**From the Parents Association of Ballinamere National School**

**January/February 2015**

**Farewell and Welcome Back**

In early February we bid farewell to Ms. Fiona Brennan who had replaced Ms. Mary Guest on maternity leave. Though staff and pupils were sad to say goodbye to Fiona we were all delighted to welcome Mary back after the birth of her son Eamonn.

**Credit Union Table Quiz**

Congratulations to our Junior and Senior Table Quiz Teams who participated in the annual Credit Union Quiz in the Tullamore Court Hotel on Friday 13th February. Our Senior Team of Mikey Gaffey, Aoife Redmond, Paul Sheehan, Lucy Fennelly and Hannah Corble scored very highly and were placed fifth, while our Junior Team of Fionan Redmond, Robert Murphy, Joe Hughes, Cian McConnell and William Corble did the school proud and won the Junior section. Well done to all.

**Basketball**

22 girls and 10 boys from 4th, 5th and 6th class participated in the Offaly Mini Basketball Finals in Coláiste Choilm on Monday 16th February. The School was superbly represented by 2 girls teams and 1 boys team. One girls team made it to the final but lost out to Clara in the end. Our other girls team performed brilliantly and won the Group A cup! The boys also played very well and were narrowly beaten by Ballinagar in the final. Well done to all the pupils on their basketball skills and their excellent behaviour. Sincere thanks to Julie Slattery and Maireád Galvin who accompanied the pupils and coached them through their games. Thanks also to Carol Slattery who supervised the boys during their training sessions prior to the competition.

**Indoor Hurling**

Well done to the boys and girls from 5th and 6th class on their participation in indoor hurling blitzes organised by the GAA in St. Marys. The girls won a trophy for their efforts. Well done girls! The lunchtime school league will be contested between Dublin and Kilkenny – good luck to both teams.

**Badminton**

Four boys from sixth class, Liam Thompson, Ronan Cleary, Paul Sheehan and Eoghan McConnell travelled to Clonaslee on Sunday, 1st March to participate in the Offaly Schools Badminton Competition. They beat teams from thirteen other schools to bring the trophy to Ballinamere. Well done boys!

**Retreat**: 6th class had their retreat recently in preparation for their confirmation on Saturday 18th April at 3.00pm. “Spiritual, relaxing and enjoyable” is how class members described the experience.

**Sacraments**: First Penance for the pupils in 2nd class will take place in the school on Thursday 19th March at 6.30pm. First Communion will also be in the school at 10.00am on Sunday 10th May.

**Fourth Class** were delighted to welcome back Abigail Spollen to their class after Christmas. All are very busy knitting.

**Art Competition**

Congratulations to Niamh Garvey (1st class) and Iris Samonte (2nd class) who won art and craft materials to the value of EUR 200 for the School, in a colouring competition sponsored by 'Supermacs'. Well done to both girls and a big thank you to Supermacs.

**Tesco Blue Tokens for Charity**

The Autism Centre received a very welcome €411.21 from Tesco recently, proceeds of the Blue Token Collection held in their Tullamore store. A big thank you to everyone who took time to help with this while doing their shopping.

**Green Schools**

The Green School Energy Committee is increasingly energetic this term. Each class are doing lessons about energy and energy conservation. The School is building up to a big green day again this year. The School is maintaining its first green flag really well and are ready to spread compost on the flower beds in the sensory garden. The Green Committee did a whole school clean up before the mid-term break. There will also be an energy slogan and poster competition.

**Lego Collection**

If you have any lego no longer used or required at home it would be very much appreciated by the pupils in Emer Dunne’s class. All donations, large or small would be gratefully received.

**Labelling of School Uniforms**

As the summer term approaches and the weather improves, the time for shedding jumpers, cardigans and tracksuit tops is almost upon us. **Please**, **please** label all items which may be removed. A clearly labelled jumper almost always is returned to its owner, an unlabelled one almost never makes it back!

**Parking**

Parents are reminded to be mindful of others when they are parking, and in particular to leave space for the buses.

**Easter Cake Sale**

We the Parents Association are hosting an Easter cake sale in the school on the morning of Friday 27th March. We would invite pupils and parents to bake something for it please. Your support would be greatly appreciated. More details to follow.

**Clothing Collection**

We are having another clothing collection on Tuesday evening 24th March from 6.30pm to 7.30pm and before school on Wednesday 25th March. If you have time to do a spring clean, we will take all your new and used unwanted clothing, shoes, belts, handbags, linens, household textiles, etc. We would be delighted with all donations to help with this fundraiser. A reminder will be sent beforehand.

**Swimming**

All classes from 1st class upwards are enjoying their swimming lessons in Aura swimming pool at present. The Parents Association helped in keeping costs down for parents by paying for the buses.

**Reminder**

Easter school holidays are for two weeks starting with a half day on March 27th.

School will be closed on Tuesday March 17th.

Please see school blog for all the latest school related news and activities: www.ballinamerens.ie. If you have any information for the newsletter, please contact Sarah on sarahkguinan@gmail.com.