

**Mountrath  
Community  
School**  
April 2024



Welcome to the April edition of our newsletter from Mountrath Community School for the academic year 2023/2024 bringing you updates on all the latest activities and achievements of our school and students. Included in this edition are the following

- LCA visit to METAC and Portlaoise Prison
- MCS Intercultural Week
- GAA President visits MCS
- Student Achievements
- Politics & Society Brussels Trip
- Student Voice
- St Vincent de Paul
- Art Workshops
- Student Leaders
- Young SVP





# Student Activities

## Fifth Year Politics & Society Class in Belgium

The 5th year Politics and Society class completed their annual visit to Belgium this year. Despite the distractions of waffles, chocolates, pizza, and crepes, students managed to make it to the Parliament of the European Union in Brussels where they received an informative talk from Roisin who works as a translator in the EU. They learned about the role of the EU, their local representatives, what was involved with being a translator in the EU, followed by a visit to the hemicycle, the seat of the European Parliament. Students also made a visit to the interactive Parliamentarium where they learned about the history of the EU and how it functions. Within Brussels, students wandered around the Grand Place, visiting the Manneken Pis, Galeries Royales, and many chocolate shops along the way. The following day, the class made their way to Bruges where they could visit the local sites, sample some waffles, and take a boat along the canals.





# Student Acheivements

## GAA President visits Mountrath by Mr. Coughlan

Monday April 22nd was a proud day for the students and staff of Mountrath Community School as they welcomed GAA President Jarlath Burns to the school for a special visit. This visit was in recognition of the 'Gold Award' the schools TY GAA Future Leaders Programme received this year as a result of their excellent work.

To mark the visit, a series of events were planned on the day which was entitled 'MCS Future Leaders, Future Stars'. This was the name given to highlight the role the school plays along the pathway from 1st year right through to intercounty stars today. To illustrate this, MCS staff members and Laois hurlers Aaron Dunphy (Captain) and Bryan Bredin were joined by intercounty players and past pupils, Ryan Mullaney, Jer Quinlan (Hurling) and Niall Dunne (Football) along with the National League Trophies which both teams won already this year. Also in attendance on the day were Laois GAA Chairman PJ Kelly, Secretary Niall Handy along with the head of Laois Games Development, Shane Keegan. Former GAA President and local Trumera man Liam O'Neill was also welcomed.

To mark the day, this year's TY Future Leaders group hosted 2 tournaments for the 1st year students of the school - one in Ladies Football and the other in hurling. In what was glorious weather for football and hurling, every match was keenly contested and there were some brilliant pieces of skill on show. The respect shown by all players, coaches and officials was also outstanding on the day. The finalists on the day along with match officials lined up and got to greet the GAA President and Laois Chairman PJ Kelly akin to what might be seen in Croke Park. True to form, Mr Burns had a friendly word for all students - something they will surely remember.

The Ladies Football tournament was aptly won by the team named 'Laois' who were captained by Robyn Dooley who was presented with the trophy by Jarlath Burns.

It was also a poignant day as the 1st year hurling tournament winners were presented with the Adam Kirwan Memorial Trophy in memory of the late past pupil of MCS. Adam's parents, Lourda & Paul, sister Marie and Grandparents were there to present the trophy to winning captain of the 'Limerick' team, Leo Guilfoyle. Adam was remembered for his contribution to the school, his love of sport and hurling and a young man who made such a huge impact and always with a smile on his face.

The GAA President was invited to the stage 'as Gaeilge' by students Ruaidhri Kavanagh and Donnacha O'Neill, and in his address, Mr. Burns spoke about the warmth and positive atmosphere he felt throughout the school. He spoke about the beautiful facilities and grounds of the school and urged the students to appreciate how fortunate they are to attend a school with these facilities on hand. He spoke about the importance of remembering in the GAA and how heartened he was to see Adam Kirwan's memory being kept alive in the school and in the wider community. In relation to the Future Leaders Programme, he stated that the great event organised by the students today was evidence of the positive role that they can all play in their communities into the future.

Finally, Principal, Ms Kathryn O'Brien thanked all guests for attending and making the time and effort to support the day. She especially thanked Mr Burns and described the excitement and honour which greeted the news of his impending visit. She commended the TY Future Leader students for the way they have developed their leadership skills and urged them to continue to use these skills in school and in their own communities in months and years ahead.





# Student Voice & Activities

## **'Message for Sixth Years' by Tiernan Donovan, 6th year student**

*As graduation day looms assuredly above all Leaving Cert students, with orals, practicals, and projects now behind us, the time to "lock in" and lead an academic comeback is drawing to a close. However, as the saying goes — It is never too late. For many attempting to balance late assignments, practice, and revision, it must feel impossible to salvage what you have ahead of the most important exams of your life. But, it is important to consider that you are not facing these trials alone. Every single Sixth Year is dwelling over the same notions in their head. With pressure comes stress, anxiety, and doubt. It can feel as if everything is working against you, but there is always a silver lining. Not only are there a plethora of resources, in class, online, and out of school, available to bring out the very best in you, but one, simple ingredient, that has never failed to make the considerable amount of work undertaken over the past two years all worthwhile — Hope. Hope makes a world of difference in transforming our attitudes towards just about anything in life. The hope that we will persevere, overcome, and succeed. It is that same hope that we must apply to our Leaving Cert. We will get through this. We will exceed our expectations. We will find a light at the end of that tunnel. When you're able to visualise what comes after the Leaving Cert, whether you're thinking in terms of the summer break, future studies, or a career of your own, you will feel a sense of relief, certainty, and optimism that will guide you towards the finish line. It doesn't matter if you're taking a gap year, working part- or full-time, pursuing an apprenticeship, considering a PLC, or heading straight to university. Your future is just around the corner.*

## **Student Leadership by Hollie Cooper**

Hello, my name is Hollie Cooper and this year I was lucky enough to be elected as the representative officer body for the Laois-Offaly area as part of the Irish Secondary schools union (ISSU). In October 2023 I was presented with the opportunity to run for election. I was very hesitant at first but I decided to take a chance. When they called the result I couldn't believe it. I was so excited to have been chosen over lots of other amazing candidates and to be chosen by hundreds of students to represent them.

So far I have faced many challenges and have made many mistakes but without having difficulties I wouldn't have been able to learn new things and grow as a person. Being able to acknowledge your mistakes and struggles helps us all as people to be able to develop and to have confidence in not just what you do but in you as a person. By having confidence and believing in your own abilities, leads to success. It gives you courage, resilience, motivation, and a belief in your own ability to succeed. My biggest achievement in this role so far is the project for the Laois-Offaly Area.

Working on This project is very important to me as it raises awareness around mental health which I believe is so important. Through working on this project I have seen so much more awareness around mental health and I believe it has made a positive impact on secondary school students. My advice for anyone who has an opportunity to take on any sort of role is to go for it. It is so important to be able to show leadership and lead by example. I know It can be overwhelming at first but you can do it, you just have to believe in yourself. Being a leader gives you an opportunity to be a mentor and to inspire others. As Dolly Parton once said "If your actions create a legacy that inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, then, you are an excellent leader."





# Student Achievements

## SciFest 2024



On Thursday 25th April in TUS Thurles. Miriam, David and Seana won the overall runner up trophy for their project.



## The Shona Project

We at Shona strive to inspire young girls to be the strong independent women, they can grow up to be. The three Mountrath Community Schools Jambos are Kate Larkin, Olivia Parlon and Katie Dowling. The girls are new to the Shona project but have already put up a Shona notice board outside the canteen and attended the yearly Shona Summit in Dublin, where they met with other Jambos and were given lots of ideas for future projects. The girls already have plenty of ideas for promoting The Shona Project for the next school year.





# Student Achievements

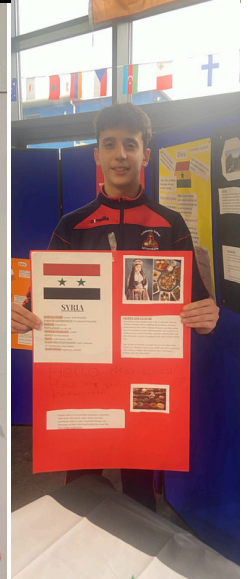
## MCS Intercultural Week

To celebrate Intercultural week and the twenty different nationalities here at MCS, the following events took place over the week. Each morning, students were introduced to a greeting in a different language to the school. Teachers and students were asked to use and encourage others to use that greeting throughout the day please.

A display of flags representing the heritage of many of our students were on display around the school while music from the various cultures played in the canteen over the week.

On Thursday, MCS Global Village was set up in the canteen, showing information, food and chat from the various countries represented in our school. A Global Quiz was available to all students to partake in and 25 Winners of the Global Quiz will take part in an African Drumming Workshop from 3 to 4.

Bolaji Adeyanju came to talk to TYs and 2nd years in classes about his experiences settling in Ireland and offer advice to all. A great week was had by all students and thank you so much to everyone who participated.





# Student Voice

## The Global Village by Abbie Khumalo (1st year)

For Intercultural Day I brought in traditional fashion jewellery and displayed it in the canteen. A few questions that people had were, where would you wear the jewellery? You would wear this jewellery pretty much anywhere and sometimes in the rural parts of South Africa, but you could really wear the jewellery anywhere, another question that people had was, how much was the jewellery, unfortunately I'm not too sure how much they cost, but if I had to guess I would say in between 80-100 rand because it's for royalty. There's different types of beading in my culture, the beading that I displayed was formal but you could also wear it pretty much anywhere. However, if you had a spiritual calling you would be given a certain type of beading called "ubuhlalu" which typically is prayed for before being given to the person with a calling. These beads will belong only to the person with the spiritual calling and they can't be given to anyone else. If I had a calling and was given the beads not even my mother would be allowed to take the beads from me because they were a prayer given specifically to me. I loved showing and explaining my culture to everyone because of how interested they were in learning about the culture. I hope I display again and represent South Africa the next time we have an intercultural day at the school so that I potentially show even more jewellery or even some food. This was an overall amazing experience for me and I enjoyed it very much.



## LCA 5 & 6 Prison visit by Leighlon Marum

Our teacher Ms Donnelly organised for all of the Leaving Certificate Applied students to visit Midlands Prison in Portlaoise. When we arrived we were met by Jimmy Grehan a prison officer from Mountrath who kindly brought us on a tour. The whole group were impressed with his talk and learnt a lot from what he said about the prison system in Ireland. He explained the different types of convictions and sentences people get for different crimes. We got a full run down of the different courts we have in Ireland. A lot of us, including the teachers, were shocked to learn the prison is nothing like what we see on films. We got to experience what it's like when a prisoner is first brought into a prison. I found it very interesting to visit some of the parts of the prison that we were allowed into and experience what inmates do on a daily basis. They are given opportunities to do some of the subjects we do in school like woodwork and PE. We also got a talk from another prison officer on what we needed to do to become prison officers in the future for anyone looking to go into the career. All in all it was a very enjoyable trip. Thanks to Claire, Jimmy and Ms Donnelly.



## METAC Visit & JS Ryan Freight

Our recent LCA trip to Metac training centre in Mountrath and JS Ryan Freight.

METAC Training is the largest energy training and assessment centre in Ireland and trains up to 3,500 people every year.





# Student Voice

## Young St. Vincent de Paul by Caoimhe Fitzpatrick.

The Young SVP group are currently running a two-week creative workshop for third and fourth class pupils in Scoil Bhríde NS in Mountrath as part of our befriending project. This workshop was created to honour the abilities of each of our group representatives in addition to giving primary school students a learning opportunity through creative outlets. The session is centered around creative expression through arts and crafts, paired reading and music. We are thoroughly enjoying working with the third and fourth class girls!

On Tuesday 23rd April we attended The Young SVP South East Youth Day held in SETU arena, Waterford. We decorated a stand with posters, lights and Polaroid photos of other SVP groups that attended the event. In the afternoon, we spoke about our experience as Young SVP representatives and learned about the different ideas other schools had to offer. We all had a fantastic day!



## Le Chéile Schools Gathering in Knock

There was a gathering of young people from Le Cheile schools from all over the country in Knock during April. They gathered to hear various speakers chatting about addictions, Spirituality and they also celebrated mass with each other.





# Student Acheivements

Congrats to 1st year student Evan Burke who recently won a Bronze medal in the Leinster Athletics Indoor Championships 60 m sprint event. Evan also finished an excellent 9th in the country in his age group. He also recently represented MCS in the South Leinster Competitions. Well done Evan.



## An Ghig Mhór by Ruairi Phelan 6th year

'Coolboy' were selected to take part in a show about Irish musicians which documents the work and struggles that come along with hosting a gig. The show will be televised by RTÉ in Autumn. We were ecstatic with the response we got to our gig on the 26th of April. We had an incredible time filming and performing and we believe the audience did as well. It was a great experience and we appreciated every second of it.



## Texaco Art Competition 2024

Beth Phelan (1st year), from Paint Pots Art Group, Ballyfin, won second prize for her work entitled 'The Farmhouse'.

Her artwork is described by Final Adjudicator, Gary Granville, Professor Emeritus of Education at the National College of Art and Design as "art through which the artist has captured a whole cultural experience in her image of an old farmhouse with free range poultry wandering about".





# Art Department - BLAST



As part of our BLAST - Artist in Residence we are working with a Laois based artist Evgeny Chuatyy. He is involved in a wide range of work, working as a sculptor, architect, and furniture designer. His work is wide-ranging. Born in Chisinau, Moldova, his roots are in traditional, indigenous, idiomatic artisan craft. He greatly enjoys working with different materials. Evgeny is working with Ms. McGrath and a dedicated and enthusiastic group of 5th year art students. Their work with Evgeny is based in their visual art studies of Romanesque and Gothic architecture. They are working with wire and willow to create lanterns and gothic style windows inspired by gothic stained glass. They have taken their work out of the school by visiting the local church in Mountrath to do measurements and see how proportions are such an integral part of gothic architecture. They will be working on models now based on their measurements as well as painting their stained glass. The 5th years are really enjoying this hands on experience of working with an artist. It's an invaluable part of their art education.



# MCS Sports

Keep up-to-date on all sporting events through our Social Media



## MCS Football

First years played Scoil Bhríde, Carnew this month in the First Year Football Shield Semi-Final.

Unfortunately after a hard tough game MCS went down by five points to an accurate Carnew side. We had some notable moments at times with John Fitzpatrick leading from the front and Paddy Ryan defending tirelessly at the back. Overall MCS did very well but that brings this season to an end.



## MCS Hurling

The second year hurling team recently played Banagher in a North Leinster semi final and ran out convincing winners on a score line of 3-21 to 3-6. They then qualified for a North Leinster final where they came up against a strong Mullingar CBS team and lost out narrowly 2-8 to 2-10.



Check out @mountrathcs on Instagram, Facebook & Twitter



# Mountrath Community School Alumni Association

We have recently set up a new association in the school and we are calling on all past pupils to sign up by emailing [alumni@mountrathcs.ie](mailto:alumni@mountrathcs.ie) or by filling out the form which is linked below. The school has a strong tradition of academic excellence and sporting accolades and are interested in reconnecting with all of their past pupils since the school opened in 2009.

If you have older brothers and sisters, cousins, or neighbours please let them know about his great new project that we are starting.

LINK: [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1L2\\_hdrRdr1Ju72OlZcWubvUrOVSB-l8\\_uiNbi5RhyU/edit](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1L2_hdrRdr1Ju72OlZcWubvUrOVSB-l8_uiNbi5RhyU/edit)

## MOUNTRATH COMMUNITY SCHOOL



## MCS Alumni Association

Mountrath Community School is calling all past pupils to get involved in the MCS Alumni Association



Would you like to...

Reconnect with old school friends?

Be part of a supportive network?

Attend social events with former classmates?

Inspire current students in their career choices?

We would love to hear from you, if you are interested in becoming a member, please contact Kay O'Shea at [alumni@mountrathcs.ie](mailto:alumni@mountrathcs.ie)

Check out @mountrathcs on Instagram, Facebook & Twitter



# EVENING STUDY

1. Open to **all** year groups!
2. Pay per day - **€3** only
3. Family offer **2nd child** €25/year

- 💰 **Flexible Payment Options** for students attending on some days - **just €3 per day.**
- Family Offer - Families with 2 students pay just **€25 for a second student.**
- 📖 Time and quiet space for **focused study** and homework completion.
- ☕ **Tea/coffee/Hot chocolate + Toast** provided.
- ☀️ Structured Environment: Encourage **discipline** and **routine** in your students **study habits.**
- 👤 **Qualified Supervision:** Our experienced staff ensures a **productive** and **safe** study environment.

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