

# Holy Family Community School, Rathcoole

## Irish Mensa School Testing



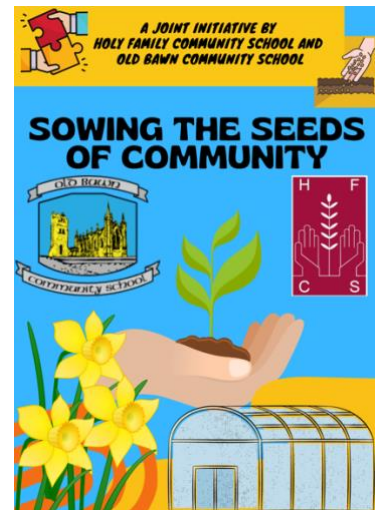
84 students participated in the Irish Mensa School Testing programme in November.. Mensa is the world's oldest and most famous high IQ society. To be offered a place in Mensa, you must be in the top 2% of the population.

20 students from 1st - 6th year in our school have been offered membership with Mensa. We are thrilled with all the excellent results - with 31 students in the top 3% of the world and 41 students in the top 5% and above. Well done to all students who participated!

## Holy Family Community School Poly Tunnel

Our Poly Tunnel, installed in 2021, has been going from strength to strength! Our LCA students are undertaking a garden design module, as part of their Agricultural and Horticultural Studies. As part of this subject, HFCS has established a joint school initiative with Old Bawn Community School. We have hosted Old Bawn's LCA 2 group, and we will be working collaboratively to achieve our fieldtrip components of LCA Agricultural and Horticultural coursework with Old Bawn by going on the fieldtrips together, the first scheduled provisionally for early January.

Our joint-school initiative is called 'Sowing the Seeds of Community'. HFCS first hosted Old Bawn on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of November, when we had our LCA groups plant daffodils en masse. These daffodils will be harvested in the Spring, and they will be delivered to Old Bawn by HFCS LCA1 where they will be sold in aid of the Irish Cancer Society for Daffodil Day. We look forward to the Spring, when we can plant, grow, and harvest crops!



## Mentors

Our 6th Year mentors have proven to be an invaluable part of the school community. Being a Mentor is a very responsible role in the school and students who become Mentors feel very rewarded in their role. The mentors engaged in training with Ms. Ryan-Clarke at the beginning of the year. Their role in supporting First Year students settle into secondary school cannot be underestimated. They show kindness and empathy to younger students every day and are a great help to the staff and management of the school. They also organised and ran a Hallowe'en fun event for 1st years, which was a brilliant success!



## Athletics

HFCS Cross Country team had a very successful day competing in the Leinster Community Schools medley relay event in Popintree Park earlier this year, taking home an overall win. Our athletics team is looking forward to continuing to train for and compete in Santry in Spring. Best of luck to all athletes!



## Open Night



We held a very successful Open Evening in September – our first in three years! It was wonderful to welcome parents and future students into our school. It was great to see so many people taking in samples of all of the fantastic work that happens, both inside and outside of the classroom!



## Cormac Dixon, Cross-Country Running Champion



Fifth Year student, Cormac Dixon, continues to go from strength to strength in running. Cormac ran for Ireland in the European Youth Olympics during the summer, taking 4<sup>th</sup> place, with a personal best of 8:25.62, just .007 seconds off the 3<sup>rd</sup> place finisher. Cormac has also recently become champion in the National U17 Cross Country, taking home three gold medals – Individual Gold, County Gold, and Provincial Gold! He is one to watch for the future!



## Culture Week

In September, we celebrated Culture Week in HFCS. Events ran all week long, culminating in a Global Village event, with over 30 stalls celebrating almost 40 cultures from around the world, of students in our school. Students wore traditional dress, prepared traditional meals, and provided a huge amount of information about their family's heritage. It was a wonderful event, enjoyed by all who attended!



## Transition Year



Transition Year has been action-packed for all students! They have taken part in a wide range of activities, workshops, and events, such as a trip to Liliput Adventure Centre and Zipit High Wire Experience. They have also benefitted from the Bridge to College Trinity Access talk, a trip to Dáil Éireann, where they had a tour and talk with former student, TD Emer

Higgins, and a talk from the Tenderfoot drama team who will choose students to engage with their drama programme.

Students have engaged in volunteer work in the community, taking part in the Localise Youth Volunteering Project. TY students have also volunteered their time for a bucket collection in aid of Concern Worldwide.

TY students have also had their first two-week block of work experience. Students worked in a wide variety of local businesses, primary schools, Garda stations, and further afield, gaining experience in DAA Airport, The Defence Forces, The Tallaght Echo, Dublin City Council, TU University Science Department, Dublin GAA, and South Dublin County Council. TY work experience is an integral element to the Transition Year programme as it allows students to explore the world of work and give them opportunities to explore potential career paths. We are extremely appreciative of and grateful to businesses who open their doors to welcome our students, and give them such valuable experience.



Students also developed their barista skills, with a barista course held in school in December. They learned how to do special effects makeup for film and television, and they participated in a 'School of Life' programme, learning valuable skills that they will use in the workplace in the future. They will continue to be busy for the remainder of the school year with an array of trips, speakers and experiences planned, including a ski trip to Laverone, Italy, in February!



## Transition Year & LCA – Localise Youth Volunteering



TY1 students, as part of their Localise Youth Volunteering Community project, are working with the local Saoirse Domestic Violence refuge in Rathcoole. They invited workers from the local refuge to come in and speak with their class to give them more information about the service and guidance about what class project they could do. Tracey and Cora came in and gave TY students great ideas on what they could do to help. It was decided that TY students will create 'Welcome' hampers that will be given to women as they arrive to the refuge, in the packs they will have some essentials like pyjamas, toothbrush and other skincare and beauty items for the women. TY1 students when they return from work experience will work on these 'Welcome' hampers just in time for Christmas. TY1 students are also thinking of doing fundraising to raise monies for the service but this will be decided at a later date.

The Saoirse Domestic Violence Service have a refuge in Tallaght and after several years of campaigning they finally succeeded in opening a second refuge. The Rathcoole refuge was officially opened in November 2019, by Minister for Children & Youth Affairs, Katherine Zappone. Transition Year students at Holy Family Community School are involved in Localise Youth Volunteering Programme, this programme allows young people to volunteer locally and become pro-active citizens and community leaders.

LCA students are taking part in the 'One Million Stars to End Domestic Violence' - Women's Collective Ireland – Ronanstown, in partnership with the Saoirse Domestic Violence Services are completing this project as part of the 16 days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence. This year's theme is Femicide, 249 women have lost their lives due to abusive intimate relationships (Women's Aid April 2022). This is a visual Art through Activism project, which involves making up 249 stars that represents all the women in Ireland that have lost their lives through domestic violence since 1996, and displaying them in Ronanstown Community Centre. LCA students are in the process of making as many of these stars as possible and they look fantastic! Each star is a sign of hope.



## STEM Passport for Inclusion

Our Transition Year girls are taking part in the STEM Passport for Inclusion in Maynooth University. This project encourages girls to move into STEM courses and careers. Students collaborated on projects in the areas of STEM, to give them an insight into what studying STEM would be like. Well done to all students who participated in the course!



## Students helping students



Former student Michael O'Connor, and his guide dog Kurt, recently paid a visit to our school. Michael finished his time in HFCS in 2015, but returned to meet 1<sup>st</sup> year student, Joseph. Michael spoke to Joseph about his journey and experience in HFCS as a visually-impaired student. Joseph benefited greatly from the visit, and is a lot more confident now about the academic and social aspects of school life. Many thanks to Michael for taking the time to visit and offer advice!

## November Remembrance Wall

A group of students have created a beautiful, respectful, November Remembrance Wall, to remember deceased family, friends, students, and staff. It is in our oratory, and it is a lovely area to sit, reflect, and remember our loved ones.



## Stand-Up Awareness Week

We recently held a very successful Stand-Up Awareness Week, standing together against homophobic, biphobic, and transphobic bullying. Events were held throughout the week, including a bake sale for all students. €615 was raised for BelongTo Youth Services over the course of the week. We continue to support our LGBTI+ students in a safe, inclusive environment.



### ACCS Conference:

Our Senior Management Team recently attended an ACCS conference in Co. Cavan. At the conference, retired Principals and Deputy Principals were acknowledged for their many years of service. This included our past Principal and Deputy Principal, Brenda Kelly and Christy Morrin. We wish them the very best in their retirement.

### HFCS Social Media:

HFCS is on Instagram and Twitter! Follow us on social media @ hfcsrathcoole, for regular updates on all the great activities happening in our school!



### Merry Christmas!

We'd like to wish a very Merry Christmas, and a peaceful New Year to all in the Spiritan Education Trust.

