

# FCJ Bunclody Christmas Newsletter



Welcome to our school newsletter. It is great to see an old tradition revived and I hope that it offers you an insight into life in our school. This term has been like no other in the life of our school. As we near the holidays, I would like to wish everyone in our school and everyone connected with our school, a safe and happy holiday. Thanks so much to all our teachers, students, parents and ancillary staff for all you have done since we returned to



school. We have never been more united as we all sought to keep our school safe. We will need all that energy and cooperation again in the new year and I would ask that families be conscious of the safe return to school in just over two weeks by carefully planning their holidays with the safe return of all our school community in mind. But for now on behalf of FCJ Secondary School I wish you all a very happy Christmas.

Mr. Daly

## **A tribute to Mary McIvor on her retirement**

When I think of Ms. McIvor as a teacher, an excellent work ethic and integrity are two of the qualities that spring immediately to mind. Mary had a keenly felt duty of care for her students and she never ever gave up on them and while students sometimes prefer the easier route, especially in ordinary level Leaving Cert Irish, Mary never shirked that challenge and her students respected her for that as they recognized her motives were genuine and sound and that she wanted the best for them.

Mary set high standards in her classroom and expected her students to meet those standards and worked tirelessly to ensure they would. Her students knew there were expectations around class and homework and standards of behaviour that must be met also. Students were very much aware that Mary had a good heart and a kind empathetic nature. She always looked out for her students beyond the teaching of her subjects and this sense of care was evident in the relationships she built with her students.

I particularly note and remember the reports Mary wrote for her students, the effort that was put into them, how each one was personal to the student and how they were always detailed, positive and encouraging.

Along with Irish, Mary pioneered the introduction and embedding of SPHE and CSPE into our school, subjects that would go on to be core features of the new Junior Cycle Wellbeing module. Mary was there at the coalface when these subjects were first introduced into our school and championed both and indeed saw their intrinsic value to

the overall development of our students. In this sense Mary was years ahead of her time. Mary and her fellow CSPE teachers consistently achieved stunning results in CSPE that were way above the national average over the years.

Mary was a tireless champion of the student voice in our school and her work here laid the basis for student leadership in our school as they participated in policy formation and had a growing say in management's decision making. This would not have happened without Mary's huge contribution towards setting up Student Councils in our school, organising elections and meetings over the years. Mary's pioneering work here has laid the basis for the future development of student voice in our school and for that students and management owe her a huge debt of gratitude.

As a colleague Mary was deeply respected. She has a kind nature which many staff can vouch for and we were always in her thoughts and when hard and difficult times came, Mary was there with a compassionate word. She is a great character and was always thinking of ways to improve the lot of her colleagues and lift morale from writing her brilliantly crafted and funny poems to organizing Grand national betting syndicates!!

Mary also thought deeply about our school and the direction it was going. She became in time a senior member of staff whose opinions were always listened to and valued as they came from a genuine place. Mary always had the best interests of her colleagues in mind. She was never afraid to speak her mind and made many valuable contributions at staff meetings down through the years, passionate, eloquent and heart felt.

So Ms. McIvor, on behalf of everyone in FCJ Secondary School we wish you and Paul a happy Christmas, a happy new year and a very happy retirement.


Brendan Daly

**“Mary McIvor – a true friend and colleague.”**

“It was with great sadness that we learned of Mary's retirement earlier this year. Mary was teaching in our school for over 28 years. She taught Irish, German, Japanese, Civics, CSPE and SPHE. She passionately believed in student voice and was innovative in her many ventures to make the student voice heard.

It is as a warm colleague that I will forever remember Mary. She always had time to listen if you needed a listening ear and she had an innate ability to see that need in you, even before you were aware of it yourself. She had a kindness and generosity of spirit not always evident in a busy, over-crowded staff room. Mary's help was always quiet, discreet, and confidential respecting her colleague's privacy without question. Many people would give testimony to that lovely quality Mary had.

Mary also had the ability to reach across the divides of age, subject areas, and gender in our Staff. She did not have to reach out to help her fellow teachers, people often instinctively came to her. Her advice was always gentle, measured, and helpful, as many of us know first-hand. She is probably the most thoughtful person I have ever known.



Mary brought joy to our staff. When she first came to F.C.J., she brought her energy and goodwill to many staff events. She was the first to brighten up the Staff room with Christmas decorations and Christmas music. We had lots of fun when Mary was around, whether it was a horse race or the Eurovision Song Contest, the stakes were high!

Above all Mary was creative, a true innovator and F.C.J. has lost something of its magic now she is gone. We miss you! Wishing Mary, a very happy and healthy retirement!”-  
**Eileen Murray, a friend, and colleague.**

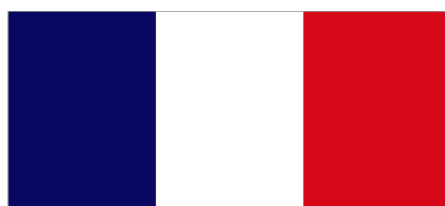
“Mary was a teacher and colleague who gave everyone a voice. A friend who instinctively knows when you needed a kind word and optimised her skills to bring fun and banter on Grand National day! I hope retirement brings new adventures.”  
-**Louise Kenny**

“Mary is renowned for her kindness and thoughtfulness towards students and colleagues alike. Her consideration for the needs of others, as knowledge was imparted is what has made her a great teacher. Mary has wonderful vision, wit and wisdom, not to mention her great gifts as a poet. I would like to pay tribute to Mary’s generosity with her time and talent. Above all Mary has given support and guidance to colleagues for many years, she has a willing ear, always ready to listen.”-**Sarah O’Hara**

“Congratulations on your retirement Mary! It has been a real pleasure getting to know you as a colleague. You have been a guiding light for us CSPE and SPHE teachers over the years, and a true advocate for staff. We will be forever grateful for your contribution here at FCJ. Wishing you many years of happiness and health.”-**Leanne Nolan**

“Mary, I have been honoured to work with you over the years. I cherish fond memories of a teacher, a colleague and a friend. Thank you Mary for your professionalism, your support and your friendship. You have enriched countless lives with your enthusiasm, encouragement and commitment. I wish you health and happiness in the future and may you enjoy a long retirement filled with fun, laughter and adventure.”-**Lucy Frend**

“Mary welcomed me warmly to FCJ and her support and friendship continued. She was generous with her time and always had words of wisdom or ideas to share. She is kind and thoughtful, she always had the best interests of her colleagues and students at heart. Mary will be missed, but I want to wish her all the best in the healthy and happy retirement she deserves.”-**Aisling Keane**



## A NATIONAL LANGUAGE DIGITAL AWARD FOR F.C.J. BUNCLODY

Well done to the following three students who are now in 4<sup>th</sup> year and 5<sup>th</sup> year on winning a 'National Modern Foreign Languages for Digital story-telling Award 2020'.

The girls completed this project last year when they were in 3<sup>rd</sup> year in Pádraig 3 under the guidance of their French teacher, Mr Niall Murphy.



*Katelyn Bolger (V5)-left, Niamh Lalor (A4)-centre and Mary Byrne (B4)-right*

This was the first time this competition was organised as they were the first cohort of students who were due to sit the new Common Level French exam in June 2020. The competition was organised by the **'Junior Cycle for Teachers' MFL team, Post-Primary Languages Ireland and Languages Connect**. The title was **'What's your story?'** and entries were welcomed from all four MFL (*French, Spanish, Italian and German*) so that students could showcase their story via the means of digital technology and the target language being studied in a fun and interactive way (in our case; French). The three girls spent months planning and creating a very innovative showcase piece

and as a result of their hard work and dedication to the task, they won a National Award on behalf of FCJ.

The three girls completed the majority of this project throughout the unprecedented time of lockdown by liaising with their French teacher on a daily basis. They persevered and collectively managed to produce a very creative piece of work.

Katelyn did all the art drawings (*some are shown below*), Niamh took care of the digital side of the showcase and Mary worked on the script while liaising with the two girls and their teacher. Their inspiration was taken from a former French Eurovision entry called 'Moustache'.

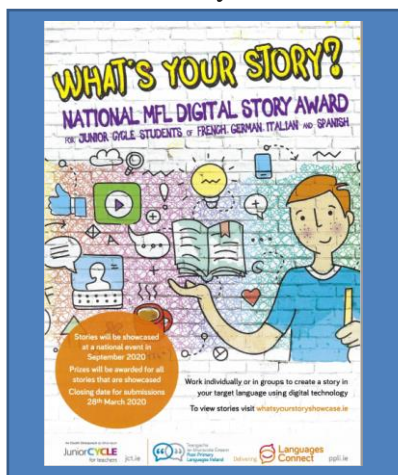


The award ceremony was due to take place in September 2020 in Citywest, Dublin but under the current guidelines then took place online on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> December 2020 where seven other winning schools also took part.

[Par ma moustache! - National Award Winners - Niamh Lalor, Mary Byrne & Katelyn Bolger - F.C.J. Bunclody, Co. Wexford - National Modern Foreign Language Digital Award competition 2020 for 'What's your story?' .mp4 - Google Drive](#)

### The winning prizes

1. A €25 One4All gift voucher for each of the 3 girls
2. An iPad for our MFL Department
3. A tripod
4. A Languages Connect goodie bag for the teacher
5. Showing of website and celebration ceremony as well as having their winning entry published on JCT, PPLI and Languages Connect for it to be viewed nationally



We just want to say '**Félicitations pour avoir gagné la compétition**' as their commitment really shone throughout the making of their showcase and this was noted by the judges in their impressive feedback. *Je suis très fier d'elles.*

**Mr Niall Murphy** ■ ■

## **BALLYCADDEN WIND FARM SCHOLARSHIP**

Congratulations to Aisling Dunne and Brian Byrne, Leaving Certificate 2020, who each received a cheque from Ballycadden Wind Farm as they embark on their third level studies in Maynooth University and Trinity College.

These two students were chosen by Ballycadden Wind Farm because of their exceptional Leaving Certificate results and their outstanding contribution to school and community life during their years as students of FCJ. They have been involved in the sporting, cultural, musical, pastoral and academic life of the school, always demonstrating enthusiasm and commitment.

Ballycadden Wind Farm is situated in Kilrush, a few miles outside Bunclody, and this is its fourth year to be involved in the awarding of the scholarship.



***Photographed from left to right is: Mr. Brendan Daly (Principal), Brian Byrne, Aisling Dunne, Mr. Tommy Kehoe (Director of Ballycadden Wind Farm)***



## WATER AMBASSADOR PROGRAMME



***Back Row L-R: James Mahon, Ciaran McGinley, Nicole Hewson. Front Row L-R: Jodie Coleman, Aisling Healy, Amy Corrigan, Aoife Foley***

During Transition Year as the FCJ Green School's Water Ambassadors, we worked on a project to strengthen our school's attitude to water. In the last ten months, we have carried out several projects.

The first project involved the prohibition in our school of all single-use plastics. This was a staggered introduction that included negotiating with the school management. Slowly but gradually, instead of single-use bottles, students started to use reusable water bottles. We decided to begin phasing out reusable water bottles. We aimed to start phasing out the selling of reusable water bottles at the School Tuck Shop and we enlisted the support of a mini-company, BottleLab, to help us in our pursuit of a single plastic-free environment. We sold these bottles to students and teachers alike, with the help



of Ms. Yvonne Rooney. The bottles were customized by the students and the school logo was included.

A second major change we made was the interaction of people with water. Ms. Lucy Frend helped us perform a survey across all year groups, which found that every day, a startling 40% of students carry single-use water bottles to school. Our poster campaign was inspired by this, where students created posters that were displayed throughout the school, encouraging people to respect water more and making them more conscious of their actions.

The Green School's committee was awarded for their brilliant work and two members received regional awards. Without the support of Deputy-Principal, Samantha Hughes and Principal, Brendan Daly, our project would not have been a reality. We hope that this project will encourage our school's future generations to try to make a difference in the global battle against water wastage.

Aisling Healy (V5)

### **Regional Winners**

Congratulations to Aisling Healy and James Mahon who were regional winners in the Water Ambassador Programme. They received a Samsung tablet and an award in recognition of their work during the year. Their achievement was celebrated at an online award ceremony which took place on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2020.



### **Congratulations Niamh**

Niamh Murphy (C5) who is a member of Ferns G.P.A. holds the title of **World Champion in Clay Pigeon Shooting – Lady Colt Division**. The world Championships were held in Meath over two days. She also won the Irish Championship in the women's division in 2019. Niamh has been participating competitively for five years during which time she has been on the Wexford County team twice, competing in Leinster and All Irelands.



## Physical Education

This year FCJ introduced Leaving Certificate Physical Education into the subject choices for 5th Years with a full class of thirty students choosing PE. So far this year we have covered a range of fascinating new topics, including different fitness types, skills and how the body moves. The subject is definitely challenging, however definitely worthwhile. It is stimulating being able to leave the classroom to work on our Performance Assessment project which is worth 30% and completed in 6th Year. PE class is a lot more engrossing and convivial than we all first assumed, not that any of us predicted it to be anything short of interesting! Overall Leaving Cert PE is an exciting new subject and we all thoroughly enjoy it.

Robyn Payne, Marie V

## Healthy Eating Campaign

This year in F.C.J. we are relaunching our Healthy Eating Campaign. A group of Transition Year students have worked extremely hard to spread more awareness and bring to light the importance of maintaining a healthy, balanced and nutritional diet.

It was decided to run a slogan competition, 'Food for Thought', challenging students in our school to create a unique slogan encouraging each other to eat healthily. There was a record number of entries with 200 students submitting their ideas for the competition.

We are delighted to announce the winning slogan.

***'Food for Thought? Simple rule.  
Give your body the best of fuel.'***

by Caoimhe Jordan, Padraig 4.



## Transition Year

It has been a busy first term for Transition Years with all scheduled workshops running smoothly, thanks to the facilities of the 'Sunday School', Church Road. September started with Induction Training for all classes. Other workshops included: Internet safety, Radio, Aware/Mental Health, Law Ed., Wexford Rape Crisis/consent, Forensics, Local history walking tour and Floral Arrangement.

Transition Year students had the following to say:

### Radio Workshop

The Radio Workshop proved popular as we experienced first-hand the job of a radio presenter. After writing our own script for a radio commercial we recorded it in the mobile recording studio using headphones and microphone. Following this we also recorded a podcast and enjoyed the free-flowing conversation style of presentation.



### Forensics Workshop

In this workshop we had the opportunity to take on the role of forensic scientists which we thoroughly enjoyed. We investigated JFK's assassination examining the evidence, weapons, buildings, people and timeline of events. We heard the conspiracy theories surrounding his assassination and tried to figure out who we thought did it, using the evidence. We did several activities including studying fingerprints and their patterns, interactive video presentations and board games. To quote a TY student 'It was a really interesting workshop because the more you learned about it the less sense any of it made!'



## Law Ed Workshop



In November, all Transition Year Classes had a very interesting and interactive workshop on the Irish Legal System. We learned about the different types of courts and how the justice system works, the different roles of solicitors and barristers and qualifications needed. The barrister told us interesting stories about cases she has worked on. We learned about the laws in Ireland that concern young people such as drinking laws, age of consent etc. We also heard about different laws that are being discussed in the Dail/Seanad presently.

## Local History Walking Tours



Transition Years went on two very interesting and informative tours of Bunclody given by Fr. Wall. The first was a tour of the market square followed by a tour of Irish Street. We would like to thank Fr. Wall for bringing history to life for us with stories about the Battle of Bunclody in the 1798 rebellion, the Irish War of Independence, social and economic history and much more.

## Wexford Mental Health Association Expressions Contest

A group of TY students from Victoire 4 volunteered to undertake a project run by Wexford Mental Health Association better known as Wexford Mental Health Expressions Contest. This project was brought to our attention by Mr Neil O Muiri who teaches the Mental Health module for Transition Year students.

Each student took on a role to play in the project. We created a video to promote mental health and make people aware of how people have coped with Covid 19 throughout this difficult year. The video consisted of video clips of life before Covid, how we coped with Covid, what we lost and what we hope to see again soon! We submitted our video for Friday 4th December and were shortlisted for the finals. Elle Mulcahy undertook a

zoom interview with Mental Health Ireland judges. The following day we received the news that FCJ Bunclody came in 2nd place in the competition and received a €100 cash prize for all their hard work!

Those who took part are as follows:

Jacqui Kehoe  
Elle Mulcahy  
Al Power  
Caoimhe O'Brien  
Katie Burke  
Anna Kinsella  
Ruadhan Dignam  
Sinead Breen  
Sarah Cox &  
Amy Collier Tyrell



Many thanks to all those that were involved in the competition and to Mr. Neil O Muiri who made it possible and well done.



## **Wellbeing Campaign**

### **“My Feel-Good Factor during Covid 19”**

During the month of October this year, we ran a Wellbeing campaign on the above theme. The First, Second and Third year students were invited to write in any form, short or long, about what keeps them happy during these difficult days. The entry could take any form, a short description, a diary entry, a letter to someone you love (or have lost), a poem, a song!

A substantial number of students entered and the topic really resonated with them. Many students wrote of how difficult lockdown was for them and their families but they also wrote positively and recognised the value of little things we all take for granted. Some of the entries had a real level of maturity that all of us can learn from. Thank you to all the students who took the time to enter. Well done all!

The overall winner was Rachel Murphy (Marie 3)

The following First Years both received special prizes for their entries: Ella Ennis (Victoire 1) and Kate Dwyer (Brid 1)

These and a selection of entries can be viewed on the Well being tab of the School's website.



## The 12 Days of Christmas



“One act of kindness a day”

Starts Wednesday December 9<sup>th</sup> to Tuesday Dec 22<sup>nd</sup>, include Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> - 12 Days of Christmas

Launched by Mr. Daly, encourage people to carry out one act of kindness a day – which can also help to boost their own mental health. Make this Christmas about giving, Giving of Yourself to help those around you and to enhance their wellbeing and your own.

The best way to help yourself is by helping others. Christmas is the perfect time to do this.

### WEEK 1

- **DAY 12:** Eileen Murray  
Wednesday Dec 9<sup>th</sup> - “Include someone new in your group at breaktime.”  
Kindness costs nothing but its effects are priceless.
- **DAY 11:** Thursday Dec 10<sup>th</sup> – Gratitude Day  
Show your gratitude to someone who helped you along the way this term.
- **DAY 10:** Friday Dec 11<sup>th</sup> a.m.  
Remember those who suffer and for whom life is tough this Christmas. Give generously to our Christmas Jumper Fundraiser.
- **DAY 9:** Friday Dec 11<sup>th</sup> p.m. – For Saturday:  
In the build up to Christmas, give of yourself – Give something back to someone you love. Help out at home this weekend.

### WEEK 2

- **DAY 8:** Monday Dec 14<sup>th</sup>  
Take a break from your worries this Christmas and help others do the same by being kind to them.





On Tuesday 22nd December the whole school community will take part in a Christmas Jumper Day. This is in aid of Crumlin Children's Hospital and Cystic Fibrosis Ireland. Huge thank you to all who donated and took part for such worthy causes.



### **Cycle Against Suicide Christmas Tree**



Every year, the Cycle Against Suicide committee make a Christmas tree to be displayed in the school to spread some Christmas spirit. This year our tree was made from newspaper. Thanks to:

Ben Holmes  
Ciara Doyle  
Faith Holmes  
Sam Holmes  
Rachel Rothwell  
Katie Gahan  
Miss Drea



## CHRISTMAS PRAYER SERVICE

Our Christmas Prayer Service took place virtually on the 21st December at 9.30am. While it was not a substitute for our traditional Christmas Mass in the Church, it was a lovely opportunity for our school to take time to reflect before Christmas. This is a piece of reflection from our prayer service.

*'This Christmas, we ask ourselves, are we willing to enter into the spirit of Christmas that involves welcoming and including others? Are we willing to be like a baby and view the world and people through eyes that are not prejudiced? A baby does not see skin colour, gender, age, sexual orientation, race or creed. The Christmas story celebrates this, and throughout his life everything he did showed us that Jesus had the unprejudiced eyes of a baby. Jesus was born into the world to bring the good news to all'*



*Crib and Christmas Scene from FCJ Bunclody*

*This year instead of sending Christmas cards Le Chéile Schools Trust are making  
a donation to St. Vincent De Paul, Bunclody*