

# NEWSLETTER

## Sutton Park School



## October 2008

### Message from Michael Moretta, Head of School

It has been another busy and exciting nine weeks at Sutton Park. In this newsletter I want to tell you about some of the events that have taken place already as well as signal future school activities. The build up to Christmas will be, as you know, just as hectic and exciting. I feel the mood of the school is very positive. In these days of gloom and despair it is refreshing to see and hear so many positives. I suppose young people are able to convey positive emotions through their behaviour and activities in ways that we cynical adults sometimes find difficult. I apologise for the length of this communication, but I hope you will all find something in it to cheer you up as the long winter nights close in.

### Open Evening

I hope as many of you as could afford the time managed to attend our Open Evening on the 16<sup>th</sup> October. The whole evening was incredibly well attended and a huge success. I am sure I am not just speaking for myself when I say that the two hours of the event swept by amazingly quickly. The school looked bright, alive and was bounding with activity. All the classrooms on display seemed to me to be filled with massively enthusiastic visitors and enthusiastic parents eagerly absorbing the information. Open Evenings have various functions, but to me one of the most important is to reassure and revitalise the whole school community. In a significant way such evenings serve to galvanise students, teachers and parents and we collectively celebrate what a fine school we have. You will be pleased to know that I heard nothing but complementary remarks about what we do from the visitors and those new to our school. I want to share some of these objective comments with you as well as add a few remarks of my own.

The guides were absolutely magnificent. They drew nothing but admiring remarks from everyone lucky enough to be escorted around the school by the team of 70 guides. It is a measure of the numbers of visitors that we ran out of guides at 7:30 and many had to complete three tours. The guides were expertly marshalled by the Senior Prefects. I would like to thank Matthew Brazel, Mark Guerin, Sinead Brophy and Anne-Marie O'Driscoll for managing the front of house so efficiently. They looked poised and sophisticated – the boys in suits and ties no less - and remained unflappably in control at the very busy moments.

As I remarked earlier I have never seen the school looking so well. A common comment from visitors and parents was, "It's such an energetic and lively school." usually followed by, "and the students they're so confident and relaxed and happy – you must be very proud to be Head." Indeed I am and I would like to thank everyone who made the evening such a success.

### Elections To The Board of Management

A number of the BOM are coming to the end of their terms of office and we are once again facing elections. I enclose a letter from the current Chair, Mr Eoin Scott regarding the procedures and I would urge as many of you as possible to participate.

#### Inside this issue:

Message From Michael Moretta  
Head of School

Open Evening

Elections To The B.O.M

PTA

Anti-Bullying Policy &  
Child Protection

Respect Debates & Brussels Trip

Grease The Musical

All Ireland Hockey Championships

MUN

Careers Night - 4th,5th & 6th

The School Canteen

Reports

Message From Liam Burns  
Intermediate School Principal

Open Evening

Parents Meetings

Clubs

Halloween

Message From Geraldine McGuire  
Junior School Principal

Curriculum Enrichment Programme

European Day of Healthy Eating



Happy Halloween



# PTA

The week before Open Evening the school hosted the Annual AGM in the library. Again the evening was very well attended. I would like to begin this section by thanking Eileen Ryan for her massive contribution to the school during her two year tenure as chair of the PTA. Her hard work and commitment to the school has been terrific and over the next few months you will see a significant change to the Junior School play area in the front of the main entrance. I have seen the plans and the new area will prove to be a fine testament to the outgoing committee.

I would also like to welcome Ms Gorman as the new Chair. I had a sense of enormous goodwill and support from the parents who attended the AGM. There was a tangible atmosphere of commitment and drive towards developing the school and driving forward that I am sure the new committee can tap into. A vibrant PTA is always the hallmark and cornerstone of a forward - looking school community and we are very lucky at Sutton Park to have parents willing to selflessly sacrifice time and give up their considerable expertise to improve the school. I enclose some accompanying PTA material with this newsletter outlining plans for FUNdraising. I hope you agree that they are exciting and imaginative and I am sure we will have many concrete and lasting achievements to celebrate in future newsletters.

The new committee are discussing future projects as I write. At the AGM I outlined areas of the school that need development of the next few years. When you begin a list of developments it soon grows and it is easy to lose sight of the costs. Moreover, we will all have different priorities and what looks like a positive process of planning can, in my experience, become divisive and fragmented. Groups of parents can easily feel that in developing one area of the school it means that another area of particular interest is being neglected or sidelined. That is why it is important for development to be directed by the school and that, I suppose, is why Boards of Government were invented since they ultimately decide such matters. In our December Board meeting we have placed school development as a major agenda item and I will report that outcome of that meeting in my new year newsletter.

You may have heard that one group of parents have a plan to develop the swimming pool. The PTA have agreed to consider this project in principle and perhaps adopt it as their major project over the next few years. It is important that such a project is embraced by an umbrella organisation such as the PTA since they represent all parents. In order to gauge interest in the parent body they have asked me to distribute a short questionnaire. I would be grateful if you could take the time to fill in this questionnaire and return it to your son or daughter's form teacher when we return from the mid-term.

I want to end this section by drawing your attention to two future events:

- Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> November from 10 am – 3:30 is our Book Fair. It takes place in the Library and the accompanying flyer explains the details. I should point out that the books in the fair are all new – not second hand. The books have been donated from Village Books in Malahide.
- Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> November the PTA are organising a talk for parents and students on nutrition and sports nutrition. The evening begins at 7:30 and will take place in the Library. Keep a look out for notices. Last year the PTA organised seminars on Drugs and Alcohol in conjunction with Ms Ryan and they were excellent.

## Anti-Bullying Policy and Child Protection

It is a truism that sound policy making requires a broad base of consensual support and clear directives and guidelines. I have been lucky enough to have been actively involved in the process of formulating and shaping our new Anti-Bullying Policy. What is most impressive to me is the “buy in” and involvement of so many people. We had support from objective experts from the Department of Education and Trinity College as well as enormous contributions from Staff, Students, Parents and Governors. The Board of Management has formally ratified the policy. All divisions of the school have been represented in the formation process and for the first time the policy applies to all sections of Sutton Park –The Junior School, The Intermediate School and the Secondary School. Ms Ryan our Student and Guidance Counsellor has consulted wisely and widely and produced a clear, sensitive and practical policy that I believe will make it extremely difficult for bullies to operate at Sutton Park.

Please take time to read through the hard copy. We all need to work together if we are to stamp out bullying and it is only really possible if we all collectively adhere to common definitions and procedures. Congratulations to all who helped put the policy together. We will implement it in full after the mid-term and review it at the end of the year.

The policy will be launched during Respect Week beginning on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> November. I hope as many of you as possible will attend the seminars for parents being organised on Monday evening – beginning at 7:00 in the Library. The PTA and the 50th Anniversary Committee have sponsored the distribution of Department for Education Anti Bullying books entitled ‘Tips for Teens’. I really would like to thank both groups for their generous support of this cause. The week will end with a special assembly on Friday when the students will present the products of special group sessions run by a team from Trinity College.

The Child Protection Guidelines are sensible and clear. These have been laid down by the Department for Education and Science and once again they have been fully ratified by the Board of Management. I enclose a digest of the procedures, but would urge you to read / load down the full document from the Department website. Our website has a link to it so you can go through the school site of you like. The roles of the Designated Liaison Person [The head of School] and a deputy [The deputy Principal] have been ratified and all staff in all sections of the school have spent time in staff meetings absorbing the document. Mr Burns and Ms McGuire are also briefed regarding the guidelines and should you seek further clarification please do not hesitate to contact any of us.

## Respect Debates & Brussels Trip

As some of you know, last year, our debating teams performed incredibly well in the Respect Debating Competition. Our team came 16<sup>th</sup> in the Country and drew huge praise from the judges. Two of the team, Anne-Marie O'Driscoll and Louise Moore have been invited on a trip to the European Commission in Brussels on the 10<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> November. They will form part of a group attempting to raise further awareness and put pressure on politicians to honour commitments given to Millennium Development Goals. They will meet students from the local International school, EU lobbyists and a selection of MEP's as well as Charlie McCreevy. I will ask them to write a brief report when they return, but it will be a very exciting as well as useful opportunity for them to see the political system in action and of course wonderful for their CVs. The Concern Debates took place in the last week of this half term. Many thanks to Mr Finucane for organising these debates. The Concern Debates took place in the last week of the half term.

## MUN

The Model United Nations group have just returned from their trip to Croydon and I have heard nothing but positive comments from the teachers who accompanied them on this visit. The MUN provides our students with the opportunity to debate and share ideas with students from many different schools all around the UK and Europe. They are required to take the role of ambassadors of countries such as the Ukraine for example and discuss up to the minute issues in front of sometimes as many as 300 delegates. Although it must be daunting I am very happy to report that all the students accredited themselves well.

I have asked them to write up an account of their experiences and will include it in the next newsletter. Many thanks to Ms Houlihan and Ms Hanratty for accompanying them on the trip and very well done to the students.

## Grease The Musical

The school production is rapidly approaching and I am hearing wonderful things about progress in rehearsals. You may have seen some of the costumes on Open Evening. Please look out for signs about ticket sales when they appear. This time the music will be live and I know tickets will be in real demand. I hope as many of you as possible will book a ticket as soon as they go on release.

We require volunteers to help in the following areas of the production:

- Makeup
- Hair
- Costume and set.

If you are able to help please contact Ms Howard Ms Trina Stalley or just leave your name at reception.

## All Ireland Hockey Championships

Our team for the All Ireland Hockey Championships leaves for Limerick on Wednesday. I know you will join with me in wishing them every success. All of us at the school will be wiling them on. Good luck boys.

## Careers Night - 4th, 5th & 6th Year Parents

**Tuesday 4th November 2008**

Sutton Park School Careers Night will be held in the Library at 7:30pm

TCD, UCD, DCU & DIT will be there as well as past pupils and parents to discuss their college courses and career paths.

**Attendance for students is compulsory.**

# The School Canteen

We have a new head chef in the canteen and I feel the quality of the food and service in general has improved significantly this term. Cost in food and transportation have however risen fairly steeply since we first priced individual items last year and I am afraid that we have had to raise prices to keep in line with these increased costs. We have endeavoured to keep these increases as low as possible. Overall prices will raise by about 8% across the board. I hope you do not find these increases too burdensome. We constantly monitor our costs in this area.

## Reports

The first academic reports in the secondary school are dispatched with this newsletter. Please remember that they are only interim reports and snapshots of the first nine weeks of a long year. Grades do not necessarily indicate end of year results or the marks of the terminal exams in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Years. They do provide you with important information about progress made. The next milestone will be the Christmas exams beginning on the 11<sup>th</sup> of December. We certainly have time to put measures in place to sort out difficulties or address problems, so please contact us quickly if you feel there is a problem.

For those students in the important examination classes of 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Years I enclose details about Evening study. Many students make a positive decision to join this supervised study to aid exam preparation. You can see there are two rates – the first a 5 day rate from Monday – Friday and then a 3 Day rate Monday, Tuesday and Thursday. If your son / daughter opts to take up Evening Study after the mid-term the costs will be half of the printed price of term one. Some may wish to take up the service later in the year and that is perfectly in order.

## Intermediate School

### Message from Liam Burns, Intermediate School Principal

On Wednesday, 22nd October last boys and girls from the Intermediate School took to the field to complete in our first ever soccer match. Our opponents were Willow Park School, the feeder school to Blackrock College.

It really was a wonderful occasion, the sun was shining, the pitch was immaculate and our team were resplendent in their new kit, kindly donated by our P.T.A.

While we fell to a heavy 5-2 defeat the team played exceptionally well and really only faltered in the last 5 minutes, conceding 3 goals as tiredness crept in.

Our goal scorers on the day were James Burns and Jack Ryan whilst Jordan McDonald and James Hurley shared goalkeeping duties. Both were fantastic and Jordon made a wonder save, palming a ferocious shot from 5 yards to safety.

Our defenders were - Conor Reilly, William Eickholt, Gavin O'Brien, Luke O'Driscoll Downes, Kieran McHale, Harvey McCone, Ben Pheifer, Amy Reynolds

Midfield Players - Daniel Holmes, Jack Ryan, Keith O'Hare, Jack Scott, Evan Christian

Strikers - James Burns, Robbie O'Hanlon, Rory Lynskey, Stevie Pitt Lennon

## Open Evening

A big thank you to all our children who assisted so ably on Open Evening. Our guides were magnificent and are one of the best means of promoting the school in a positive light. Those children who took part in the classroom activities were a credit to themselves and the school and are to be congratulated on their wonderful efforts.

## Parents Meetings

I would like to thank all parents who attended the group meetings at the start of October. I hope you found them informative and that they gave you some sense of our priorities on Intermediate School.

Individual parents meetings are to be held on 19th November and your child shall be given a note confirming details on their return from mid-term break.

## Clubs

On Wednesday, clubs are now in full swing and are very diverse in nature ranging from Cookery to Gaelic Football and Drama to Taekwondo. The Book Club went into town to visit Waterstones on Wednesday 22nd October. They were very impressed by the bookshop experience but were even more impressed by the protesters they stumbled across outside Leinster House. The mounted police and the chanting hordes provided great excitement and really made it a memorable occasion. Our librarians Valerie and Trina will really have to pull out all the stops next year to surpass this years trip.

I would like to thank Valerie and Trina for the wonderful work they do with the Book Club. They really do foster a love of reading in all our children.

## Halloween

The children had a fancy dress/non-uniform day on Friday 24th October to enter into the Halloween spirit. Their donation of 2 Euro's per child will go to Baldoyle Children's Hospital.

Finally I wish you all a restful break and look forward to seeing you all on return.

# Junior School

## Message from Geraldine McGuire, Junior School Principal

It is hard to believe that the first term of the school year is over. Evidence of a very enjoyable and productive term lines the corridors and walls of classrooms in the form of displays of written work, art & craft and photographs.

All classes settled very quickly and good work practices were established at the outset. I know that you see your child's work on a very regular basis and your opportunity to view it in its entirety is at the Parent Teacher meetings on November 19<sup>th</sup>.

## Curriculum Enrichment Programme

The Curriculum Enrichment Programme introduced this year which takes place on a Wednesday afternoon has proven to be a huge success. As Tuesday comes along both teachers and pupils are to be seen checking the calendar to see what excitement the following day holds. So far we have visited theatres and museums, taken part in a music workshop, walked the local area learning the Green X Code, enjoyed meeting an author and developed our cookery skills in a number of cookery classes. There are more exciting events planned for next term. I would like to thank all parents who have helped us on our excursions and I must thank especially all those involved in organising the cookery classes. All details of this term's activities are on the school web-site.

## European Day of Healthy Eating

On Tuesday, November 4<sup>th</sup>, we will be celebrating the European Day of Healthy Eating with the children of Grades 1, 2 & 3 engaging in three workshops; Sensory Testing, Planting and Healthy Lunch Box Preparation. Junior & Senior Infants will be engaging in something similar and age appropriate. We are looking forward to an interesting, hardworking and productive Christmas term

# Sutton School of Dance

18<sup>TH</sup> SEP - 11<sup>TH</sup> DEC

Sutton Park School  
St Fintan's Road  
Sutton

Thursdays

4 - 7 yrs 3:00 General

8 - 12 yrs 3:45 Ballet

8 - 12 yrs 4:30 Jazz

Fridays

2:45 - 3:30 Boys Only



Classes welcome 4 - 12 yrs.  
Beginners to advanced dancers,  
Encouraging great co ordination,  
Posture and creativity of skills  
Working towards choreographed  
Dance routines.

Register Now

Contact

Gill Grueber 086 8396985

suttonschoolofdance@gmail.com

**COMING  
SOON**

**Sutton Park School  
Presents**



**The Musical**

**26th, 27th, 28th (8pm) & Sat Matinee 29th November 2008**

**Tickets Available Soon on 01 839 9400  
Book Early To Avoid Disappointment**