

Welcome to the Christmas newsletter of the last one of 2015. It's been a very busy half term and everyone is looking forward to the Christmas break.



St Damian's are proud to have achieved Bronze CardiacSmart Status!

The CardiacSmart award recognises schools, for their dedication to raising awareness of heart health, basic life support and defibrillators in their local communities and the impact it has had. Thanks to the training staff have received from NWAS we really are increasing the chances of survival for anybody using our facilities who suffers a cardiac arrest. We have 2 defibrillators in school and have trained staff in basic life support. We will continue to raise awareness of how important improving access to a defibrillator is in local communities. Our award will be proudly displayed in school for all to see and is testament to the work that our staff have put into making St Damian's a healthier place.

### Carol Service

Rehearsals are in full swing for the St Damian's Carol Service 'The Way, The Light, The Truth'. We have over 200 pupils involved in this celebration and parents will be very welcome to come and celebrate with us on December 14<sup>th</sup> at either the 1.30pm or 6.30pm performance. Tickets MUST be reserved in advance. Please contact reception if you have not yet reserved your seats. Please note that due to the number of pupils involved, tickets are limited to 2 per family.

### Music

Pupils in 8X2 had a really exciting experience on November 26<sup>th</sup> when they went to the BBC studios at MediaCityUK to be part of a live lesson recorded and streamed around the country. It was a fantastic opportunity to see the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, poet Lemn Sissay, CBBC presenter Naomi Wilkinson, Blur's Alex James, world famous Street Artist 'Stik' and 4 times World DJ Champion 'Mr Switch'. The link to watch this live lesson is <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0376g8q>.

We have come to the end of a fantastic term of Music. More pupils than ever before have been learning instruments and getting involved with extra-curricular activities. With more than 250 pupils each week having instrumental lessons, singing in choirs and playing in bands there is a really fantastic vibe about The Arts. This has been reinforced by our Music Ambassadors. There were lots of fabulous applications for this post, with the successful students being Aimee McEwan and Adam Scaife in year 7, Jessica Nwoji and Laurence Cull in year 8, Eve Chadderton and Caitlon Senior in year 9, Jemima Wright and Jessica Sweeney in year 10 and Amy Terry and Daniel Hayes in year 11. Already, they have been doing a fabulous job and promoting and supporting music at St Damian's.

At St Damian's we really value singing and helping our students to develop their musical skills! Pupils throughout the school from a 'whole year 7 choir' to a 'Senior Prefect and Staff Choir' will be performing at the Carol Service on December 14<sup>th</sup>. We are now lucky enough to have been given access to an online 12 week vocal training course for all of our staff and pupils. The Voxtrain system uses a map to guide students in their learning and gives them the opportunity to work independently. All pupils have to do is visit **Voxtrain.com** and enter the voucher code **VTUK-STD001-2015**. This voucher code will allow students access for 12 weeks and give them time to complete the 12-week singing programme completely free of charge. If you have any problems logging on, or for more information, please contact Mrs Dickson in school.

**Liturgical Group** Since September the Liturgical group have had a busy time! They have received their certificates for winning the Dianna award from the Mayor of Ashton, a real privilege! They have met and quizzed local MP Angela Raynor and have been at the forefront of the charitable work at St Damian's. They ran the Macmillan

Coffee morning and have been visiting forms to let people know about the importance of Mission Christmas. They are currently collecting and wrapping presents! During the final week of term they will be leading the traditional Christmas jumper day! On Christmas Jumper day we are transforming our Piazza into a Winter Wonderland and we will have our very own Christmas Markets where we will be selling drinks, cakes, sweets. All proceeds will go towards the wonderful Key 103 Christmas Appeal.



### St Damian's Language Ambassadors



Twelve Year 10 pupils have been chosen as Language Ambassadors for their excellent attitude and effort in languages. Their duties have involved speaking to younger pupils in assemblies about the importance of languages, helping out at the European Day of Languages celebrations and in the New Year they will be completing the Language Leaders Award. As a reward for their hard work so far, they were taken to the Christmas Markets in Manchester on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> December where they completed a variety of different language tasks, speaking to native French, Spanish and German stall owners in their own language! Of course, all pupils behaved impeccably, and Lydia Smith and Harriet Brotherton were the overall winners of the Christmas Markets Language Challenge!

**Exam Equipment:** Year 11 have recently sat their GCSE mock examinations, many without all of the equipment they require for an examination. Please could you ensure that your child has a clear pencil case containing a black pen, ruler, eraser, pencil and a calculator. ALL equipment can be purchased from the school office.

### MAC

St Damian's have launched "MAC" to recognise and reward good maths practice in ALL subjects. Maths Across the Curriculum (MAC) encourages pupils and teachers to develop efficient and consistent maths skills that will help all pupils and be useful in life after school! MAC Ambassador pupils have been chosen to help pupils and teachers develop their MAC skills. MAC Success and MAC Champion badges are given when good practice is demonstrated. If pupils are nominated for three MAC success badges, they qualify for a Gold Champion badge. Three gold badges entitles pupils to a £50 voucher!! *Bring on the MAC!*

### Year 7

Year 7 are going to watch a performance of Charles' Dickens' a Christmas Carol in the winter gardens in Blackpool on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> of December, this will be a great opportunity to help them with their studies of this text in English.

### Year 10

Since September Year 10 have made an outstanding start to their GCSE years. They have been building on their leadership skills throughout the school in preparation to become Prefects next year. Year 10 are already leaders in Science through the STEM club, we also have Language Ambassadors as well as Worship captains to name but a few! They received their Progress Checks and as a year group they are making excellent progress towards their target grades! Some of our pupils were also chosen to attend Ashton Sixth Form 'Raising Aspirations' programme that will allow the pupils to get an insight into their chosen subject areas at college and university. Year 10 are a shining example at St Damian's; they have shown commitment to their learning and dedication to the wider community – long may this continue!

## Reading Millionaires

A big *congratulations* to these students who have taken on the Reading Challenge of reaching a MILLION WORDS through our ACCELERATED READER programme. A BIG WELL DONE !!

Our Reading Millionaires are; Max Gaunt ( Year 7 ), Patrycja Darzek ( Year 7 ), Denis Duff (Year 7 ), Rubab Mahmood ( Year 8 )

## Mother Goose Pantomime- 7<sup>th</sup> December 2015

On Monday the 7<sup>th</sup> December 2015, Mrs Whiteside, Miss Allen & Mrs Ogden had the privilege of taking 56 year 7 and 8 pupils to the Oldham Coliseum for the pantomime Mother Goose. It was a very exciting trip for all those concerned (staff included). The singing and dancing were amazing and had us all singing along to hits like Uptown Funk. The pantomime dame was very amusing with all the changes of costume (oh no he wasn't!). Thank you to everyone who helped to organise the trip and to all the pupils for their wonderful behaviour and infectious enthusiasm. A great time was had by all!

## Year 7 and 8 Royal Mail Competition

All year 7 and 8 pupils have recently entered the National Competition with Royal Mail this year along with over 100,000 other pupils around the country. They were asked to write a letter explaining why they would be great at their dream job. It was fantastic to see the variety in jobs that the pupils are thinking about such as dancing instructors, solicitors and Ninja Warriors! Good luck to all of you. Judging should have taken place by mid-February 2016.

## Performing Arts

The Year 10 Performing Arts group has been working extremely hard to come up with their own production of 'Aladdin'. This will be presented as part of the annual SVP Party for the good citizens of Tameside. It will take place on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> December in the school hall. Our guests will be bedazzled with the singing, dancing and acting of our talented performers (Oh yes they will!).

## Tameside Cross Country 2015



On Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2015 we took over 30 pupils to represent the school in the Tameside Cross Country Championships at Richmond Street, Ashton. In treacherous ground conditions the pupils did fantastically well. We had some great team results as well as superb individual performances. The Year 8/9



girls team followed up from their great performance last year and were once again crowned Tameside Champions. The Year 7 Boys team ran fantastically well to become the Tameside runners-up, here's to going one better next year. Well Done from all the PE Dept.

## Basketball

In the recent Tameside Basketball Tournaments the Year 11 and Year 8 boys did fantastically well both achieving runners-up spot in their competition.

## Boys Football

The league season is progressing nicely for all teams involved with over 75 boys representing the school in football through the season so far. We are looking forward to the league resuming after February half term to go for the league titles. In the Tameside Cup Years 7,8,9 and 10 are all through to the Quarter Final Stage that will resume after Christmas. In the Greater Manchester Catholic Cup Year 11 advance through to the quarter finals after a hard fought win over St Thomas More. The Year 9 team are due to play St Peter's and we wish them the best of luck. Once again the pupils were a credit to St Damian's.

## Pupil Learning Forum

Mrs Lowe would like to thank the Year 11 members of the Pupil Learning Forum for their exceptional contributions to improving the learning experience of the pupils of St Damian's. The time and commitment they

have volunteered over the last 18 months is very much appreciated. At the end of this term these pupils will relinquish their PLF duties so that they can prioritise their own learning in the final stages of Year 11.

Lauren Bacon, Liberte-Mae Hirst, Niamh Connaghan, Shanise Cabral Fernandes, Amy Terry, Ciara Blackhurst, Daniel Hayes, Rebecca Cooper, Jack Povey-Hillan, Anna Murphy, Butchelle Amigable, Ben McCarthy, Akhil Sebastian, Joseph Jones

I would like to congratulate the forty Year 10 pupils who have recently been interviewed for the Pupil Learning Forum. These pupils should be very proud of the high quality of their letters of application and their articulate responses to the interview questions. **Particular thanks to Mrs Jones, Our Chair of Governors, who has given up her time over four days to interview all the applicants. We really appreciate the unlimited time and commitment that Mrs Jones gives to support the success of the Pupil Learning Forum.** Special thanks also to the Year 11 pupils who interviewed with Mrs Jones: Benjamin McCarthy, Rebecca Cooper, Lauren Bacon, Daniel Hayes, Butchelle Amigable and Amy Terry. Mrs Jones was highly impressed with their maturity in the selection of the new members. The Pupil Learning Forum will expand considerably this year so that all forty pupils can contribute actively to 'improving learning' across the College. However sixteen pupils have been selected through the interviews as the Core Pupil Learning Forum. The selected pupils will be announced next week in the Year 10 Assembly and these CORE members will be awarded Gold ties in recognition of this achievement.

### Year of Mercy



December 8<sup>th</sup> the Feast of the Immaculate Conception marks the start of Pope Francis' Holy Year of Mercy 2015-2016. This Jubilee Year will run until the 20<sup>th</sup> November 2016, concluding with the Solemnity of Christ the King. Pope Francis encourages us to "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful". This is a reminder to us all that no matter what wrong we have done or sin we have committed, there is always the possibility of starting over again and discovering the wonder of the love and mercy of God.

	School Closes	School Re-Opens
Christmas	Friday 18th December 2015	Monday 4th January 2016
Half term	Friday 12th February 2016	Monday 22nd February 2016
INSET DAY	<b>*Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2016 (school closed)</b>	
Good Friday	Friday 25 <sup>th</sup> March 2016 (school closed)	
Easter Monday	Monday 28 <sup>th</sup> March 2016 (school closed)	
Easter	Friday 1st April 2016	Monday 18th April 2016
Spring Bank Holiday	Monday 2nd May 2016 (school closed)	
Half term	Friday 27th May 2016	Monday 6th June 2016
Summer	Tuesday 19th July 2016	**

\*STAFF INSET DAYS: (school closed to pupils)

- Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2016

\*\* It is anticipated that autumn term 2016/17 will commence Monday 5th September 2016



**May I take this opportunity to wish you a peaceful and Holy Christmas and we look forward to welcoming the children back to school in the New Year, Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2015**