedia Britannica (Junior, Student and library edition):** Includes thousands of searchable articles and related websites.
- **Library Press Display:** The world's largest online newspaper portal which gives free access to 600 newspapers and magazines from all over the world. These papers come in different languages so it could be particularly helpful to students wanting to improve their language skills.
- **Byki:** An online language learning system that can offer students the chance to learn over 80 languages including French, German and Spanish.
- **Credo Reference:** Provides access to over 464 titles including encyclopaedias, dictionaries, books of quotation, as well as a host of subject-specific titles.
- **Dictionary of Irish Biography:** Contains over 9,000 posthumous biographies from earliest times to date, which describe and assess the careers of Irish subjects.
- **Mintel:** Provides easy and fast access to Irish consumer and market information.

**Introducing Club Tuesdays:** There will two new clubs that will take place on Tuesdays at lunch

**Book club:** A total of 80 students from 1<sup>st</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> year have signed up for the book club. There will be a separate book club held for each class on Tuesdays at lunch time. The purpose of the book club is to enhance

*'I am continuing and introducing a number of activities in the library.'*



**CREDOREference**  
Smart Research Starts Here



ENCYCLOPEDIA  
**Britannica Online Library Edition**



*'to help members  
become critical  
thinkers as well as  
being more aware  
of what's  
happening in the  
world around  
them.'*

## Library re-opens continues

students reading, comprehension and vocabulary.

**Journal Club:** I am hoping to introduce a journal club and it is mainly intended for senior students, as well as some interest groups e.g. a debating group. The idea is that each member reads a selected article and discusses it at the club meeting. The theme can be anything varying from the environment to politics. The idea is to help members become critical thinkers as well as being more aware of what's happening in the world around them. Due to high demand from the book club it is likely the Journal club will take place after school.

Ruth Slamon (6N) and Joy Murphy (6C) are the two sixth year prefects that have been assigned to help me in the library. Some of their duties will include making announcements regarding library activities, helping out at library events and letting me know any requests or ideas students and parents might have.

As the school librarian I would be happy to hear any thoughts you may have about the library. Any requests regarding special events or books can be given to Ruth or Joy who can then refer them to me.

I wish each student at St Joseph of Cluny every success and I hope the library can contribute to this success.

### Opening Hours

08:30 – 16:30: Monday to Thursdays

08:30 – 15:30: Fridays

Break times: Every day except Thursdays

Lunch time: The library is open every day during lunch.

### Lunch time Activities

Tuesday (Book clubs)



## Jam-ing with Jemma

Question: Why were the little raspberries upset? Answer: Because their parents were in a jam!

In my fourth year culinary arts class this month my class and I ventured away from the usual dishes we like to make such as risotto, pizzas and cakes. Instead we decided to make something new and interesting like our own home made jams. We were all very enthusiastic about the idea as it was something new to us all and it sounded like a bit of fun! It was interesting to learn just how easy it is to make your own jam from scratch!

There were very little ingredients and the recipe was very straight forward and easy to follow. My favourite part was scooping the jam into the glass jars and being able to decorate the jars as we wished. I put a pretty yellow ribbon around the centre of my jar, and then I cut up some fabrics (courtesy of the sewing room) and tied them around the lid of the jar using an elastic band. The jam looked gorgeous and tasted amazing!

My Nana has always been good to me as long as I can remember so I decided that the least I could do is to give her the jam as a gift! She was delighted with it and she said it tasted delicious too! Jemma Matthews 4N.

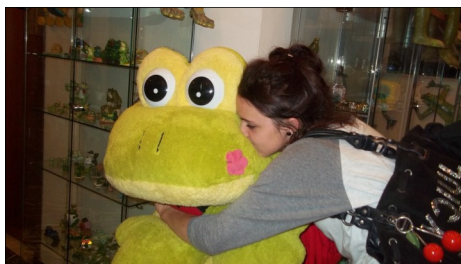


# Italy—5th Year Trip—Mid-term 2011

*Buongiorno! Durante le vacanze di metà trimesstre, sono andata in Italia, con la maggior parte delle ragazze del quinto anno (e sei professori!). Mi piaceva molto il giro, e non lo dimenticherò mai!*

...You'll be glad to know that that's where my Italian pretty much runs out. Over the mid-term break, I was one of the lucky Fifth Years who got to go on the trip to Italy. It started at the crack of dawn on Saturday morning and (sadly) came to a close late the following Wednesday night. In those five days, we explored Venice, shopped in Milan, enjoyed *gelati* on the shores of Lake Garda, and destroyed our vocal chords on the rollercoasters in Gardaland. It really was an unforgettable trip!

We flew into Marco Polo Airport in Venice early on the Saturday morning. All it took was the fresh air of a trip on a *vaporetto* (water bus) across to the city of Venice to really wake us up. We had a walking tour of the city, and had some free time to go sight-seeing ourselves (though if I'm honest most of us used the time to enjoy some 'fine Italian cuisine'). We didn't go on a gondola, but we succeeded in getting a gondolier to sing something in Italian to us as he rowed past. Basically the same thing, really. That evening we headed to our hotel by Lake Garda, where we had lasagne for dinner in their frog-themed restaurant (yep, *frog*-themed) and got some much-needed sleep.



(Some of us became quite attached to the frogs...)

The following day was spent between the two picturesque towns of Malcesine and Riva del Garda, followed by bowling in the evening. The towns were gorgeous, as was the boat trip between them. We had free time to explore them ourselves, stopping for pizza for lunch along the way, needless to say!



(On the boat from Riva del Garda to Malcesine)

(Photo: Ellen Cogan getting into character on the vaporetto)



On the Monday we went to Verona and Sirmione. Verona, as you may know, was where Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* was set, and we made a point of visiting Juliet's balcony – which was at least ten times more crowded than any other attraction in the town! Sirmione was another beautiful town. Tired after a long day in Verona, we spent most of our time there sitting on the pier enjoying the view and some more ice cream. When in Rome Italy, right?

(Photo: Juliet's Balcony in Verona)



(Photo: 'Farfalle' or 'butterflies' decorated the sides of some buildings in Sirmione)



Tuesday saw our much-anticipated trip to Gardaland. Naturally most of the day was spent either on the rollercoasters or queuing for them – it was time well spent! The rollercoasters were terrifying at times but for the most part hilarious – especially when we looked at the photos on them afterwards!

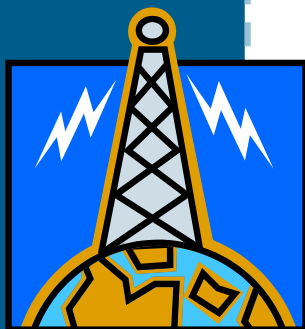
The last day, Wednesday, was when we went to Milan. After saying a fond farewell to the hotel, the lake, and the stuffed frogs, we set out for the city. We started with a visit to the Leonardo Da Vinci Science Museum – which some girls (\*cough\* the Physics class \*cough\*) enjoyed so much that they went back during our free shopping time – before going for lunch with the teachers, then getting down to some serious shopping. Eventually we had to say goodbye to the city and head out to the airport. By that stage we were in a weird place between sadness and sheer exhaustion (as well as general hyperactivity because, you know, we were in *Milan* all the same). I think we can all agree it ended far too soon at any rate!

I had a fantastic time in Italy, as I can be sure everyone did. On behalf of everyone, I'd like to thank the 6 teachers who came with us, in particular Mr Browne and Mr Hartigan, who organised it, for making it possible for us to go at all. We had great fun from beginning to end, and I think any one of us would jump at the opportunity to do it all over again! *Grazie!*

Megan Ross 5C







# Blackrock Radio Project

Three weeks ago Mr. Byrne told the Transition Year that we had been invited to take part in the Blackrock College Radio Project. We would have a twenty-seven minute slot to fill with items that would entertain fourth years and the general public. The students who wished to try something new were picked. I volunteered to be an editor as I knew this would be a great opportunity to experience working on a radio station.

We chose Karen Koster, the XPOSE host, to interview as she was a past pupil of the school and a lot of the girls were interested in how she became such a successful TV presenter. I set off to find her and after a week I tracked her down! She very kindly agreed to do the interview. Karen visited the school on Monday and honestly answered all our questions; we learned a lot from her and she was extremely patient and friendly and a little nostalgic.

Others items included in our slot were juicy celebrity gossip, interesting ways to make money as a student, a fun music show and an amazing performance of "Super Bass" by Ruth Richardson, Sophie Walsh and Emma Horkan. After prerecording most of the show we ventured into Blackrock College. As we nervously walked through the doors we were greeted by Ms Nulty and Security. They escorted us to the studio where we successfully recorded the rest of the show.

It all went very smoothly. A lot of work and time went into putting together our twenty seven minute slot, it was really worth it.

Everyone who participated agreed that they had learned a lot about radio

Rebecca Dunne 4N



*Cathy McDonagh,  
Sarah Lynam,  
Ruth Richardson,  
Christine Blennerhassett,  
Rebecca Dunne,  
Jessie O'Sullivan.  
(Ed. Board Members).*

# Fantastic Contraption

Transition Year Maths team-teaching for Achievement Folders



# International Cookery



**International  
Cookery  
Prize  
Winners**

In our Culinary Arts class we had two International cooking weeks, where we had to design menus and prepare, cook and serve the main course during our double class. The first week was European cooking so we decided to do an Italian style menu and picked spaghetti with meatballs as our main dish. We researched a few possible recipes but finally decided on Jamie Oliver. It was an authentic Italian meal and we could have given Mr Jamie Oliver a run for his money!! The second week was Asian and we decided to go for Chinese, an area we have much experience in, our favourite takeaway! We then looked up some traditional Chinese dishes and after scanning through all the

Ying Yang Yong's and the Chin Chon Chee's we decided to go for an old favourite, chicken curry. We used a recipe with apples to make our curry sweet. On the day our curry turned out really nice, the apples added a fruity taste to it and we had discovered a way to make our favourite takeaway meal for cheaper and it was a much healthier option.

We won the prize of a cinema voucher for the best designed menus in our class. The two International Cookery weeks showed us how simple it is to research and prepare foreign foods by simply using the internet and cookery books. It gave us an insight into different cultures and we enjoyed making these menus and meals.

Hannah McAteer and Jessica O'Sullivan, TY



*'we could have  
given Mr Jamie  
Oliver a run for  
his money!!'*

## Dragons Den—Cluny Style

As part of our Home Economics module, we were assigned a project where we had to think of an idea for a novel food product that we could produce in a double practical class that could be sold at a Christmas Fair. We had great fun thinking up all sorts of crazy ideas and on the day, we would have made any Dragons Den judge proud! There was a variety of different ideas throughout the class such as Mini Gingerbread houses, "Stain Glass Window" Cookies (made by melting sweets in the middle), Strawberry Fritters, Christmas Tree Cookies, Cinnamon Biscuits and Gingerbread Men. We had to think of a suitable packaging and labelling to make the items look as attractive as possible. This was an enjoyable project as we

got to use our creative minds and also be innovative.

Aoibheann McGuirk and Hannah McAteer



## Opening of the Year Assembly Address by Head Girl



Head Girl Aisling  
Murphy & Deputy  
Head Girl Anna  
Thorp

*'the role of  
school is to  
create well  
rounded  
individuals who  
will make a  
positive impact in  
society.'*

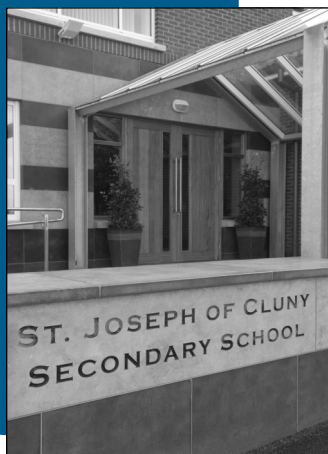
Good morning and welcome to this year's annual open of year assembly. My name is Aisling Murphy and this year I have the privilege of holding the position of Head Girl. Firstly, let me extend a warm welcome not only to our esteemed guests and teachers but also to our new and returning students. I hope you enjoy our presentations.

Contrary to popular belief, the primary purpose of school is not to teach you the difference between catabolic and anabolic reactions, nor to show you the ins and outs of Hamlets serious case of bipolar or indeed to have you learning off any other fact by rote. Rather, the role of school is to create well rounded individuals who will make a positive impact in society. To be successful in life, you need to be able to work as part of a team, balance your valuable time effectively, have leadership skills, and, most importantly, have belief in your own abilities. Such important qualities cannot be developed in the classroom but are acquired on the hockey pitch, on the choir risers, in the debating team or in the swimming pool at 6.30 on a cold and dark morning. Cluny therefore is so much more than just a school. It is a place which provides numerous sports and extracurricular societies, all intended not just to give you a deserved break from study but also to realise your full potential.

The options open to all Cluny girls, in terms of sports or extracurricular activities, is in my mind, endless. Not only are there the more common ones such as basketball or hockey, but there is also a diverse range of activities for the, shall we say, less athletically gifted among us, myself included. From guitar lessons to Blue Angels

to Irish Club, there is something for everyone, no matter how diverse your interests are. Not only do these societies provide the chance to delve in to your interests further, there is also the opportunity to make new friends across all year groups, from the scuttling first years to the nonchalant sixth years, learn more about yourself or even unveil some hidden talents. Amongst us there could be a prolific debater, a gifted author or an award winning actress, who will never be uncovered unless you are willing to try something different, something which truly interests you. I encourage not only the first years, but all of you sitting here today to make it your mission to explore all the societies and clubs available to you this year. Not only will you benefit by developing as a person, school will become less of a chore and more of a truly enjoyable experience.

These school activities provide you with a chance to 'have the lols' and they also illustrate dedication to maintaining a pleasant school environment and interest in each and every student's wellbeing. Student Council provides a forum for your opinions and ideas on school policy, A.B.C. provides a listening ear for those who are having difficulties, whether it is at school or at home and Green Schools even take the responsibility of reducing your carbon footprint. These societies not only demonstrate the devotion that Cluny has to each and every student, they also give you the opportunity to give back to your school community. To those students lucky enough to be a part of these truly important societies, congratulations. However, Cluny also provides the opportunity to each and every student to make a difference to





## Opening of the Year Assembly Address by Head Girl continued



**Cluny students visiting Sierra Leone Mission House in 2006**

the community at large. Whether it is through the extensive community service program, the House System or the sixth year official charity, each and every one of you can 'give back'. Each year, the generosity and charitable spirit of each Cluny student is astounding and the amount of 5<sup>th</sup> year students receiving the Gaisce badge today only highlights this.

Make the most of your time in Cluny. As it has been said by possibly every Cluny 6<sup>th</sup> year student on this stage, your six years here will disappear in a flash. My advice to you is to enjoy each moment and in my opinion, getting involved in all Cluny has to offer is the best way to do that. The memories you make will last a lifetime and provide you with friends who will hopefully last as long.

Finally, I would like to end in a quote from the novel 'One Day' which contains good advice for each and every one of us: 'The trick of it is to be courageous and bold and make a difference. Not change the world exactly, just the bit around you. Work hard at ... something. Cherish your friends, stay true to your principles, live passionately and fully well. Experience new things. Eat sensibly. Stuff like that.'

Thank you for listening.

*'The memories  
you make will  
last a lifetime  
and provide  
you with  
friends who  
will hopefully  
last as long.'*

## Fashion Show

Cluny students took to the catwalk on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> October in a whole school fundraising effort for our six Cluny Mission Houses. A Fancy Dress Fashion Show was organised by the 6 House Captains to raise money for the mission houses in Fiji, Gambia, Ghana, St Lucia, Sierra Leone and Tahiti. A great effort was made by all, with the various costumes reflecting the creativity and imagination of their wearer. We had it all on stage - from Bananas and Sheep, to Superheros and Daisies. Prizes were awarded in a number of categories including Most Creative, Funniest, Best Group, Best Walker and Best Overall. Over 800 euro was raised on the day, so well done to all who took part and espe-

cially to the House Captains – Lauren, Laura, Jenny, Emma, Grace and Eimear who ran the very successful event.

Ms M Seymour





Recess, Co. Galway

# Our Trip to Recess

After a gruelling year of blood, sweat and tears, the day we had all been waiting for had finally arrived. After all the excitement of receiving our Junior Certificate results, one would think that we all would have been worn out and ready to return to life before the worry of exam results plagued our already stressful enough teenage lives. This was, of course, not the case. We were too busy packing for our four day trip to the Recess Adventure Centre in Connemara!

On Thursday, 15<sup>th</sup> September, we arrived at the school at 8am excited (albeit half asleep) for the long bus journey ahead. After saying our good-byes to our parents and promising them that we would get our full eight hours of sleep, we lugged our massive suitcases to the bus. Accompanied by Mr Randolph, Ms Fahey and Ms McEvoy, we set off on the six hour bus journey to Connemara.

After an eventful bus journey which included classic road trip games such as 'I Spy' and the not-so classic '21' and X-Factor-esque performances ('The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air' theme tune was a hit), we arrived at the adventure centre. Cue the stampede for the beds. Luckily no one was injured and almost everyone got a bed. Hats off to the 30 or so girls who shared a room!

We were then given an introductory speech about what activities we would partake in, safety, meal times and chores! We split ourselves into the four groups that we would

be doing the activities in. The activities were canoeing, hillwalking, orienteering and rock climbing/abseiling. My group did orienteering first. Let's just say that some people never completed the course because they didn't even enter the gate into the forest and spent two hours walking along a road. Or because they fell into a bog and all time was spent trying to get them out. At one point, calling a mountain rescue crew was seriously considered!

The next morning my group went rock climbing/abseiling which was made just that bit more exciting by the fact that it had lashed rain and the rocks were even slipperier than usual! Despite the fact that we had to descend from a rock that to me was the height of Mount Kilimanjaro, we all gave it a go. I still find myself bursting out laughing when I remember some people's approach to abseiling which was to basically hold on to the ropes for dear life and hope for the best with the odd gasp-inducing scramble thrown in.

Later that day, we went hillwalking. Well to rephrase that we actually went for a hike in the woods as it was far too wet for hillwalking. We all felt like Bear Grylls at the time and we

*'The activities were canoeing, hillwalking, orienteering and rock climbing/abseiling.'*





# Our Trip to Recess continued

even collected some Connemara marble! When we got back, we were absolutely shattered. After all, we had done our share of exercise for the entire year!

On Saturday, we got to go on another bus journey-this time to Achill Island. Some people opted to catch a wink on the bus but I stayed wide awake as there was a 'serial snapper' who decided to take pictures of people while they were sleeping! Plus, I was too excited. We would be going surfing! For many of us, it was our first time and watching shows like *Home & Away* in the past added to our interest. It was an amazing experience even though I managed to spend half of my time in the water rather than on the surfboard! Afterwards we got a tour of the island and had a barbeque with toasted marshmallows.

Sunday was our last day and although we were all upset that our trip was coming to an end, we still had one more activity to do. My group's last activity was canoeing. Surprisingly enough, being splashed with freezing cold water, falling into the lake and crashing into rocks was great fun. Afterwards some of us decided to jump into the lake. It was our last day there so why not?

After getting absolutely drenched, we had to do the miserable task of packing our bags and saying goodbye to Recess. No more playing pool and Ping-Pong in the evenings or playing truth or dare. All of the years above us raved on about Recess but we never knew how much fun we would actually have. It will remain as one of the best memories of secondary school.

When I got back home, my mother bought ear plugs because I would not stop nattering on about how great Recess was. She was probably just jealous...

