

## Holy Family Community School, Rathcoole

### HFCS x Darragh Ennis quiz:

On Friday 17<sup>th</sup> November, Holy Family Community School welcomed former student, and star of ITV's 'The Chase', Darragh Ennis, back to our school. Darragh has been a proud supporter of our school over the years, and recently offered to host a quiz as a fundraiser for our school.

**Table Quiz Fundraiser**  
For  
**Holy Family Community School**

**Where?**  
Louis Fitzgerald  
Hotel, Newlands  
Cross, Dublin 22

**When?**  
Friday 17th  
November  
8pm sharp

Hosted by Darragh Ennis  
**From**  
**The Chase**

- Tickets are €15 per person
- Maximum 6 per transaction
- Must be over 18 years old to play
- Tickets available on school website: [www.hfcs.ie](http://www.hfcs.ie)

PIC-COLLAGE



Darragh visited the school on Friday morning, reminiscing over his time here, and meeting up with former teachers, classmates, neighbours and friends. He also offered his time to record some promotional work for our school and parents' council social media platforms.

Following a huge promotional campaign, the stage was set at the Louis Fitzgerald Hotel for our quiz night. Having sold out in a matter of days, over 200 people attended the quiz night, primed and ready to take on the quizmaster. With Darragh as quizmaster, there were plenty of questions across a broad range of topics that got the brain juices flowing across the 42 teams participating. Throughout the quiz, we had a bumper raffle with over 50 amazing prizes. While guests of the quiz had the opportunity to win some of these incredible prizes, we also had a raffle for the ultimate prize – beat the quizmaster! Four people went head-to-head with Darragh Ennis - one emerged victorious, two drew against him, and one lost. Darragh very generously donated the prize money, both for the winner and for those who drew against him!





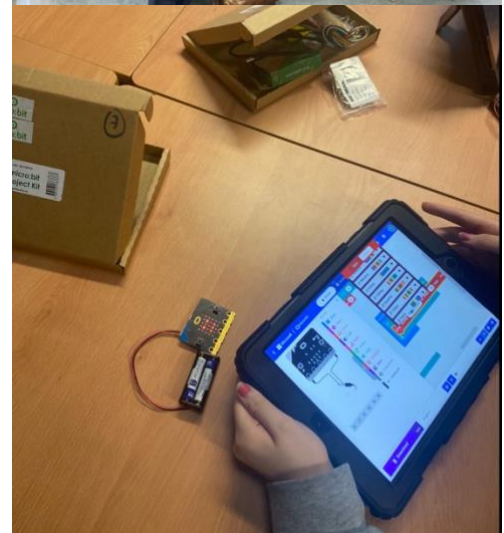
We are so very grateful to everybody who contributed to the funds raised – from ticket sales, to raffle sales, and to all the local and national businesses who provided advertising sponsorship, as well as the many wonderful raffle prizes, and to past pupil David Byrne of Spectrum Print, who generously donated the sponsorship advertising booklet



The quiz was an incredible event, which highlighted all of the wonderful support of HFCS – from our supportive parents, teachers, past pupils, and wider community. Everyone who attended was enthusiastic about it, delighted to meet and chat with Darragh, and overall they thoroughly enjoyed the night! It was a night that won't be forgotten for a very long time, and we look forward to welcoming Darragh back to our school again in the future.

### Wriggle Digital Learning Field Trip

The On Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> December, HFCS welcomed over 40 digital leaders and senior management teams from schools all around the country, along with Educational Technology company, Wriggle. We had the opportunity to showcase our digital learning journey thus far. Visitors were invited to a talk with Ingrid Fallon, Principal, Derek Maher, Deputy Principal, and Shane Keightley, Digital Learning Coordinator, each of whom outlined the journey we have been on so far – how we have integrated the use of iPads and Office 365 into the daily teaching and learning in our school, and how it has transformed the teaching and learning environment. Visitors then were brought to a number of classes across a number of subject areas – Coding, Gaeilge, Geography, and Science. Here, visitors were able to engage with teachers and students in the classroom, as topics were being taught – observing the teaching and learning environment, asking questions and gathering opinions from both students and teachers to delve further into the reality of using the iPad on a daily basis. It was a wonderful day for our school. We were



delighted to be able to share our journey so far, showcase the reality of working with technology in daily teaching and learning, as well as offering advice to others on how they can further progress in their digital learning journey.

### **Irish Mensa School Testing**

A number of students in HFCS are taking part in the Mensa programme, via the Beo group in our school. Thus far this year, they have received talks from Darragh Ennis on his career and work in science, and a talk from Riona Burke from the University of Exeter on Epi-Genetics. They have also worked on various science and STEM-related projects within our school!

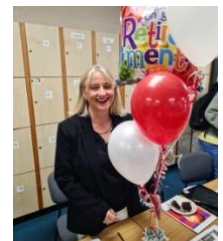
### **Students' Council:**

Our Students' Council continue to work on behalf of the student body of our school. They organise school events and fundraisers, and they run other initiatives to benefit the entire student body. Recently, HFCS was awarded the Cineáltas Flag, in recognition of the Anti-Bullying week and Anti-Bullying Action Plan. Here, our Students' Council are pictured with the Cineáltas Flag!



### **Retirees:**

Ms Sheila Daly and Ms Paula Dunne have retired from HFCS, following a combined 73 years of teaching in HFCS. Both Sheila and Paula have had such a positive impact on the thousands of students with whom they have worked over their decades in HFCS. Both much-loved members of staff and of our school community, they will be sorely missed! We wish them both the best of health and happiness, and all of the wonderful experiences that retirement offers, as they start the next chapter of their lives.





## 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! More recently, they had a fantastic rock-climbing team-building event, where they reached dizzying heights! This was a really beneficial day for them, which gave them many useful tips for working as part of a team!



## 6<sup>th</sup> Years:

Our 6<sup>th</sup> Year students have had a busy first term! They have greatly benefited from a trip to see their Shakesperean drama 'Hamlet', their Irish drama 'An Triail', which will add to their understanding of the drama. There have been many careers-related talks held, and trips to various university open days – including a campus tour of Trinity College Dublin. We hope that exposure to such a wide range of options for their futures will inspire them in their decisions for the next chapter of their lives!



### Halloween Concert:

We had a wonderful Halloween Concert and Costume Competition amongst our First Year students just before the Halloween mid-term break. The creativity amongst the costumes was extremely impressive, and as always, the talent on display at our concert was incredible! You can see videos of the many various acts on our social media channels - @hfcsrathcoole.



### Lively Lunchtimes:

Our Lively Lunchtimes initiative has continued for 2023/2024. Students have the option to participate in a wide range of areas, including games club, crafts club, debating club, dungeons and dragons, drama club, and much more. It has proven to be popular amongst students, as it gives them the opportunity to meet new friends, learn a new skill, and a way to relax during a busy school day.



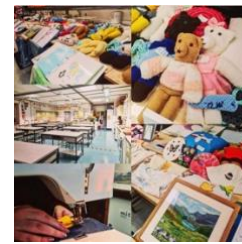
### Extra-Curricular Activities:

Our extra-curricular activities are as popular as ever, with a wide range of sports included – from badminton to soccer, gaelic football to basketball, athletics and rugby to hurling and camogie. There are multiple teams to incorporate every year group, age group, and gender. We wish our teams every success in their various competitions throughout the year!



### Open Night

We held a very successful Open Evening in September. With over 1,000 visitors to our school, 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!





## Culture Week

In September, we celebrated Culture Week in HFCS. We had 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. A number of TY students have joined our SSE Committee, which saw them being brought to the ACCS Student Voice seminar in Dublin Castle. Here, they enjoyed student-led workshops and engaged in rich discussion about the importance of student voice in our school.



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 businesses, services, both local and beyond! 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.



In addition to this, 3 TY students have taken part in the 'Med Student For A Day Programme' through the Trinity Access Programme at the Russell Building at Tallaght Cross. There are also a number of students participating in the Microsoft DreamSpace Ambassador Programme, which incorporates a wide range of workshops, including Micro Bit 101, Micro Bit Next Level, Safer Internet Day, Make Code Arcade, and Python 101

Students also developed a range of skills through a number of workshops they participated in. 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 January!



### **Localise Youth Volunteering**

TY Localise projects are currently underway with TY1's Peamount Hospital visit, where they will be singing some Christmas carols and presenting gifts. TY2 Saoirse Domestic Violence project will include a fundraiser to raise funds for the local women's refuge centre. In the new year, more projects will be completed with Saoirse's local refuge centre as the students are going to help paint and make some shelving that the refuge centre needs.



**Localise**  
youth volunteering

### **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!





## Leaving Cert Applied

Our LCA students are also enjoying a jam-packed programme! LCA1 students are currently completing their General Education task through Visual Art. They also helped with Open Night preparing delicious cakes for our visitors.

LCA2 students are completing their Agriculture and Horticulture student task, where students are collaborating to create a booklet - 'HFCS Guide to School Agriculture and Horticulture'. This guide will have a visual guide to Irish trees and flowers, and instructions for constructing windowsill greenhouses and bird feeders. It will also entail a recommended planting Calander for the school year and many more helpful guides.

LCA2 are also in the middle of completing their Practical Achievement, where some students are being taught new skills such as tiling from our very own Mr. O'Sullivan, making props for our upcoming show 'Matilda', animation drawing, art nail design and much more. LCA2 students were presented with their results from last year. We are so proud of them as they all did exceptionally well. They were brought to the local coffee shop to celebrate their wonderful results over coffee and cake.



## 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. We continue to support our LGBTI+ students in a safe, inclusive environment.

### **Restorative Practice:**

HFCS' RP journey is continuing to flourish. This year so far, our entire staff have had two CPD sessions about using restorative approaches and methodologies in their classrooms. These sessions were facilitated by the school's RP Ubuntu team.

All second year and TY students are completing the student RP programme called 'Relationship Keepers', which teaches students about the core values of RP such as empathy, respect, and personal accountability. It teaches them how to build positive relationships with one another as well as themselves. Also, it equips them with the key skills, language, and tools to navigate their way out of conflict in a healthy manner. The 6th year mentors are in the process of completing their mentor 'Be-long' programme which helps them in their role of mentoring the first-year students.

On the 5th of October, Michelle Stowe, founder of ConnectRP, was a guest speaker at our Parents' Council AGM. She spoke about how parents and guardians can use restorative practice with challenging teenagers in the home. Parents were also invited to take part in the virtual 'RP at Home' programme. This complements the student RP programme, 'Relationship Keepers', which is being taught in school.



### **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 students, staff, family and friends of Holy Family Community School, and to all in the wider community!

