



URSULINE
SECONDARY SCHOOL

Christmas Newsletter

2023



Malcolm Doolin Memorial Award & Remembrance Day Services, London, 2023

In October, Fifth Year's Eimear McCormack, Gillian Aherne and Muireann Meade, winners of the 2023 Malcolm Doolin Memorial Award, were presented with their certificates by Gerry White from the Western Front Association. This UK based competition aims to promote interest in the First World War among primary and secondary school students. Their winning project was a 62-page submission on the effects of the Great War on the people of Tipperary and they shared first place with Loreto Balbriggan. Gerry, a retired Irish serviceman, said he was proud that two Irish schools had won the award jointly this year and reminded the assembled teachers and students present that the reason for studying the devastating effects of war was to try and strive for peace in the present day. Eimear, Gillian and Muireann completed their work in TY and over the summer months with guidance and encouragement from the TY History Coordinator, Ms Aoife Whelan. As part of their prize they travelled to London in November to take part in Remembrance services such as the ceremony for the arrival of the unknown warrior in Victoria Station and placing poppies and crosses at the Royal Irish and Leinster Regiment memorials at Westminster Abbey. Then on the Saturday they were the first Irish students to be invited to lay a wreath at the Cenotaph, in honour of Irish soldiers who fought and died in World War One. Congratulations to them and their teacher on achieving such a prestigious history award and representing the school with pride at the Remembrance services in London.



Winners of the 2023 Malcolm Doolin Award Eimear McCormack, Muireann Meade and Gillian Aherne, with their teacher Ms. Aoife Whelan

The Little Mermaid

The Sr Ursula Memorial Hall was awash with colour and home to a host of exotic sea characters for four nights in October with the staging of the annual musical, *The Little Mermaid*. It was a sell-out, knock-out show, which marked the directorial debut of Ms Erica Flanagan. In conjunction with Musical Director, Ms Joan Butler, they regaled audiences with an enchanting version of a much loved children's story. The cast of two-hundred and fifty talented students put on a dazzling spectacle. Such an endeavour could not happen or succeed without all the behind the scenes people who help each year to pull the school show together. The main characters were played by Molly Burgess, Ariel; Sarah Grace-Ginty, Prince Eric; Hannah Murphy, King Triton; Sheena Wright, Sebastian; Emma Moran, Ursula, Flounder, Isabelle O'Connor; Grimsby, Cáit Browne; Scuttle, Rosa Ryan; Flotsam, Aoibhín Ræ; Jetsam, Katherine Allen; Chef Louis, Christina Whelan; Windward, Emer Commins and Leeward, Tara Rae. The mersisters were Bibi Russel, Luanne Everard, Katelyn Barry, Grace Mahon, Chloe Cahill and Maura Moran while Fiona Barry, Caitlín Tierney, Aisling Stanley and Aoife Crosbie were the maids. Finally, thanks to all the parents and guardians who supported their students and the school as well as the numerous businesses and private individuals that supported *The Little Mermaid*.



Left, Sheena Wright as Sebastian faces the wrath of the powerful King Triton, Hannah Murphy.



Sarah Grace Ginty (Prince Eric), Molly Burgess (Ariel) and Rosa Ryan (Scuttle) in *The Little Mermaid*



Ursuline Sustainable Designer storms Aruba Fashion Week

Ursuline Fifth Year student and fashion designer, Genevieve Keane, is taking the world by storm with her sustainable, head turning styles. She was invited to make a bespoke collection of green fashion pieces to showcase at Aruba Fashion Week 2023. This amazing opportunity came about by chance when her designs caught the eye of a manager with the French Fashion House, Louis Vuitton. She travelled to Aruba in the Caribbean over the midterm break and her original outfits were very well received at this premier, sustainable fashion exhibition. Genevieve's designs were inspired by Greek mythology. One of her dresses, made from blue plastic materials found on Aruban shores was dedicated to the goddess of the sea, Amphitrite. This young woman is an outstanding ambassador for the Ursuline and the Junk Kouture Competition. She won the 2022 International Junk Kouture Cultural Couture award in Abu Dhabi, modelling her original design, Acantha, based on St Patrick and the coming of Christianity to Ireland. She led the creative performance section of this year's St Patrick's Day parade in Dublin along with the patron saint himself. It has been a whirlwind year for this talented designer who is still in school but if the past twelve months is anything to go by there is a bright future in fashion ahead for the Ursuline's Genevieve Keane.



Fifth Year, Genevieve Keane at Aruba Fashion Week in November





The Liturgical Year



Sixth Year School Councillor, Sarah Bell, at the Opening of the Year Mass, presents a primary school Ursuline student with a commemorative poster of the 2023/24 shared theme for the year, *Kindness is at the Heart of our School Community*

Opening of the Year Mass

The Opening of the Year Mass, on Thursday, 21 September, was a very special one this year as it was celebrated by all Ursuline primary and post-primary schools together. While most tuned in online, Ursuline Thurles had the very special honour of hosting and live-broadcasting this unique gathering of sisters, representative students, and teachers from schools in Dublin, Cork, Waterford and Sligo the entirety of our own school community, in the Cathedral of the Assumption. The mass centered around the theme *Kindness is at the Heart of our School Community* and is shared this academic year by all Ursuline schools in the country. The mass included readers from all the schools present, with other students who travelled to Thurles being involved in the opening procession. Sr June Fennelly, Chairperson of the Board of Management and Education Director of the Irish Ursulines, welcomed the more than 4000 people watching and present in the Cathedral. She encouraged each and every one to build communities of kindness in the spirit and vision of founder St Angela Merici. The mass was celebrated by School Chaplain, Fr Jim Purcell, with music provided by Senior Orchestra, Chamber Choir, Cecelian Choir, soloists and traditional musicians to enhance the liturgical celebration. At the end a representative from each school was presented with a commemorative framed poster by members of the School Council, which was commissioned by UCT specially for the occasion and created by local graphic design firm, Designedly. The recessional hymn was a lovely collaboration between the Secondary School's

Cecelian Choir and the Sixth Class Choir from Scoil Angela Primary School, joining voices together for the uplifting *Our God Reigns*.

November Prayer Service

On Wednesday, 22 November the whole school gathered in the Sr Ursula Memorial Hall to pray for deceased family members and friends. *I Still Burn Bright* was chosen to illuminate the Christian belief that those we love, live on after death, a promise that fills the faithful with hope. Students wrote the names of those they wanted to pray for, especially, in November on cardboard candle cutouts. These were then brought to the altar by two students from each year group while a third lit a candle on behalf of their peers. The six candles, in honour of the dead and those they have left behind, represented grief, courage, memories, love, hope and faith. Junior Orchestra and Cecelian Choir enriched the remembrance service with psalms, songs and instrumentals with many thanks to soloists Hannah Murphy, Sheena Wright, Mairéad O'Brien and Thérèse Taaffe.



Susan McCormack lighting the candle on behalf of all Third Years at the November Prayer Service

Christmas Mass of the Gifts

The Ursuline Christmas Mass of the Gifts will take place in the Cathedral of the Assumption on Wednesday, 20 December at 2pm. All are welcome to celebrate this festive tradition which will feature First Year students performing a liturgical movement to *Silent Night* and all the gorgeous Christmas hymns that focus the minds and the hearts on the birth of the baby Jesus.

Music

Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann

Fifth Year student Muireann Meade won two All-Ireland titles at the 2023 Fleadh Cheoil in August. She wowed judges in both the fast tunes and slow airs sections of the Uilleann Pipes Competition.



Fifth Year Muireann Meade who won two All Ireland titles at Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann this year

Trad Groups

The Ursuline has many accomplished trad musicians and Irish dancers and Open Night was a chance for them to showcase their talents under the direction of Ms Barry. Parents and their daughters were greeted with a lively medley of Irish tunes as they came through the main entrance and it was a very warm welcome indeed. They continue to meet throughout the year for sessiúns and will perform for Seachtain na Gaeilge. Meanwhile the TY Trad group are practising in preparation for a Gael Linn music competition, Clár Raidió. Their repertoire of foot tapping tunes featuring all the usual traditional instruments as well sean nós singing will be recorded and submitted in late February.



Holly Dalton, First Year, Saoirse Coen and Amy Kelly, Second Year, members of the Ursuline Trad Group who played for Open Evening

Orchestra

Senior Orchestra started their performance year by playing the overture of *The Little Mermaid* every night of the show. They are busily preparing for the Christmas season with the upcoming Carol Service and Mass of the Gifts. They are rehearsing much loved Christmas classics like *Walking in the Air* and *Oh Holy Night* which are staples of the Carol Service each year. Junior Orchestra played *I Giorni* for the November Prayer Service, a breathtakingly beautiful piece by Italian composer Ludovico Einaudi. Meeting in the Band Room of the Music Academy every Monday the Junior musicians are also learning *Alla Hornpipe* from Handel's *Water Music* and the *Carol of the Bells*.



Members of the Ursuline Senior Orchestra at the Opening of the Year Mass celebrated in the Cathedral of the Assumption, Thurles on Thursday, 21 September

Choir

Every liturgical celebration that takes place throughout the year is made more special by the gorgeous lilt provided by the two school choirs – Cecelian and Chamber. Chamber Choir are currently honing their Christmas programme and will be singing the technically intricate but resounding *This Little Babe* by Benjamin Britten from a Ceremony of Carols. Cecelian Choir sang *Run* by Snow Patrol for November with its very fitting chorus of 'light up light up.....even if you cannot hear my voice I'll be right beside you dear,' in keeping with the theme for November, *I Still Burn Bright*. The Choir are also learning the pop classic *Baby One More Time*, the tune that launched the career of Britney Spears, which the choir will perform in competition later on in 2024.





Dr Aisling Butler Memorial Bursary, 2023

Megan Boland was this year's recipient of the Dr Aisling Butler Memorial Bursary. Megan, who is in her first term of Medicine in Trinity College Dublin thanked the Butler's for their generosity. She told them that as a First Year student she was inspired to aim for a career in Medicine after hearing them speak about Aisling's dedication to and passion for helping others through her chosen profession. Evelyn said that she and John are grateful that so much good has been done in their daughter's memory by the many young women of the Ursuline who, since the inauguration of the bursary, have followed Aisling's example of excellence.



The 2023 recipient of the Dr Aisling Butler Memorial Bursary, Ursuline student Megan Boland. Megan is pictured here with her parents Aoife and Barry and Dr Aisling's parents, John and Evelyn Butler.

Leaving Cert Class of 2023

Congratulations to all our students who received their results in August. Once again they surpassed all our expectations and should be so proud of their achievements. We wish these past pupils the very best on the next stage of their journey.

Points	2023 National Average	2023 Ursuline
600 +	4.8 %	9 %
500+	24.4 %	48 %
400 +	51.8 %	81 %

Scholarships

Congratulations to past pupil Elizabeth O'Meara, who received an All-Ireland Scholarship at a ceremony in University Concert Hall, Limerick. Elizabeth is studying Human Health & Disease in Trinity. Caoimhe Dooley was awarded an Academic Scholarship from UCG in November. Caoimhe is currently studying physics in Galway



All Ireland Scholarship recipient, Elizabeth O'Meara, Class of 2022



UCG Academic Scholarship recipient Caoimhe Dooley, Class of 2022



Megan Boland and her dad Barry receiving her LC results from Ms Gleeson - a maximum 7HIs and 625 points

Sixth Year Geography Trip

It's a long, long way from Clare to here, which is why it is better to go for two days! And two glorious days in the banner is what our Sixth Year Geography students enjoyed. They hightailed it out of the school on Thursday, 7 September to complete their compulsory Field Work Study, investigating the impact of geomorphic processes on the formation of the landscape at Cregg beach. This study is an essential component of their Leaving Cert exam, worth 20% of their overall grade. But just because it's compulsory doesn't mean it can't be enjoyable and so as well as checking out coastal defences in Lahinch, the geographical features of Ailwee Caves and the spectacular Cliffs of Moher from a boat on the Wild Atlantic the students enjoyed ice-cream, swimming and a bit of sunbathing too.



Sixth Year Geography students, pictured here with their teacher Ms O'Sullivan, enjoying the good weather while completing their LC Field Study Report

Sixth Year Art Trip

The two Leaving Cert Art classes enjoyed a day of art appreciation in Kilkenny on Wednesday, 6 September in the company of their teacher's Ms Delahunt and Ms Hackett. They went to the Butler Gallery first where they saw the permanent exhibition that included a wide variety of mediums such as installation, sculpture, painting, print and photography. In the afternoon they visited the Irish Design and Craft Centre, meeting with working artists and crafts people, seeing their workshops and learning about their techniques.



Sixth Year Art students perusing the temporary art exhibition on sport on display at the Butler Gallery in Kilkenny on 6 September.

Sixth Year History Trip

Georgian Dublin, tenement life and the graves of the key figures in twentieth century Irish History were the sights and stories that awaited the Sixth Year History students when they visited Dublin on Thursday, 5 October. The day started in 14 Henrietta Street, a Georgian house that has been preserved as a museum. Their guide, Justine presented the two chequered narratives of the house. The first as a residence to the super wealthy Molesworths in the seventeenth century and the second as a home to the poor of Dublin, housing over 100 people within its walls during the eighteenth century. Then it was onto Glasnevin Cemetery in the afternoon. Here they saw the graves and learned more about the key personalities on their Irish History syllabus paying visits to Charles Stewart Parnell, Arthur Griffith, Éamon de Valera, Maud Gonne and Michael Collins among many others. It was a very enjoyable day of being immersed in the past.



Sixth Year History students, with their teacher Ms Keating, at Glasnevin Cemetery in October posing in front of the canopy of Yew trees made famous by an Ariana Grande Instagram post.





Junior Cycle Results, October

Junior Cycle results arrived on Wednesday, 18 October amid a plethora of anticipation, excitement and a wee bit of trepidation before opening the envelope. The JC class of '23 all did brilliantly with their teachers and parents being so proud of their results and they should be proud of themselves too.



Ursuline students Mya Grace and Natasha Cahalan on Junior Cycle results day

Mission Day

In the year of Barbie the Sixth Years decided to bring some of the pink lady's glamour and fun to the Ursuline for Mission Day on Tuesday, 3 October. Along with their Year Head, Ms Carroll, they organised a day of Barbie fuelled activities to entertain the school. There was a lot of enjoyment on offer including Just Dance, Bingo Loco, a haunted house, a bouncy castle and face painting to name but a few. As well as having a great day the students raised over €5,500 for the Ursuline Missions in Kenya, vital money needed to help young women in a developing country avail of education and training opportunities.



Fiona Barry and Amy O'Brien on Junior Cycle results day



Naoise Quinlivan, Abbie Meagher and Ruth Schofield manning the Bouncy Castle on Mission Day



Katie O'Mahoney and Sarah Gleeson acting as security for Ken's Country Club on the Barbie Themed Mission Day

Certified Irish Angus Beef Schools' Competition

The Certified Irish Angus Beef team of Gráinne Callanan, Evie Smyth, Rebekah Smith and Kaitlyn Ryan, 2022/2023 finalists brought their now fully grown Angus calves to ABP, Cahir in November. They also got the opportunity to see how beef production works at the final stage, before it hits the supermarket shelves, as a packaged product. Donning hard hats, wellies and factory attire they enjoyed a tour of the facilities, spoke to many of the key personnel and were delighted at the end of it all to be picking up a cheque for their prize winning cattle. The four girls and Ms Hogan finished

their day out in ABP with delicious 'Angus' burgers, getting to sample some of the quality assured beef available to consumers in Ireland and abroad from this home reared multi million-euro industry.

Congratulations to the two TY teams who are through to the next round of the 2024 Certified Irish Angus Beef competition. Emily Creagh, Audrey McNamara, Amber Bannon and Ellen Seymour are undertaking a study of controls within the Beef Industry to mitigate against food fraud, adulteration and promote authenticity. The team consisting of Ellen Ryan, Saoirse Ryan, Lilly Kavanagh and Louise McGrath hope, through their study of sexed semen, to provide a solution to reducing live calf exports. Both teams will continue their research over the coming months with an aim to presenting their findings and compiling recommendations to a panel of judges from the Beef Industry in Fermoy in February.



Certified Irish Angus Beef teams who recently qualified to go through to the presentation/interview stage of the competition in February. (L-R) Lilly Kavanagh, Louise McGrath, Ellen Ryan, Saoirse Ryan, Emily Creagh, Audrey McNamara, Amber Bannon, Ellen Seymour



Certified Irish Angus Beef Finalists 2022/23 and Ms Hogan at ABP, Cahir. (L-R): Rebekah Smith, Kaitlyn Ryan, Gráinne Callanan, Evie Smyth and Ms Olivia Hogan

College and Careers Fair

On November 12, the school hosted its inaugural Careers and Colleges Fair. The day featured dynamic presentations by four accomplished women in diverse careers: Caroline Nesbitt, a graphic design firm managing director; Edwina McGrath, who balances a successful dairy farm and beauty business; Laura Douglas, a clinical psychologist; and Maire Kirwan, a financial advisor. They shared insights into their career paths, college studies, and professional journeys. In the afternoon the Sr Ursula Memorial Hall buzzed with the activity as representatives from fourteen higher and further education institutes. Engaged TYs, Fifth, and Sixth Year Students learned about courses, access routes, and opportunities for further study, training, and upskilling.

Sixth years have also had talks from other past pupils, with Mallorie Ronan speaking to Sixth years about her career as the Marketing and Sponsorship Executive with the IRFU.

While Nicole Patan, Class of 2017, studied engineering in UCD and spoke to the Sixth Years, interested in engineering, giving them an insight into what the course entails and the opportunities available to graduates.



Ursuline Sixth Year students Aoiife Bourke and Rachel Phelan with guest speakers at the Ursuline Careers Day on Tuesday, 14 November. Those who spoke about their professions were Graphic Design MD of Designedly Caroline Nesbitt, Edwina McGrath, Dairy Farmer and Beauty Entrepreneur, Laura Douglas, Clinical Psychologist with Jigsaw and Marie Kirwan, Financial Advisor with Zurich.



Past pupil Mallorie Ronan, the IRFU's Marketing & Sponsorship Executive with Ms Gleeson following Mallorie's address to Sixth Year students





Geography Week

For those who love all things geographical and relish the challenge of a tricky Geography conundrum there was plenty to keep them occupied during Geography Week which took place from Monday, 20 November to Friday, 24. The week began with a lunchtime Geography bake off and other activities included a scavenger hunt, last letter Olympics, postcard from the future, stop the Geography bus and finally a photo competition where students submitted a Geography inspired, captioned pic. The whole thing was great fun and was enthusiastically supported. Thanks to the Geography Department for their ingenious earth-related activities.



Ava Maher and Rosa Ryan with their 'This looks schist but tastes gneiss' entry for the Great Geography Bake Off at the start of Geography week.



Second Year CSPE class, 2F, had a bake sale on Monday, 20 November in aid of the Dillon Quirke Foundation and the TY's who will visit Ursuline Schools in Kenya next year

First Year, Day One

First Years began secondary school in the Ursuline on Friday, 25 August and what a whirlwind day it was for them. They met Ms Gleeson, Ms Tuohy, Mr Kirby and Year Head Ms Stakelum first thing in the morning before being assigned to their base classes and meeting their class tutors. There was a tour of the school, getting their journals and lockers, finding out about extra-curricular activities which took them up to lunchtime. In the afternoon the PE teachers whisked them out to the Astroturf for games designed to break the ice, promote bonding and encourage teamwork. The first day was topped off nicely with an ice-cream.



First Years enjoyed ice-breaker games on the Astroturf on their first day in the Ursuline.

First Year Trip to Templemore Park

A few weeks after settling into the Ursuline there was a chance for First Years to escape lessons for a few hours with a walk and picnic in Templemore Park. There was a treat for everyone, organised by Ms Stakelum, an opportunity to get fresh air, meet others in their year group and play in the park. It was relaxed and fun with everyone enjoying the nice day out.



First Years had a great day out picnicking in Templemore Park in September.

International Students

We're excited to have students from other countries join us for a year to learn English. It's a great chance for them to improve their language skills, and for us to learn about different cultures. They are part of our school life, making friends and connecting with teachers. This helps us all appreciate the variety of cultures in our school and makes our community more welcoming.

Ласкаво просимо – Laskavo prosymo

This September, the Ursuline also welcomed a number of new Ukrainian students to our school, to join those who arrived last year. Since their arrival, the girls have spent their time working on their English, adapting to life in Thurles and becoming part of our school community. For those in TY, a particular highlight was taking part in our musical, *The Little Mermaid*.



Some of our International & Ukrainian students this year.

Open Evening

Open Evening gives all students, across the spectrum of years, the opportunity to show off the school to those thinking of choosing UCT for their post primary education. Parents and their Fifth and Sixth class daughters were warmly welcomed and given a tour of the facilities by Second Years. There was plenty to see, not only in specialist rooms, but also the new gym, the new tennis courts, as well as the other amazing facilities like the Sports Hall and Astroturf pitches. There was music, food, games and plenty of people, both staff and students, around to answer questions and explain what life is like in secondary school. The place was buzzing with positive energy and pride and it is a wonderful thing to see so many young people speak with passion about extra-curricular activities and subjects and what they enjoy about attending the Ursuline. They are literally the life and soul of the place.



Open Night in the History Room with Aysha, Caitlin, Stella, Katelyn, Toni and Teagan, from Third Year, 3B, who kept visitors entertained with their funny, horrible histories style re-enactments.





Public Speaking and Debating

The first term is always a busy one on the school's Public Speaking and Debating circuit. The Ursuline was entered into quite a few competitions, including Soroptimist, Soapbox Europe Direct, Articulation, Concern Debating, Gael Linn Debating and then there was the First and Second Year in-house debating contests organised by Ms Quinn at lunchtimes and after school.

Europe Direct Soapbox

On Tuesday, 21 November Ursuline Thurles was very well represented at the Europe Direct Soapbox Competition held in Portlaoise Library. TYs Lily Murphy, Holly Kiely, Chloe Fogarty, Aoife Coyle, Siobhán Dowd, Katherine Allen, Emer Commins, Marie Taaffe, Cáit Browne and Fifth Years Rosa Ryan and Rosie Bradish spoke for three minutes on the same topic; 'There's no such thing as a vote that doesn't matter'. Congratulations to Rosa Ryan who advanced to the Soapbox All-Ireland Final and subsequently won it!



Soapbox Europe Direct Public Speakers at the Regional Final in Portlaoise. (L-R); Holly Kiely, Rosie Bradish, Marie Taaffe, Lily Murphy, Aoife Coyle, Siobhán Dowd, Rosa Ryan, Cáit Browne, Emer Commins, Chloe Fogarty and Katherine Allen.



Rosa Ryan after winning the national title in the Europe Direct Soapbox

Soroptimist

The Soroptimist competitors Rosa Ryan, Hannah Murphy, Rosie Bradish, Fifth Year and Maura Moran, TY spoke on a variety of topics including the planet and the environment, the empowerment of women and human rights. They travelled to Lawlor's Hotel in Dungarvan on Tuesday, 31 November to deliver their speeches in front of the judges. Soroptimist is an international public speaking forum that encourages young women to fully develop their personal and professional capabilities. Congratulations to Rosa Ryan who beat off intense competition to go through to the Regional Final.

Concern Debating

The Concern Debating team navigated challenging topics in the first term, triumphing in their initial debate against St Anne's of Killaloe on the motion 'Africa will regret its reliance on China.' Building on this success, they faced Cork's North Monastery Co-Education School on November 22, arguing that 'Fossil fuels must be used in African nations to lift their people out of poverty.' Following a recent victory over Our Lady's Templemore, the team now progress to the next stage. Well done to Ms. Downey and the dedicated Concern team—captain Jane Collins, Nora Kilrane, Fiona Maher, Aisling Flynn, Kate Fitzgerald, and Clodagh Twomey.

Gael Linn Debating

The Irish debating team of Trudy Wilson, Genevieve Ní Bhréacháin and Lily Duffy had a successful first outing in the Gael Linn competition, winning against Carlow ETB and Heywood Community College in their opener. The three Ursuline girls proposed the motion 'TV stars are rubbish' or 'Seafóid atá sa teilifís realtachta, ás Gaeilge. The next round will take place after Christmas.



Ms Barry with the Junior Gael Linn debaters (L-R): Lily Duffy, Genevieve Ní Bhréacháin and Trudy Wilson

First & Second Year Debating

Ms Quinn has organised in-school debating competitions for First and Second Years between October and Christmas. These lively, fun events were open to all with an inquiring mind and a willingness to learn the art of public, respectful discourse.

Poetry Aloud

Congratulations to TY student Cáit Browne who advanced to the National Final of the Poetry Aloud Competition. Cáit did a fantastic recital of *Picking Figs* by Dublin based poet Ann Tannam, impressing the judges with her interpretation and passion.



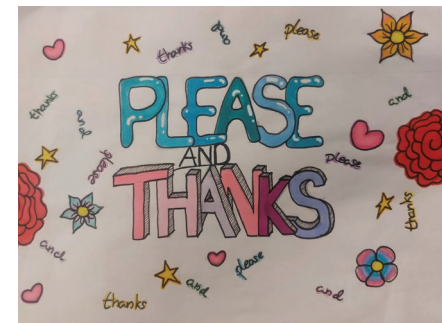
Poetry Aloud National Finalist, Cáit Browne, TY.

School Council

The School Council is made up of representatives from every class group, giving all students the opportunity to voice their issues and concerns, as well as promoting initiatives throughout the school year. They have been very busy since returning in August! The theme for this school year, which will be promoted by the Council is *Kindness is at the Heart of our School Community*. They kicked off the year with a coffee morning to welcome all newly elected members. Many great ideas were generated and from this the girls set about planning the months ahead. To promote the school theme of kindness a poster competition was organised for all Junior classes. The many entries can be seen along the walls of our corridors, reminding everyone of the importance of being kind. Another initiative that they have embarked on is a campaign to highlight the issue of period poverty among young girls. In order to give this practical support, the Council have made contact

with outside businesses, to help provide free sanitary products. The plan is for these to be easily accessible to all students throughout the school. The Sixth Year Councillors, as part of Big Sis Little Sis, helped the First Years to organise Christmas shoe boxes for Team Hope. This drive was done in collaboration with the Charities Committee.

The Fifth Year School Councillors have organised some great Christmas games to spread cheer and festive spirit along with organising Christmas cards for all, to be sent internally through the Christmas post-box. There will be a special card, with a goodwill message for everyone, written by someone in the school. As usual the naughty Elf will be hanging around the place during December, sending cryptic messages as to his whereabouts through Eileen in the Office. A special Christmas video is also apparently in the early stages of production, so watch this space. Finally, as is Ursuline tradition, the first term will end with UCT X-Factor, showcasing the talents of students and some staff members too. Lots to look forward to in the weeks ahead.



School Council 'Kindness is at the Heart of our School Community' poster competition entries



Student Council Christmas Postbox





Charities Committee

The Ursuline Charities Committee have been busy working on a couple of different fund raising initiatives since the school year began. They operated a shop each night of the school musical. *The Little Mermaid*, selling bottled water and chocolate during the intervals. This was a great success, raising €850 over the six performances, vital funds for the Ursuline schools in Kenya. They also enthusiastically supported the Sixth Year led Mission Day which was collecting on behalf of the same cause. Since mid-term break they have been busy encouraging the student body to bring in Christmas shoe boxes for the annual Team Hope appeal, an organisation the Charities Committee have a long standing association with. This year the Sixth Year school councillors worked in collaboration with the Committee to fill shoe boxes with their First Year classes. All the 157 presents donated by the Ursuline will be delivered to children affected by poverty in many parts of the world, providing essential hygiene and educational items and a lot of joy to those most in need.



Charities Committee collected and sorted through 157 boxes for Team Hope after mid-term break. Many thanks to students and their families who donated so generously to this cause.

Green Schools

The Green Schools Committee are continuing to work towards their tenth Green Flag, Global Citizenship, Food and Biodiversity. Congratulations to Chairperson of Green Schools, TY Amy O'Brien and long standing committee member Lily Murphy who submitted a project for Green Schools in September to the South East Technological University in Waterford. They won first prize in the Post Primary Team category and, the icing on the cake, they won the overall prize in the competition too. Their three-minute video described the crop growing and harvesting that happened last

spring. They won a €300 voucher for themselves and the school received a prize of €400 worth of equipment to grow more food stuffs.

The committee are currently working on a number of initiatives including a festive season Christmas jumper swap, an innovative drive to collect empty crisp packets which will be recycled into foil sleeping bags for the Simon Community, collecting E-waste, promoting local Tipperary food producers, and are encouraging the use of second-hand shops, upcycling, swapping clothes and generally being more sustainable while staying on trend. Finally, some of the committee members have applied to Cycle Ireland to install a bike rack and shelter at the back of the school. TY students collected data on modes of transport to UCT and on foot of this will be encouraging more students to travel on foot or by bike as overall the results showed an overdependence on the car as the means to getting to and from school. There is plenty to keep the Green Schools going well into 2024 and their work in making everyone a little greener is much appreciated.



Green Schools Chairperson, Amy O'Brien and long time Committee member, Lily Murphy won the category and overall prize in the SETU Competition with their three minute video on crop growing and harvesting in the Ursuline.

Amber Flag

Kindness Week, organised by the Amber Flag Committee began on the first Monday after the mid-term break. There were plenty of lunchtime activities to promote wellbeing, togetherness, fun and teamwork. A poster competition was launched on the Monday whereby students were encouraged to submit a colourful design highlighting kindness. Well done to Maria Taaffe, TY who took first prize, Amy Reidy, Second Year, runner-up and Eadaoin Carroll, First Year whose poster was third. On Tuesday Second Year classes were put through their

paces with a fun fitness obstacle course in the Sports Hall. Well done to 2C who through a combination of determination and pulling together won the title of UCT's Fittest Second Years. On Wednesday there was mindfulness in the Prayer Room and on Thursday at break time there was a Bake Sale, a chance for students to be kind to themselves with something sweet. On Friday the week finished with a disco and some karaoke in the Sports Hall for all First Years. The students were able to donate €600 to Pieta House through all the various activities they put on as well as raising awareness on inclusivity, looking out for each other and putting kindness at the heart of the Ursuline school community.

The Sixth Year Amber Flag representatives looked after their peers with a breakfast morning at the beginning of December. This is an occasion everyone looks forward to, with plenty of fruit, breads, cereals and of course tea and coffee to get the day started the right way. Thanks to Ms Loughnane and Ms Coman and all the Amber girls for promoting positive mental health around the school.



Amber Flag's UCT's Fittest Second Years was a fun lunch-time activity organised by the committee for Be Kind Week which began after mid-term break. Leah Dunne and Emily Feehan are working together to complete the three-legged race.

Transition Year

The four Transition Year classes have had a jam-packed first term with a varied programme of workshops, talks, activities and projects to keep things interesting. Workshops so far have included Develop Me, Fundamentals, Law Workshop, a manual handling course, a Barista workshop, and a Film Workshop where the TYs experience the whole process from generating story ideas, developing characters, scripting, costuming, lighting, directing, sound and editing.

TY's have also enjoyed an energetic Boogie Bounce session, the humour of the Ger Carey Comedy Show, an interpretative dance performance from the Arts Council, along with a talk from a breast cancer survivor Juliette, in October. She emphasised the positive outcomes of early detection and the importance of self checks in combating the disease.



TYs searching for 'The Lost Dutchman's Goldmine' in the Develop Me Workshop.



TYs from Room 7 doing the marble run at the fundamentals workshop



TYs in character for the Film Workshop in November





TYs Katherine Allen, Emma Fogarty and Tessa Kearney at the Hockey Coaching Course in September



TY day of bonding and team building at Ballyhass Lakes

RSA Roadshow

Road safety, the importance of driving with care and respect for all road users was emphasised to TY's and Fifth Years when the RSA Education truck came in September. It was a chance for students to learn more about the devastating effects of road crashes. Using virtual reality head-sets they got to experience driving while under the influence of alcohol and see how using a mobile phone can easily cause collisions. Everyone is a road user and over the next few years many of these students will be driving themselves.



TY Alanna Spillane on the virtual reality motor bike at the RSA Roadshow.

Gaisce Hike

Thanks to Ms Egan, Ms Bourke, Ms Spillane, Ms Golden and Ms Coffey who brought 77 students hiking over two days in the Slieve Bloom Mountains in order to complete the adventure journey for both bronze and silver medals. It was a tough challenge with very soft terrain and a wet start for those who travelled on the Friday, even though it was still only September. However, the sense of accomplishment that everyone felt when it was completed was tremendous. There was also plenty of chatting while walking and craic at picnic and mealtimes making it worth all the effort.



TYs and Fifth Years on the Gaisce Hike in September.

National Ploughing Championships

TY's and senior Ag Science classes were up early on Wednesday, 20 September to travel to Ratheniska for the Ploughing. Wellies and warm clothes were the order of the day with plenty of time for exploring the stands, picking up freebies and a chance to spot some of the more famous attendees.



TYs Ava Ryan, Siofra O'Loughlin, Nadine Slattery and Sophie O'Dwyer met Minister for Education, Norma Foley at the National Ploughing Championships.

TY Comhairle Na nÓg Talk

Following on from a TY Comhairle Na nÓg Talk, Ursuline student, Christine Wong attended the AGM and was elected to the Comhairle Committee as PRO. This organisation, linked to Tipperary County Council, is a taster of what local government is like, how it works and how decisions are made. It is an ideal platform for those interested in the political system to have their voices heard.

TY Student Enterprise

TY mini-companies are in the course of developing products, advertising, marketing and selling their wares around the school. The aim is to make money but also the most innovative, original ideas will get the opportunity to compete in the County Enterprise awards. Some of the products available to buy are Croc accessories, jewellery, hand knitted charms, UCT sports gear and so much more. The TYs are busy selling coming up to the Christmas period and hope to sell enough to make a tidy profit.

Junk Kouture

There are ten teams of TY's working on their Junk Kouture entries for the 2024 competition. They are up-cycling, reworking and reimaging old throwaway objects into sustainable, haute couture, catwalk worthy outfits. The Ursuline has a fantastic track record in this international competition in recent years and last year's finalists 'The Eye of the Beholder' the brainchild of Zoe Whelan, Lauren Egan and Shauna Walsh will be heading to Monaco for the World Final in the new year.



Junk Kouture



TY students on French Exchange Programme to Blanche de Castille, Nantes





SPORT

Camogie

Munster 7's A Wednesday, 4 October, 2023, Boherlahan

Ursuline Thurles V St Marys Nenagh Won 2-7 to 3-0
 Ursuline Thurles V Coláiste Ennis Won 5-3 to 2-3
 Ursuline Thurles V Hazelwood Dromcollogher Lost 1-6 to 4-3
 Final Ursuline Thurles V Hazelwood Dromcollogher Won 4-10 to 4-2

All Ireland 7s A in Meath GAA Centre of Excellence, 18 October, 2023

Ursuline Thurles V Loreto Kilkenny Lost 1-5 to 5-3
 Ursuline Thurles V Claregalway Won 6-8 to 2-6
 Ursuline Thurles V St Patricks Maghera Won 5-2 to 1-6
 Final Ursuline Thurles V Loreto Kilkenny Lost 5-3 to 6-11

Junior A Munster Championship

9 October, 2023, Ursuline Thurles V Hazelwood Dromcollogher Won 1-16 to 2-6

14 October, 2023, Ursuline Thurles V Ursuline Waterford Won 5-13 to 3-6

28 November, 2023, Ursuline Thurles V Coachford Won 2-13 to 0-8

Senior A Munster Championship

17 November, 2023, Ursuline Thurles V Hazelwood Dromcollogher Won 6-16 to 0-6

21 November, 2023, Ursuline Thurles V Cashel Community School Won 0-22 to 2-5



Senior A Camogie Team after their win against Cashel on 21 November.



Camogie Panel who represented Munster in the All Ireland 7s Final in Co Meath October 2023.

LGFA

Senior Gaelic Football Munster Championship

Ursuline Thurles 7-11 Our Lady's Templemore 0-4
 Ursuline Thurles 10-18 Loreto Fermoy 2-6
 The Senior Gaelic Football team now advance to the Munster Semi-Final.

Junior Gaelic Football Munster Championship

Ursuline Thurles 5-8 Our Lady's Templemore 3-5
 Ursuline Thurles 3-6 Coláiste Dún Iascaigh, Cahir 0-1.
 The Junior Gaelic Football team now advance to the Muster Semi-Final.

Minor Gaelic Football Munster Championship

Ursuline Thurles 4-16 Our Lady's Templemore 0-3
 To play Cashel in Round Two

First Year Football

First Year Footballers had a great first day out representing the Ursuline against Cashel with a decent win. They were very grateful for the challenge and chance to don the UCT jersey.



First Year Football captains Leah O'Connell and Sasha O'Keefe at the recent challenge match against Cashel CS.



Charlotte Butler Clyne in action for the Junior Footballers

Basketball

Senior Basketball U19

Ursuline Thurles 25 Presentation Clonmel 51
 Ursuline Thurles 31 Comeragh College
 Ursuline Thurles 32 St Anne's, Tipp Town 33
 Ursuline Thurles 35 Scoil Ruain, Killenaule 14

The Senior Basketball squad missed out on qualification to the quarter-final of the South East Regional League on scoring average.

Cadette Basketball U16 - Round Robin Games

Ursuline Thurles 35 Presentation Thurles 24
 Ursuline Thurles 39 St Anne's, Tipp Town 7
 Ursuline Thurles 36 Presentation Clonmel 28
 Ursuline Thurles 53 Scoil Ruain, Killenaule 10

Quarter-Final of the South East Regional League

Ursuline Thurles 42 Castlecomer CS 18

Semi-Final of the South East Regional League

Ursuline Thurles 31 Coláiste Bride, Carnew 28

Final of the South East Regional League

UCT Cadettes lead from start to finish. Pres Wexford came back into the game with a late surge, pushing Thurles to the final whistle in what was a thrilling finish and with a great win for the school, with a score of 41 - 37

First Year Basketball

The Ursuline had two teams of First Year basketball players invited to participate in challenge games in the Presentation Thurles both before and after mid-term break. On Monday, 13 November they played teams from Loreto Clonmel as well as Pres Thurles. The invitation was much appreciated on both occasions as our players got a chance to compete against others and hone their skills on the courts.



Cadette Basketball Team - South East League Champions

Athletics

Tipperary Schools Cross Country

The Tipperary Schools Championship provided the first opportunity for Ursuline athletes to compete this year. In the Thurles Crokes club grounds the first race was the 1200m Minor race. Here, the UCT First Year students bagged gold. 83 girls took part in the race and the school had its first three girls finish in the top seven. Orla Pamplin led from the start running very strongly and ably supported by Leah O Connell who put in a great spurt to finish in fourth place. In her first cross country race, Ella Maher had a great run to finish in seventh place. The rest of the team, Sarah Kelly, Lauren Sheehan, Phoebe Ryan and Millie Kearney finished well up the field.

The Junior team also ran a distance of 1200m. They were led out by Eleanor Kiernan who took command from the start and ran a very strong race to finish in first place. She was followed in by Rachel Dowd, another débutant at cross country and the third place on the team was filled by Emma Murphy. Eadaion Carroll, Hannah Byrne, Isabel Ralph, Sarah Delaney and Katheline Lynam .All competed very well and the girls were rewarded with team silver, missing out on the gold by just one point.

The Intermediate team had the longer distance of 1500m. The team consisted of Aisling O'Reilly, Alanna Spillane, Doireann Lynch, Sophie Nolan, Isobel Hourigan, Róisín Ferncombe and Laura Hales. They won the overall race team event by the slimmest of margins from Presentation Clonmel. Once again they showed great maturity and were anxious to follow up on the success of the minors and juniors. Aisling won an individual bronze with Alanna and Doireann coming in closely behind her.

The last race for the day was at Senior level, run over 2000m. This race brought together the majority of our All Ireland bronze medal winning team from 2019. Kate Ferncombe ran a very good race to finish in silver medal position, despite attack after attack from Hazel Brennan of Pres Clonmel. Orla Ryan and Paula Quirke finished in fourth and fifth places with Aoibheann Fogarty in sixth and Rosie Bradish in fifteenth place. Well done to the girls for bringing home gold in this event.

Thanks to Thurles Crokes for the course and to the many parents who came out to support. The next cross country outing will be the South East Munsters which will take place in the new year.





Senior Athletics team of Rosie Bradish, Aoibheann Fogarty, Paula Quirke, Kate Ferncombe and Orla Ryan, brought home gold in the Tipperary Post Primary Schools Cross Country Championship in November



The Ursuline Rugby team who played Borrisoleigh in the school's first ever competitive rugby game

Tag Rugby

Three teams of Ursuline TYs had a great time playing Tag Rugby in Old Crescent on Thursday, 28 September. It was a brilliant competition hosted by Munster Rugby, with 45 students from the school attending and taking part in the competitive fun on the pitches. Thanks to Ms Fahey for organising the teams and bringing everyone to this enjoyable sporting day out.

Hockey Results, September – November 2023

Senior A

Ursuline Thurles v Bandon Won 5-2
 Ursuline Thurles v Kilkenny College Drew 2-2
 Ursuline Thurles v Mount Mercy Lost 3-1

Senior B

Ursuline Thurles v Rockwell Lost 5-0
 Ursuline Thurles v Villiers Lost 5-1
 Ursuline Thurles v Pres Thurles Lost 3-0
 Ursuline Thurles v Kilkenny College Won 3-2

Junior B

Ursuline Thurles v Villiers Lost 5-2
 Ursuline Thurles v Kilkenny College Won 1-0

Junior C

Ursuline Thurles v Villiers Drew 0-0

Minor A

Ursuline Thurles v Scoil Mhuire Lost 3-2
 Ursuline Thurles v Mount Mercy Lost 1-0
 Ursuline Thurles v Kilkenny College Lost 3-2
 Ursuline Thurles v Middleton Won 4-1
 Ursuline Thurles v Laurel Hill Secondary 5-1

Minor B

Ursuline Thurles v Loreto Clonmel Won 4-1
 Ursuline Thurles v Kilkenny College Won 2-0
 Ursuline Thurles v Castletroy 0-0 Draw
 Ursuline Thurles v Rockwell Won 2-0
 Ursuline Thurles v Villiers Won 4-0

Minor C

Ursuline Thurles v Villiers Won 6-0

First Year 11 a side

Ursuline Thurles First Year Red v Loreto Clonmel Won

Ursuline Thurles First Year Green v Pres Thurles Won
 Ursuline Thurles First Year Green v Laurel Hill Secondary Won

Ursuline Thurles First Year Pink v Rockwell – Won
 Ursuline First Year Pink v Laurel Hill Secondary – Won

Ursuline Thurles First Year Yellow v Laurel Hill Secondary Won

Ursuline Thurles First Year Blue v Laurel Hill Secondary Won



Senior A Hockey Team 2023/24.



Ms Fahey with the Minor A Hockey players.



First Year Hockey players surfing the breeze.



Celebrations of the Cadette basketball team at the final whistle



TY students at tennis coaching every Monday

Rugby

Thurles RFC was the venue for the encounter between the Ursuline Junior Rugby team and their counterparts from Borrisoleigh. It was a super performance from both sides and a historic day for UCT, being the first game of 15 a side full contact, competitive rugby the school has participated in. Sophie Coughlan and Róise O'Brien scored for the Ursuline and Doireann Lynch converted to finish up 17-12 to Borrisoleigh. Thanks to captain Orla Carey and vice-captain Molly Hayes and to the students who donned the UCT rugby jersey, all of whom play with home clubs. A special mention to Ms Fahey who has done huge work in promoting rugby throughout the school.





Soccer

U19 Schools Cup

Ursuline v Castletroy College Won 3-2
Ursuline v St Mary's Middleton Won 2-1

U17 Schools Cup

Ursuline v Presentation Thurles Lost 4-1

U15 Schools Cup

Ursuline v Cashel Community School Won 4-2



Lilly Kavanagh in action for the Junior A Hockey team



U19 Soccer Team



Amabel Townshend at Equestrian Interschools in Dublin



U19's Soccer player, Niamh O'Brien, going in for the tackle.



Students enjoying a class in our new gym

Wishing all our students, staff, families and friends a happy and peaceful Christmas and a joyous New Year

*Triona Gleeson
Principal*





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