

# PTA Newsletter

Winter 2009

As our 2<sup>nd</sup> term comes to an end, and the Junior School has “Rocked Hosanna”, uniquely presented a nativity scene and the Senior School has inspired us with a beautiful carol service it is time again to update you on PTA activities and initiatives.

## QUIZ NIGHT

The quiz night was a resounding success. Over 400 people attended the night and raised a total of €2467 for Barnardos (€894) and the TY musical in aid of the Sue Ryder Foundation (€1573). The final race was a tight one with a tie-breaker finish for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place. The winning team, Daisy Kinahan Murphy, Megan Power Foley (5<sup>th</sup> year) and Rosie Kinahan Sheehy and Ava NcKevvitt (P3) won 4 VIP tickets to the Miley Cyrus concert for their efforts - we hope they enjoyed their special night. A special thank you to Virginia Fortune for donating such a fantastic 1<sup>st</sup> prize.

## Junior School Santa Visit

Santa came to visit the girls on the 21<sup>st</sup> of December and the excitement was contagious. All the girls received a small gift from santa as they were all on the “good list”!



## Swimming for KGs (PTA coordinators Kim McGuire & Matthew Orpin)

An opportunity for KG students (and their siblings) to avail of swim lessons at Castle Park School for the autumn and spring terms was recently explored by the P.T.A. Unfortunately, previously made arrangements and conflicting schedules meant most parents were not able to take up this offer. For anyone who has not yet seen Castle Park’s swim facility, it is very nice: it is newly built, heated and the changing rooms are clean, warm and spacious. The PTA will be checking with KG parents again before the end of April to see if there is any interest for the 2010 autumn term.



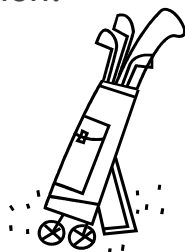
### Saturday Morning Coffee Rota (PTA coordinator Rhona Hutchinson)

Volunteers are still needed for the coffee rota on Saturday mornings in the Pavilion, from 9.30 to 12 noon. Everything is provided. All the volunteers need to do is be there to welcome visiting parents and oversee the girls. Volunteers are required for the New Year rota. Preferably two people for each Saturday, if enough people volunteer it should be necessary to call on each person only once in the year. To volunteer, or for more details, please contact Rhona at [rhona.hutchinson@ucd.ie](mailto:rhona.hutchinson@ucd.ie) or 086 3826567



### GOLF (PTA coordinator Orla Tormey)

Ten girls are taking part in a 6 week course of Golf Lessons in Leopardstown Driving Range. Feedback from the girls has been very positive. In January the next step is look at how to get the girls out playing real golf (e.g. Pitch & Putt, Par 3, 9-holes). We hope to offer introductory lessons again next term. Please email [Orlatormey@hotmail.com](mailto:Orlatormey@hotmail.com) or via [pta@rathdownschool.ie](mailto:pta@rathdownschool.ie) if you would like more information.



### First year "Meet and Greet" evening

(PTA coordinators Rhona Hutchinson & Abby Langtry)

The PTA has agreed to host an evening for first year parents in January. This will provide parents the opportunity to get together with parents from their daughter's class and in many cases put faces to names. An invite will be issued to all 1<sup>st</sup> year parents once arrangements are in place. Depending on feedback we hope to make this an annual event and to host it much earlier in the school year.

### Careers Evening

(PTA coordinators Nell Kavanagh and Ken Fennell)

We plan to hold a careers evening next term. The aim of the evening is to provide 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> year students with an opportunity to talk to people involved in all types of careers. This initiative is dependent on input from parents. So please let Nell or Ken ([pta@rathdownschool.ie](mailto:pta@rathdownschool.ie)) know if you are interested in talking to the girls about your chosen field/career.

### **SAVE THE DATE**

As you begin to fill in your dates for 2010 please put the Annual PTA BBQ in your diary for Friday May 7<sup>th</sup>. We promise great food, great music and great fun - we pray for good weather!!

## Healthy Eating Initiative

### Junior School (PTA co-ordinator Kim McGuire)

The Healthy Eating Initiative got off to a great start in November as all ten classes were visited by PTA member Kim McGuire, who is heading up the programme for Rathdown Junior School. Kim is working with Nola O' Neill, a dietician with the Health Promotion schools network, on this initiative. Kim started by visiting the dining hall while P1-P6 students were having lunch. She was happy to see first-hand that the quality of food provided by the new hot lunch catering firm, Compass, was very tasty and well presented. She was also happy to see that the girls who brought lunches from home were eating well too, with a broad range of foods from smoked salmon on brown bread to the more humble ham and butter sandwich.

Discussions in the classrooms centred on: 1) eating in season; 2) the healthy food pyramid; 3) school approved flasks; 4) the new "Kids' Food Council" (a new committee which will be similar to the Green School Committee but focused on food); and 5) what is a healthy drink, snack and lunch.

The flasks were a big hit. Kim is currently sourcing them from a supplier in Ireland but they are available immediately at [www.shopireland.ie](http://www.shopireland.ie). If you are ordering them online or buying them elsewhere the product name you are looking for is Thermos brand **Coolkidz Steel Food Jar - 290ml** (see picture below). An important note to all parents: the food put into the container in the morning will not necessarily be hot at lunchtime. When the directions are not followed exactly, the food is warm, rather than hot. The appeal of this particular container is that it gives parents and children the option of bringing things like pasta and casserole to school in a safe, fun way. All students have been asked to please bring their flask to school before using it in their lunch. This will give teachers the opportunity to ensure students have got the officially approved flask for Rathdown Junior School rather than one which may not be safe. One of the topics for discussion during the classroom visits was, "What exactly is a healthy snack, drink or lunch?" The kids had lots of fun offering up their ideas and a school-wide list was compiled of everything deemed healthy!

A book that all the kids really enjoyed looking at is **Ready, Steady, Lunchbox** by Lucy Broadhurst. It is a good resource for parents who want ideas for their daughter's lunches. If you have any feedback about this programme please contact Kim via the PTA email [pta@rathdownschool.ie](mailto:pta@rathdownschool.ie)



## TIPS FROM TALKS

As promised in our last newsletter, here are Prof Vincent Maloney's parenting tips

### THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OF CHILD REARING

(primary school age group)

1. Blame the behaviour not the child.
2. Use affirming touch. Give and receive at least 10 hugs a day - not just between adult and child - hugging your partner is just as important.
3. Communicate with your child - we have two ears and one mouth - listen twice as much as you talk.
4. Make sure your child understands what you are saying.
5. Help your child postpone gratification
6. Teach your child to make choices - choose between 3 as two is too little and 4 too much.
7. Find your child doing right things and associate it with effort.
8. Teach your child to deal with failure.
9. Make memories with your child
10. Give your child rules and principles.

**ABOVE ALL LIGHTEN UP AND ENJOY YOUR CHILDREN - DON'T LEAVE IT UNTIL TOMORROW TO ENGAGE WITH THEM - THEY'LL HAVE GROWN UP AND LEFT BY THEN.** Two books written by Dr. V. Molony and his wife N. Molony were on sale as follows: **Parents Under Pressure and Coping With Adolescence**

### COPING WITH ADOLESCENCE - 10 GOLDEN RULES

1. **Never** compare one child to another sibling or any other child. Treat your child as an individual.
2. Help your teenagers to establish **goals** in life and get them to write them down - short term goals, medium term goals and longer term goals.
3. **Communicate** with your children. Listen twice as much as you speak to them. Best to try communicating in ways other than face to face - try doing so side by side when walking, cooking, driving or helping each other. Talk to them about their friends - don't react when they reveal what others are doing. Just absorb all the information and feelings being transmitted and store up for pondering on and use later.
4. Help your child to develop a **feeling vocabulary** - words to describe what affects them, what it feels like. Describe your own feelings. Danger is that if a child can't speak a feeling, he/she may act it out.
5. Teach them the **financial facts of life** - then money becomes real. Try paying for something for them with a wad of 5 euro notes instead of a credit card!
6. Teach them to **give** from their abundance e.g. give a small percentage of their pocket money weekly to a charity of their choice. They must learn how lucky and privileged they are. Discuss things money can't buy like health, fresh air, time.
7. Agree a common **set of rules** with your teenagers. Choose some time when they are not breaking rules to lay them down. Both parents should agree on the rules even if separated - be consistent.
8. Establish the **'We'** position - the values that are held in the household in order to resist pressure from peer groups. 'We are careful with alcohol, 'we' are honest in our dealings with others - whatever the family values are, make them very clear.
9. Learn how to say **NO** and mean it. If child is 12-14 years and asks for permission to do something say yes 25 times in a 100. If 14-16 and they ask your permission to do something say yes 50 times in a 100. If 16-18 years and they ask your permission say yes 75 times in a 100 because they won't ask permission so often. When they ask why you are saying no, give them a clear answer and don't change the answer if asked again. Also, never decide on a punishment when you are angry. Part of discipline is in waiting for the punishment e.g. parent to child 'I am so happy to see you home safely, I won't even tell you what punishment I had planned for you being late. I'll tell you tomorrow'. Ask child to consider what punishment might be appropriate.
10. Respect your child's **intelligence**. A child can be intelligent in other ways than academic. There are 8 types of intelligence of which your child is likely to have 2 or 3. They are: (1) Visual/spatial. (2) Logical/mathematical (don't ever say that nobody in our family was ever good at maths). (3) Linguistic. (4) Musical. (5) Interpersonal. (6) Emotional. (7) Naturalistic. (8) Bodily Kinesics. It is important to recognize your child's intelligence and get a good match with what they do in life so that they can be happy and motivated in their work life and home life.

It only remains to wish you and your families a festive season filled with joy and laughter and peace and good health to all for 2010.