

*Welcome to the December edition of our newsletter. Unfortunately, the winter bugs/virus have not been kind to us in recent weeks. So, if you have missed any days and are wondering if you missed any events/activities, take a few moments to have a read over what took place and get a sneak peak into what lies ahead in 2020!*



### **Carol Service 2019**

December 11<sup>th</sup> saw St. Martin's Church fill to capacity for the much loved Christmas Carol service. And it was safe to say that nobody was disappointed. From the ambience created by Fr. O' Reilly's festive lighting to the innocence of the children in their performance, it was a night that we only wish could be 'bottled and sold'. The whole school opened the night with 'A Spaceman Came Travelling'. Junior infants followed with their A-Z of Christmas. The story of Christmas was then narrated by 4<sup>th</sup> class, acted by Senior infants and the choir sang throughout the night's performance. While for many the donkey stole the show, it was true to say that every single child in Piercestown was a star on the night! The night was completed in true 'Frozen' theme with the spine-tingling rendition of 'Let it Go' – Elsa and Anna would have been proud! Special thanks to Fr. O Reilly and all the staff and parents who made this event possible. We all left the church with a little more Christmas cheer and looking forward to December 25<sup>th</sup>.

### **Lámh – Let it Snow! Let it Snow! Let it Snow!!!**

Ms. Sinnott's class were also getting into the Christmas Spirit this week. Check out the school blog for a beautiful video of them performing "Let it Snow!" using Lámh.

### **The Season of Good will – Thank you for helping us give something back! C.A.N. and Wexford Women's Refuge**

As the season of goodwill was upon us, a suggestion came to have a collection on the night of the Carol service. Our chosen charities for 2019 were the Wexford Women's Refuge and Cottage Autism Network. We would like to thank each and every one of you for any contribution big and small. The collection for Wexford Women's refuge raised was €132 and the total raised for Cottage Autism Network (Wexford) was €153.20 We look forward to presenting both charities with these funds over the coming days.

### **Droichead training in Piercestown N.S.**

As per changes in Department procedures, Droichead will be undertaken by all schools going forward in 2020. Droichead is an integrated professional induction framework for newly qualified teachers. Each Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT) works in collaboration with a Professional Support Team (PST) which consists of experienced teachers who have completed a programme of professional development and training. Ms. Walsh, Mrs. Corrigan and Ms. Hearne recently attended such training in Waterford Education Centre in preparation for the implementation of Droichead in our school from September 2020.

### **Medal giving ceremony to take place in the New Year**

November was a successful season with the boys winning 3-in-a-row in football and the Rising stars securing a runners up medal. There was a lovely acknowledgement in the report at the recent St. Martin's AGM and we would like to thank our local GAA for their ongoing support and encouragement. At the time of going to press, a medal giving ceremony was postponed due to unforeseen circumstances and will be rescheduled ASAP in the New Year. Once again, thanks to Ms. Hearne and Mr. Murphy who do so much from our Piercestown perspective and special thanks also to Mr. Murphy and Mr. Whyte in Murrintown!

### **Christmas Trip 2019**

On the 18<sup>th</sup> of December, Ms. Sinnott's, Ms. Taylor's and Ms. Rea's class went on their Christmas adventure to Wheelock's Farm. Here, they were greeted by Mrs. Claus and the elves who took them to see the Snow Queen for story time. Afterwards, the children wrote their letters to Santa, took them onto the Christmas train, around the farm and up to the Elves Post Office to send. Next, they all got to play in the elves garden before the main event - meeting Santa himself! They were all treated to hot chocolate and cookies before the fun bus journey back to school. A great day was had by all!

### **Toy Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> Dec – Thank you everyone!**

Many thanks to all parents and children who sent in toys last week. All donations were given to Fr. O'Reilly for Toy Sunday mass and will now be given to children in need this Christmas. *"Christmas is most truly Christmas when we celebrate it by giving the light of love to those who need it most."* – Ruth Carter Stapleton

### **2<sup>nd</sup> class visit the EPA as part of their Junior Achievement Programme**

There was great excitement in 2<sup>nd</sup> class on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> December as the children set off on their trip to the EPA. Once there, they had their final lesson in the "Our Community" programme, facilitated by Gráinne Power and received their Certificates of Achievement. Afterwards, there were smiles all round as the children were treated to hot chocolate and a cookie! As a school, we were delighted to participate in the programme and welcomed the opportunity to forge links with our local community. Many thanks to Gráinne for volunteering her time and energy – the children will miss her weekly visits!

### **Junior Achievement programme in 3<sup>rd</sup> and in 6<sup>th</sup> class**

Following on from the success of the Junior Achievement Programme in 2<sup>nd</sup> class, 3<sup>rd</sup> class and 6<sup>th</sup> class will participate in similar initiatives in the new year. The 6<sup>th</sup> class programme, entitled "Energise", involves a partnership between Junior Achievement Ireland and Gas Networks Ireland. It explores the world of science and engineering in a fun and exciting way and includes topics such as health and well-being, forensics, energy, safety and light. "Our City" is the 3<sup>rd</sup> class programme, sponsored by Core Media led by a volunteer from BNY Mellon. It explores cities and towns as places where people live, work, play and go to school. The children will have the opportunity to construct paper buildings, map out a city, write newspaper articles, plan their own restaurants, and examine why banks are important. These programmes link in well with many skills and concepts of the Primary School curriculum, particularly in the areas of Science, Geography and SPHE.

### **Chess Update**

The in-school chess championship is up and running again. With round two just completed the competition is heating up. Six further rounds will take place after Christmas before we crown this year's champion so the competition is still open for all to win. With places also available on the school chess teams, make sure to get the chessboards out and continue practising over the Christmas break!

### **Student Council Update**

Piercestown N.S.'s first ever student council have elected their committee as follows: Rianna Gooden takes on the role of chairperson, Kate Roche is the secretary and Mollie Quirke is the treasurer. The newly elected council met recently to discuss possible initiatives to further improve student life in Piercestown N.S. There will be a Student Council suggestion box at the Christmas Bazaar for any suggestions you may have. We would like to wish all our student council members the best of luck in their upcoming endeavours!

### **Emma Cahill – Under the Mask**

On Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> December 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class received a visit from Emma Cahill, a primary teacher who is presently Head of Teaching in a school in Brazil. Emma realised that there is a 'gap' in helping children deal with mental and emotional matters and to assist children to get a better handle on this, she has written a beautifully-illustrated book, 'Under the Mask'. Her book features three super-heroes who are fun-loving, but who deliver the message that it is normal to feel a range of emotions and that talking about them may help to alleviate a particular problem. Emma read part of her story to the children and they loved it! It has key coping mechanisms and skills that children need to help them deal with their emotions. With Christmas upon us Emma talked about how Christmas time can be difficult for some children. Pieta House also strongly recommends this book and it is available in Wexford Book Centre. For more information visit [emmacahill.ie](http://emmacahill.ie)

### **Credit Union Quiz 2020**

As per tradition in Piercestown N.S. we look forward to entering a team in the Credit Union Quiz in 2020. Our application must be submitted the first week back in the New Year. So dust off the board games, Trivial Pursuit and swot up on the general knowledge if you want to be in with a chance to secure a place on the under 13 team and the under 11 team. Due to restriction on numbers, each school can only submit one team of four people at each age category. Our method of selection gives all pupils from 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class a general knowledge quiz and the highest

scores get first refusal on their participation in the team. We will update you in the next newsletter on who the successful team members are.

### **Board of Management – sympathies**

The Board of Management on behalf of the school community wish to extend their heartfelt sympathy to Miss Sinnott and her family on the passing of her beloved Grandmother, Mrs. Philomena Sinnott. They also offer their sincerest sympathies to Lena Foley and her family on the passing of her mother, Mrs. Jenny Hamilton. Ar dheis Dé go raibh bhúr n-nanam. Such a sad time in the lead up to Christmas. You are all in our thoughts and prayers. “To live in hearts we leave behind, is not to die” - Thomas Campbell.

### **Christmas fever – Annual Bazaar and Christmas Party!**

Our Annual Christmas Bazaar returns this year with gusto! This important fundraiser is organised by the Piercestown Parents’ Association and kicks off with coffee and cake in the Scout hall from 10am this coming Friday 20<sup>th</sup> December. The Bazaar will run from 12pm with all the usual favourites - chocolate/bottle stall, Christmas crafts and much more. This year saw the children become actively involved in making some of the crafts to sell on the day. 6<sup>th</sup> class have been very creative, making wonderful yule logs to decorate our homes. 5<sup>th</sup> class were also very busy making reindeer food to feed all of Santa’s hungry reindeer! Don’t forget to buy your tickets for the Christmas Bazaar Raffle – there are great prizes to be won, all sponsored by local businesses. Huge thanks to the Parents’ Association for their Trojan work behind the scenes in preparing for the Bazaar. The children are really looking forward to it!

Before we close for the holidays at 12pm on Friday there is one last treat in store for everyone – our Christmas party and sing-along in the PE hall. This is always a big hit with the children and this year DJ Rob is in the house! We can hardly contain our excitement!!!

### **A quick look ahead to 2020**

With 2020 almost upon us we take a quick look at just some of the events still to come this year. Term 2 sees 3<sup>rd</sup> class begin their swimming lessons while all other classes begin Gymnastics. Our school is once again taking part in the “We are Writers” literacy project which gives every child the opportunity to become a published author. The children in 2<sup>nd</sup> class will soon begin more formal preparations for their Sacrament of Reconciliation. Not forgetting our usual annual events such as Seachtain na Gaeilge, Annual Art Exhibition, Active Week, etc. there is much to do and we look forward to working in partnership with our whole school community in the new year.

### **A Word from the Principal – Happy Christmas 2019!**

The past month on a staff level has been tinged with sadness that unfortunately is part of human life. We however, soldier on, and work as a team to ensure the best for the most important people in our school, the children. They have worked so so hard, Junior infants and Miss Sinnott’s class in successfully completing term one of big school – take a bow! We are so proud of you. 6<sup>th</sup> class you are preparing to enter your last ‘year’ in primary school, we ask you to try and relish some of the moments along the way and make one or two more memories before you part company with us. You the parents have battled with the winter bugs and we salute you. My wish is for one and all to have a happy, healthy and safe Christmas with those you love. We look back on 2019 with the fondest of memories and we look forward to 2020, a new decade full of hope and anticipation! But for now, take a well-earned break and we look forward to seeing you back on January 6<sup>th</sup>! So this is not goodbye, but simply, see you next year 😊 With warmest festive wishes, Ms. Walsh. P.S. Don’t forget to leave out the cookies for Santa and the carrots for Rudolph!

### **Here are some dates for your diaries:**

- Christmas Bazaar – Fri. 20<sup>th</sup> Dec. in the Scout Hall: coffee and cake from 10am, Bazaar from 12pm
- School closes at 12pm for holidays – Fri. 20<sup>th</sup> Dec.
- School re-opens in the New Year - Mon. 6<sup>th</sup> Jan.
- Gymnastics begins 10<sup>th</sup> January 2020 for all classes (except 3<sup>rd</sup>)
- Swimming begins 10<sup>th</sup> January 2020 for 3<sup>rd</sup> class