



THORNHILL COLLEGE JUNIOR SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

December 2018



Dear Parents,

A multitude of events have celebrated the end of the autumn term. On Thursday 13th December we hosted our annual Christmas Carol Service. The range of performances on display and the quality of musicianship was outstanding. Listening to renditions of 'Mary did you know', 'In the Bleak Midwinter' and 'O Holy Night' certainly got the congregation in the festive mood. It was Christmas Jumper Day on 14th December and the class with best attendance (8E) were rewarded with a special screening of ELF at Brunswick Cinema. In assemblies this week we had our beautiful Christmas liturgies reminding us of the true meaning of Christmas. The festivities culminated today with the legendary Christmas show.

As we conclude the longest term of the academic year, it is apparent that the transition for the new Year 8 students has been very smooth. It has been lovely to see new friendships develop and students mature and go about the school day with a smile on their face.

This term we ran a competition in the Junior School to mark Anti-bullying week 2018 asking girls to design a simple logo to represent the behaviours we seek to promote in our school such as kindness, consideration, respect and inclusion. Congratulations to Ciarrai Nicolas of 10G who created the winning design included below. This logo is now displayed throughout the school community in classrooms and corridors to raise awareness that Thornhill is an anti-bullying environment and it will act as a constant reminder that we all flourish by supporting each other with kind words and actions.

In a bid to recognise pupils who have gone 'over and above' we've introduced Hot Choc Fridays with the Head. The idea is for the Principal to invite such girls to share a hot drink and a chat together. It's an opportunity to commend those who get on with things quietly but don't always get the recognition they deserve.

Thank you to the PTA and Mrs Green for their organisation of the fantastic Colour Run Event in September and the Year 8 social in October. Thanks to all the hard work and generosity of everyone involved, the PTA has so far raised a grand total of £3497 this term for the school. Congratulations to the Junior Cross Country teams who dominated the Derry Schools' Cross Country Finals last month, which was hosted here in school for the first time.

In the run up to Christmas amid the enjoyment and excitement and excess, we've encouraged our girls to reflect on the theme of giving and take a moment to think about other people – not just our close friends and families, but other people in our own communities and around the world. With your help the girls have risen to the challenge and created over 500 Christmas Gift shoeboxes and 55 food hampers for those less fortunate. With that in mind, may this festive season also be a time for bringing hope, peace, joy and fulfilment in your lives. Thank you for all that you do to support the Thornhill College community.

Best Wishes

G Walker

Mrs G Walker
Head of Junior School





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Year 8 news from the Head of Year, Dr Morewood

Year 8 pupils have settled well and continue to grow in confidence as they establish themselves at Thornhill. Academic progress has been excellent and each pupil should be commended for the manner in which they have approached their studies. Congratulations to all the Year 8 pupils for making an excellent start to their time at Thornhill and completing their first term successfully. I would like to thank all parents and guardians for their support in helping their daughters settle in so well. I wish you and your families a very happy and restful Christmas break.

Pastoral Focus

In Form Class all Year 8 pupils have been following a Pastoral Programme. This is designed to give them practical tools to help them manage different situations and has included units on Settling In, Health & The Whole Person, Anti-Bullying and Managing Change. In addition, the girls took part in the Smashed Project, an educational theatre initiative with a vision – to break the culture of underage drinking and reduce alcohol related harm amongst young people. On 10th December Derry Youth Community held an in-school retreat for Year 8. The girls enjoyed a day of reflection on the themes of hope, peace, joy and love. This concluded in a special mass with Fr Clerkin. Pupils have been involved in numerous extra-curricular activities and events during the term all of which add to their overall experience and help to nurture and develop their skills and talents.

The Year 8 Halloween Social is always a highlight of the school year and this year was no exception. All the form classes must be congratulated on their preparation for the dance competition; the standard was very high. Congratulations to 8A who were the winners of a very tight contest. To mark the beginning of the new Year 8 pupils' journey in Thornhill College, we held a tree planting ceremony. Representatives from each Year 8 form class attended and Fr Clerkin conducted a blessing of the trees. The Year 8 Talent Show showcased some fantastic acts to a packed Assembly Hall. Everyone involved contributed to a fabulous event. Congratulations to 8B, who emerged victorious.

In the Picture



First day at Thornhill



Year 8 Social winners!



Tree planting ceremony



Yellow ribbons for Anti-Bullying Week



Year 8 at the start line of the Colour Run



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Year 9 news from the Head of Year, Ms Byrne

As my first term with Year 9 comes to a close, I would like to thank the girls and their form teachers for the warm welcome to their year group. The Year 9's are brimming with enthusiasm and have approached their array of subjects and extracurricular activities with great determination and diligence. I have been highly impressed by the mature approach to their studies, effective teamwork and positive attitude to all aspects of school life.

Year 9 students had a busy first term including various trips and visits. They had the pleasure of visiting the River Foyle natural gas pipeline crossing by Firmus Energy to witness the largest drill project undertaken in Northern Ireland. They also went out on church visits and had an enjoyable and informative day where they learned about different faith's and got to meet with Rev Katie McAteer and Rev Mark Roberts. I wish you all a restful and happy Christmas break which has been so well earned.

Pastoral Focus

Our pastoral focus this year commenced with settling back into school and continued with a host of topics such as Managing Change, Feelings and Emotions and completing the Dead Cool Cancer Programme. The SMASHED PROJECT was a great success as the students were wholly engaged when the company performed a short play to convey the dangers of consuming alcohol with a workshop and discussion to conclude this informative session.

Anti-bullying week is always imperative in Thornhill and to promote the theme of respect this year, every student wore a yellow ribbon on their blazer during anti-bullying week. Congratulations to Sinead Harper of 9A who was the winner of the Year 9 anti-bullying logo! To finish the term, each class is creating a HANDS hamper, which reflects our mercy ethos; caring for others and generating kindness and compassion for those in need in our local community.

In the Picture



Church Visits



9E Christmas Jumpers



Cross Country Champions



Firmus Energy Site



Colour Run



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Year 10 news from the Head of Year, Dr Garland

As the senior year group in junior school, Year 10 pupils have been leading the way in a wide range of activities and initiatives. The Year 10 buddies have been mentoring the new Year 8 pupils, making them feel safe and secure and guiding them through this transitional stage of their education. In relation to STEM, Year 10 pupils have also taken part in a Sentinus Robotics event in October while in November the Technology department organised a *Tomorrow's Engineers* event followed by the Lego League competition in December. Throughout these events, pupils developed their team working skills and improved their own problem-solving skills.

As the term comes to a close Year 10 pupils have been involved in the Shoe Box appeal and also the HANDS Christmas hampers. Some classes even designed and sold their own Christmas cards with proceeds going to Foyle Search and Rescue. Year 10 continue to demonstrated their generous spirit by helping people in their own community as well as people living much further afield.

Pastoral Focus

Year 10 have been very busy during form time. They have been using pastoral lessons to study Drugs and Society to understand how legal and illegal drugs can be used and misused by individuals and society as a whole. Students assessed their knowledge, attitudes and skills needed to make informed choices in this area. In October the year group took part in a *Mood Matters* workshop delivered by Aware NI the programme which gave students advice on managing their feelings when stressed or worried. Following the Hallowe'en break the attention turned to anti-bullying and behaviours to combat such issues. Careers and Employability has been the focus for the rest of term. It has been encouraging to see the mature and organised way they have responded to this process as they will be making their GCSE subject choices in the new year. Researching possible careers and the required qualifications will allow the girls to make informed decisions about which subjects to choose.

A large number of Year 10 girls took part in the *Blues Programme* this term. Facilitated by Action for Children, the CBT style project aims to reduce the low mood and negative thoughts as it gives them the tools to cope. Feedback from participating pupils has been extremely positive.

In the Picture



Hot Choc with the Head



Robotics Workshop



Carol Service



Tomorrows Engineers Event



10F Christmas Jumpers



Anti-Bullying Ambassadors