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## *St Gerald's DLS College*

*Newsletter January 2024*

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### *Le Chéile Knock Symposium*

#### *A Day of Reflection and Unity*

On Thursday, April 18<sup>th</sup>, our school had the privilege of participating in the Le Chéile Knock Symposium, with ten of our 5th-year students joining with others from various schools from across the country. This gathering provided an invaluable opportunity for reflection and celebration of our shared ethos, thanks to the efforts of Ms. Loftus, Ms. Lavelle, and the entire Le Chéile team.

The day kicked off with a warm welcome from Mairead and the Le Chéile representatives, followed by an engaging icebreaker led by Mairead herself. This set the tone for a series of workshops and discussions, where students explored topics ranging from the Story of Knock to the impact of music in prayer.

Throughout the day, students had the chance to rotate through different workshops, gaining insights into various aspects of faith and spirituality. From the solemnity of Mass in the Basilica, led by Fr. Harrington, to the thought-provoking address by Jim Deeds, the symposium provided a diverse array of experiences.

Lunch provided a welcome break, allowing students to recharge and explore the surroundings. The afternoon continued with more workshops and concluded with a closing reflection.

We extend our sincere thanks to Claire and the entire Le Chéile team for organising such a meaningful event. With 36 schools and 360 participants in attendance, the symposium was a testament to the strength of our community and the power of collective reflection.

As we reflect on the day's experiences, we carry with us a renewed sense of purpose and unity. We look forward to future opportunities to come together, learn, and grow as part of the Le Chéile family.





### *SGC Subject Choice Fair: Empowering Transition Year Students*

On Friday, April 12<sup>th</sup>, SGC proudly hosted its inaugural Subject Choice Fair for Transition Year Students in the DLS Hall. This event marked a significant milestone in our commitment to providing comprehensive support for students navigating their educational journey. With all 19 optional subjects on offer, the fair offered a valuable platform for TY students to engage with Senior Cycle Students, gaining insights and advice to inform their subject choices.

We extend our sincere gratitude to all involved for their dedication and enthusiasm, which contributed to the resounding success of the event. Special commendations are due to Ms. Geraghty for her exemplary organisation and leadership.

Building on the momentum of the fair, SGC hosted a Subject Choice Evening on Thursday, April 18<sup>th</sup>. This event provided an intimate setting for students and their parents/guardians to engage directly with teachers of the TY optional subjects. This personalised interaction allowed for in-depth discussions, enabling students to gain a comprehensive understanding of each subject's requirements and implications for the Leaving Cert.

By empowering students with the knowledge and insights needed to make informed decisions, SGC reaffirms its commitment to fostering academic excellence and personal growth. We are confident that these initiatives will pave the way for each student to embark on a fulfilling educational journey tailored to their interests and aspirations.



## *Retreat Day with An Tobar Nua*

On Wednesday, April 24<sup>th</sup>, students from classes 2D, under the guidance of Ms Loftus, and 2E, led by Ms. Hiney, embarked on a memorable retreat day with An Tobar Nua. It was a day filled with exploration, reflection, and growth, as students actively engaged in the activities presented.

Students participated with great enthusiasm throughout the day. Their energy and openness contributed significantly to the success of the retreat.

An Tobar Nua's approach to student development focuses on nurturing overall well-being while fostering faith in a manner that is interactive, relatable, and enjoyable. Their mission statement, "to inspire young people to discover meaning, value, and purpose in their lives," resonated deeply with the students, guiding them through a series of activities designed to spark introspection and exploration.

As students immersed themselves in the day's events, they were encouraged to reflect on their personal journeys, values, and aspirations. Through interactive sessions, discussions, and team-

building exercises, they gained valuable insights into themselves and their relationships with others.



Many thanks to An Tobar Nua for their dedication to empowering young people and for creating an environment where students feel supported and inspired to explore their faith and personal growth.





### *Cultivating Creativity: Story Seeds Programme*

This week, students from Ms. Hoban's 2A English class and Ms. Naughton's 2E English class embarked on a journey through storytelling as they participated in the Story Seeds programme. Organised by Fighting Words and facilitated by the Linenhall Arts Centre Castlebar, this initiative provided students with a unique opportunity to explore the art of storytelling and discover the power of their own narratives.

The Story Seeds project, as described on Fighting Words' website, aims to empower young people to craft their own stories, delving into the depths of their personal, circumstantial, and emotional experiences. Through this process, students not only develop their creative writing skills but also gain a deeper understanding of their own life stories and their place within the world - both geographically and socially.

Students were encouraged to unleash their imagination and express themselves through storytelling. Through a series of engaging workshops



and collaborative exercises, they learned how to nurture their ideas, shape their narratives, and bring their stories to life on the page.

## *April Sports Round-up: A Month of Triumphs and Achievements*

April proved to be a month of exhilarating victories and admirable performances for SGC's sporting teams and individual athletes. From the thrill of championship victories to the resilience displayed on various fields and courts, our students have showcased their talent and dedication with pride.

The month kicked off with an outstanding achievement as SGC's 1<sup>st</sup> Year A team secured the title of Connacht Champions in a gripping showdown against St. Joseph's Patrician College ('The Bish') Galway. The hard-fought victory is a testament to the skill and determination of our players, as well as the guidance of their coaches, Messrs Naughton, Reilly, and Tonra.

In the realm of badminton, our 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Year players made their mark at the Division 3 Connacht Schools Badminton Championships in Ballina. Despite it being their first time representing the school, they displayed remarkable prowess and emerged victorious in the Shield competition.

The Athletics Team also left their mark at the North Connacht T&F meet in ATU Sligo, with several athletes qualifying for the upcoming Connacht T&F in Athlone. Their dedication and hard work have paid off, and we wish them continued success in their future competitions.

Beyond the school grounds, our students have been making waves in various competitions. Members of the u14 Ballintubber Bulls basketball team, including first-year students Jack Loftus, Cillian Reilly, Ryan Summerville, and Cillian Donnelly, showcased their skills at the basketball All Ireland Club Championships in Gormanston. Additionally, several of our students represented Mayo Minors (U17 Football) and faced Roscommon in the Connaught



Championship, displaying grit and determination on the field.

Individual achievements were also celebrated, with Alan Hegarty (5th year) clinching silver in the U19 800m at the National Indoor Athletics Championship in Athlone, showcasing his talent and dedication in the realm of athletics.

As we reflect on the accomplishments of April, we extend our heartfelt congratulations to all our athletes and teams for their outstanding performances. Your hard work, dedication, and sportsmanship inspire us all, and we look forward to cheering you on in your future endeavours.



### *April in Review and Anticipating May*

As April ends, we reflect on a month filled with notable achievements and meaningful contributions from our SGC community. From sports victories to acts of kindness, our students have demonstrated their talent and generosity in various ways.

Looking forward to May, we anticipate another busy month ahead.





*✂️✂️ Clip, Snip, Cheers: SGC Barbershop - Where Fresh Cuts and Good Causes Collide! ✂️✂️*

Zac and Calum from 6th year kept the scissors swinging and the laughter flowing, raising over €350 for Mayo Mental Health Association. Students and teachers alike were put to the shears, all for a great cause.

