

AGM is on Tuesday 27th September at 7.30.

Chairperson's address

As always, this year has been another busy one for the Parents Association of St Colmcille's Community school and I would like to take this opportunity to thank you, the parents who make up the association, for your continued support.

All contributions made by you are gratefully received.

In order to get the most benefit from your contribution can I encourage all of you to fill in and return a CHY3 form and return it to us as this enables us to claim back a significant sum from Revenue.

Details can be found on the website. I also wish to thank all of the members of the committee for their hard work on your behalf this year.

In this newsletter you will find a flavour of some of the things your contributions are spent on. In choosing projects we are guided by the needs of the school and we also try to plan for the needs of future students.

This is an important part of our work as the present students are now benefiting from projects undertaken by previous committees most notably the extension to the Art room and before that the extension to classrooms, which now affords all of our students the opportunity to do Transition Year.

Other things we have spent your contributions on further improve the school experience of all students, such as provision of water fountains, support for end of year graduation events for TY and Leaving Certs and the purchase of the large Christmas tree which really enhances the school entrance during the festive season.

We would like to congratulate the Ballyboden St Enda's team on their historic win in the All Ireland Club Championships, especially to those players who are past pupils of St Colmcille's.

Should you have any queries or suggestions for us we can be contacted by email at parents@stcolmcilles.ie through the post-box in the general office or by consulting our page on the school website. Finally as the year draws to a close, we wish the Leaving and Junior Certs good luck as they undertake their state exams. For the Leaving Certs, we hope that we have played a small part in supporting you in your journey through St Colmcille's and wish you all the very best in your future endeavours.

Janet McNamee

Overview of monies spent 2016



Sports Kits

A comprehensive review of all sports kits held in the school was undertaken by Ms Gráinne Fogarty in November 2015. The Parents' Association (PA) had agreed a programme back in 2013 to assist where possible with replacing sports jerseys based on need and condition of kit. This year the PA Committee agreed that they would sponsor a full set of 24 Jerseys for the Girls Camogie team as these were considered priority items for replacing.

It is hoped that the PA will be in a position to sponsor a set of gear for one of the boys teams in 2017 with the intention to replace all team kits over the next few years on a needs basis. Should any parent or company be in a position to help in sponsoring a team kit they can contact the PA, who would be delighted to assist.



*Senior Camogie Panel
wearing their new kit sponsored by the parents' association*

Lab Aid and IT Support

For many years now the Parent's Association in recognition that Science and Technology will offer major employment opportunities in the future has supported the school's students by funding a Science and ICT position. This support position has been invaluable in the continuous development of the science department and school's ICT capacities. To this end the school has employed Dr. Thomas Foyle a NUI Galway graduate who has extensive experience having lectured at University level in both science and computers.

The role includes the management of science resources including stock control, new resource acquisition and equipment maintenance and repair. This centralised management improves the efficiency of the science department and frees up teacher time to focus on continuous improvement in curricular delivery and innovation. Since the inception of this role there has been an associated improvement in exam results achieved by students.

On a day to day level Dr Foyle provides assistance by preparing laboratory experiments and chemicals and setting up the labs. All students in the school have benefited from this support as all students study science during the junior cycle and most study at least one science subject for the leaving certificate.

In-house ICT support has been essential in helping to keep the complex computer systems used by the 700+ student and staff body running optimally. Repairs and maintenance can be carried out promptly to minimise disruption to staff and students. By the end of 2016 over 360 students will be using their own iPads in school to enhance their learning. Dr Foyle delivers classes to all first years on the correct and safe use of iPads for education. This in-house ICT expertise has also been invaluable in the continuous professional development and mentoring of teachers. Thomas undergoes on-going training such as the attendance of Apple Tech programs "Mobility with Apple for Education" which have helped inform this role.

Dr Foyle's role has expanded to offer free assistance and mentoring of students involved in co-curricular Science activities such as the BT Young Scientist Exhibition and Scifest. He has also managed the Schools Badminton teams over the past number of years. This year's achievements include the under 14 girls reaching the All-Ireland Finals, the under 14 boys winning the Dublin Finals (pictured below with Mr Foyle) and under 16 girls winning silver at the Dublin Finals. The Parents Association hope to continue to support this important role into the future.



Musical

This year we staged Grease which was a resounding success. We had the biggest cast ever on our stage (170) and had approximately 250 students involved in our show. As usual the Musical created a very positive buzz around the school and the songs could be heard morning noon and night. Our costumes were fantastic this year and we are indebted to our wonderful Parents Association who always help us out. Two of our staff members Trish and Catherine along with their band of helpers sourced amazing costumes - they were both bought and hired. The students felt a million dollars and it enhanced the whole show. We also thank the Parents Association for their organising of our Musical Raffle every year - in fact we are hopelessly devoted to you.



Multimedia

The multimedia class in Transition Year is continuing to grow in popularity, we created a second class in 2014 so that we can now cater to 48 students but demand still exceeds that each year.

So far the PA has supported the purchase on 6 iMac computers for editing, 2 small cameras, 2 high quality cameras and a range of accessories such as lights and a green screen.

Our skills are growing steadily and this year saw the creation of our most successful film so far, In My Own Words which picked up over 180,000 views online in the first week after being launched.

The film won the finals of the Fresh Film Festival on 10th March. The full collection of films produced is available on our YouTube channel, St Colmcille's Film.



The film won the Radharc Award for Heritage and Documentary, the RTÉ Award for Factual Documentary, and 1st place overall for a group entry.

Speaker Programme



While school is a place where students study and prepare for exams, we as a school team, recognise that our students are not just intellectual beings to whom we impart knowledge. They are physical, emotional and spiritual beings as well. It is important that as a school community we develop all aspects of each person's life.

If our young people are affected by bereavement, separation, anxiety, stress or depression, this impacts on their ability to learn and to fully become the person they are meant to be. We are so fortunate in St Colmcille's Community School to have a Parents' Association committed to supporting the work of the school in the development of the whole child.

This year, through the generosity of the Parents' Association, we had Internet Safety Workshops for our 1st, 2nd and 3rd Year students. The presenter was Dr. Sinead Devine from MGMS Training. Sinead also delivered a parent talk on internet safety to 2nd and 3rd year parents that night. It is hoped that 1st year parents will have the same opportunity to avail of this talk. Check out the website <http://www.mgmstraining.ie>.

It is worth a look. Our 6th and 4th Year students had the privilege of hearing Jason Maupin (above) who was visiting from the United States. They have had visits from people involved in A.A. tell their personal stories of addiction. Fourth and fifth Year students had a very inspirational talk from Jason Black, a speaker recommended by some of our parents who had heard him address a scouts gathering. This year due to the focus on the refugee crisis in our world, Jennifer Brennan from Trocaire addressed our Carol Service. Our 3rd, 5th and 6th Years had a three hour workshop on relationships and sexuality presented by qualified counsellors who work with adolescents and have a rich insight into their world.

This gives you just a flavour of some of the interesting speakers that we've had address our students. It just would not be possible without the ongoing support and dedication of a committed group of parents who work so diligently on behalf of all our parents and students.

School Counsellor

A number of years ago, we availed of a small grant from Family Affairs to access the services of a counsellor, to come into our school every Monday.

This funding has been handed over to Tusla. Needless to say the grant did not fully cover the costs of the counsellor. Once again we were blessed to have a Parents' Association who committed to meet this shortfall and support this very valuable service.

The work of the counsellor is invaluable in supporting students through transition periods in their lives.



As with all grants, we have seen the amount given to us decrease over the years.

Without the help of the Parents' Association we could not continue to offer this valuable service in our school.

Anne Loughman



Blinds

It was noted by the school that the vertical blinds were tearing and flapping and causing annoyance to students and teachers alike. Funding was applied for and granted by the Parents Association for rooms 32,33,37,38 and 39. These blinds are motorized and can be controlled by the teachers in order to minimise annoyance and distraction to students in the course of their day.

Art room - Special blackout blinds were requested for both keeping out light and to protect the students art work. Also replaced were three large blackout blinds in the GPH. The school have expressed their appreciation of these replacements and have noticed the huge difference between these new blinds and the old vertical blinds. They are also aware of the huge cost to the Association.

EYP

European Youth Parliament

"On April 17th, I was one of the lucky few given the opportunity to Ireland at the 78th International Session of the European Youth Parliament in Izmir, Turkey.

There we met with groups of enthusiastic and motivated young adults from all member states across the EU. I was on the committee on Agriculture and our goal was to debate current agriculture affairs whilst forming a resolution booklet to debate in a General Assembly with 14 other committees.

The whole Journey lasted 10 days, 10 incredible days with over 250 delegates from 31 different countries, 31 different cultures and hundreds of endless different ideas all working together with one aim, to simply make the EU a much safer, sustainable and better place live. The experience was unforgettable, extraordinary and simply remarkable." European Youth Parliament

Conor Dunne

Career Guidance

The Parents' Association provide excellent support annually to the career guidance department through the provision of the mock interviews for sixth years and contributing to the guest speaker programme. This year thanks to additional support from the Parent's Association, the Career Guidance Department has expanded and we have a strong team of three Guidance Counsellors; Ms Kenny, Ms. Ahern and Ms. Patton.

The extra support has allowed for the introduction of Career Guidance and Mental Health education to junior cycle students. For the first time, we are piloting the 'Mindstein' motivation programme with various years in a hope to develop and deliver top class encouragement and tip's to optimise the success of our students.

In addition, our Department has endeavoured to introduce additional supports to students particularly at exam times. We were delighted to welcome Fr. Flann Lynch to the student body this year and to our careers evening in December. He has taught mindfulness worldwide and developed an abundance prayer that has been endorsed in many professional arenas. He is currently working with a group of TY multimedia students to produce a video outlining his work which can be used as a resource by schools. Please visit flansformation.com for more information.

Our Department also capitalised on the visit of American student teachers to our school and it was a pleasure to host lunch time yoga before Christmas for first year groups. Our Careers evening and mock interviews held at the beginning of December were a great success. We are extremely grateful to the Parent's Association for all their work in organising and running the mock interviews.

6th year students were interviewed by parents with expertise in these areas and received constructive feedback on their CV and interview technique while also receiving tips for future interviews. The student evaluation forms were very positive with 100% reporting their interview experience as helpful or very helpful. The evening was a great success and students, parents and staff enjoyed meeting past students and the many College representatives who attended on the night.

In January, we started the New Year on a very positive note. We were successful in securing sixty places at the Cycle Against Suicide Student Conference. This was double the number of places typically offered and the event was an outstanding success. In February, we had careers week where TY students visited many third level Institutions including UCD, TCD, ITT and DCU. This helped inform their senior cycle subject option choices.

We also had a presentation on careers in engineering and preparing for job interviews from Majella Henchion, one of the Parent Nominees to the Board of Management. This was very informative and was well received by students.

Since Easter the fifth year students are benefiting from career guidance talks from college representative in relation to different career areas including science, law, business and computers. They are also meeting with their guidance counsellor to discuss their future study and career options. Our sixth years also have access to more support as they prepare for the Leaving Cert examinations and reviewing their CAO choices during the Change of Mind period from May until the end of June.

Finally, we cannot underestimate the progress in our department facilitated by the contribution of the Parent's Association. Our Department is growing and our students' are benefiting from the additional input provided by the guidance team as they face the challenges of secondary school as well as preparing for life after St Colmcille's. We are very grateful for the ongoing support of the Parents association and will endeavour to provide the best care possible for the students in St Colmcille's.

Guidance Department

Dr. Harry Barry – 'The Early Screenager'

The Parents' Association were delighted to host a talk by Dr. Harry Barry entitled 'The Early Screenager'. Dr. Barry's talk addressed some of the most important topics that affect most parents of teenagers today.

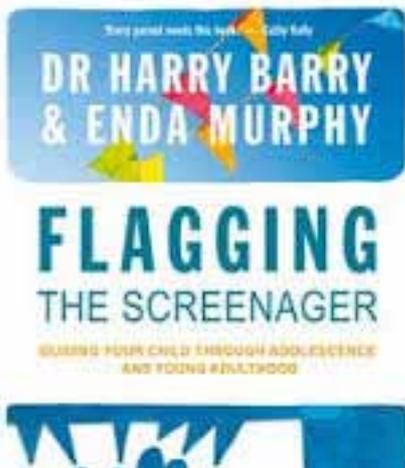
How do we manage screen time in our adolescent's life? What are the implications of the technology saturated world we live in and how can we help our children to cope? He made some very interesting observations about the brain of the developing child/teenager.

Understanding that our teenagers live in a constant state of anxiety and that by simply acknowledging their problems (no matter how small or insignificant they may seem to us) may be the first step in opening up the lines of communication.

Depression, peer pressure and cyber-bullying are major factors in our adolescents lives and it is our duty as parents to be as informed as we can about how to help our children survive these turbulent years.



It is impossible to stop the progress of technology but these issues and many more are explored in a book entitled 'Flagging the Screenager' by Dr. Harry Barry and Enda Murphy.



...about the Texting Reminder Service?

Have you received a text from the school to remind you of notes in school bags, important dates, exam payments, parent teacher meetings etc?

If not, it is likely that your most up-to-date mobile number is not in the system! Important messages will be sent by text, usually before it can be posted on the website, so it is important to check that we have your most up-to-date number. This is a service provided by the Parents' Association for you and continues to get very positive feedback from parents.

To ensure we have your correct number, drop your details into our post box in the school office or contact us via either the mobile or email below.

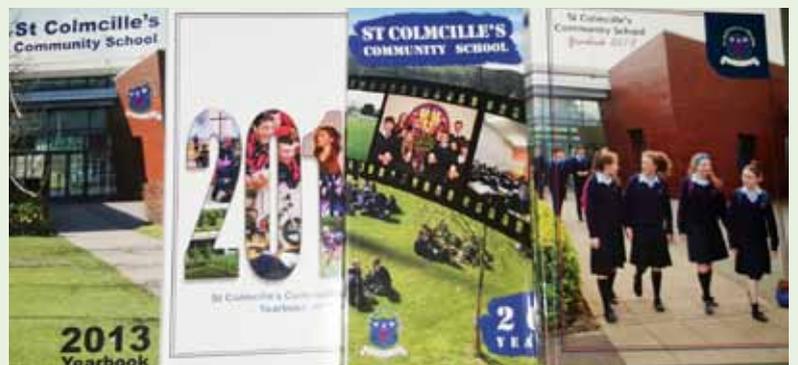
txt Liz on 087 220 9861

or send an email to
parents@stcolmcilles.ie

Yearbook

Another year, another fabulous yearbook. In this throwaway, disposable society isn't it nice to have something tangible for both parents and students to look at and dip into. We are so accustomed to seeing fleeting images and photos on our phones and screens, which all too often get deleted, this book should stand the test of time.

The yearbook is an extremely professional venture which the pupils should be very proud of. The quality and variety of the articles is quite astounding. You can but marvel at our very talented students who have created this yearbook from cover to cover. Flicking through the pages you will find everything from sports news, interviews to school trips, fun stuff and so much more - the yearbook has it all. The Parents' Association are proud to sponsor this invaluable book for all 6th year students and hope it will bring back lots of happy memories and maybe a few laughs in the years to come.



Library

Another year has passed and we have been fortunate to stock up with new books courtesy of the Parents' Association.

We sought recommendations from our students and attempted to purchase books spanning a diverse range of interests. With all the distractions of modern day technology it is important to encourage our children to spend some time reading. The benefits of reading are not just educational; it allows students to de-stress and relax.

Therefore our junior cycle classes get to have at least one reading class per week in the library. During lunchtime 1st years have the opportunity to participate in our homework club which is manned by the buddies.

In addition, after school we have a healthy number of 5th years who do homework/study for 1 hour.



New Year's Resolutions were acted upon from January with a group 6th Year girls taking part in dance classes directly after school every Friday. The girls thoroughly enjoyed the activity. It was fun and a great stress buster. The girls are very grateful to the Parents' Association who funded this enterprise until the end of May.



Debs Reception Wed 9th Sept 2015

The Parents' Association, as in previous years, hosted an early evening reception for parents and students in St. Colmcilles Community School. A very large crowd was catered for which provided a great start to the excitement of the evening to come for the students, who looked amazing. The students themselves were a credit to the school and thanks to the students' committee who liaised with the Parents Association in organising the event.

Ms Coulihan, as usual, was on hand to take the 'official debs photographs' for the students as they arrived. A huge thanks to the students from several year groups who assisted on the night and with the clean up afterwards. Many thanks to all the staff of the Community School for their assistance to us and allowing us to take over the school for their graduating students of 2015. Last but not least, a huge thank you to every member of the Parents' Association who all assisted in various ways as this is an 'all hands on deck event'! Plans are already in hand for all the graduating students of 2016 and it is always a great occasion to look forward to.

