

MORE LIFE



Newsletter of St Thomas More RC Academy, North Shields

EASTER 2019

RFU RECOGNISES OUR HARD WORK AND BACKS US FOR CONTINUED SUCCESS

In recognition of consistent commitment and success in rugby fixtures and festivals over the past two years, St Thomas More has been selected by the RFU (Rugby Football Union) to receive a £10,000 grant towards further developing Rugby at STM. Working in partnership with North Shields Rugby Club, the grant will be used to support staff and student training with experienced coaches and transport costs to festivals and fixtures. It also includes a full Canterbury squad kit that we will design with them, with additional team kits in the coming years. Here are some of the thoughts from our students regarding the grant: Billy Bloomfield 8S – "The new kits will bring us closer together as a team. The new equipment will



encourage more people to join in with the sport, making us a bigger and better team. The coaches can teach us the core values of Rugby that will make us a great team."

Casey Stubbs 9T – "The girls team love playing in competitive matches and going to training,

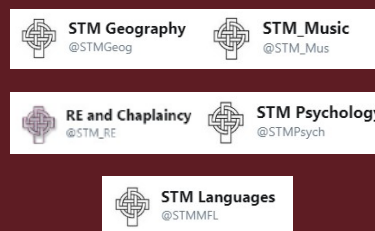


RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION

however we have previously sometimes had limited opportunities. This grant will help us to improve as a team and compete against other schools."

Congratulations to all staff and students who have been involved in Rugby at STM over the past few years and who have made this grant possible. Follow @STM_PE on Twitter to keep up with the most up to date Rugby news.

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@STMCA**



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A PRAYER FOR EASTER FROM THE CHAPLAIN

Lord, we ask you to bless all those in our St. Thomas More community - our students, our staff, our parishes and our families - throughout this joyful period of Easter. We ask that you help us to live our best lives always encouraging us to go out and be people of love and joy. In your most heavenly name we pray, Amen.





CAROLE ALLEN 1951 - 2019

We were saddened recently to be informed of the death of Carole Allen, one of our longest ever serving cleaners. Carole lived close to the school, which was a big part of her life, and we were honoured when the family informed us that her funeral cortège would pass by the school. A large number of staff and students lined Lynn Road to pay their respects to this much-loved member of the STM family.

Carole Allen started working at St Thomas More on the 6th June 1988, doing a variety of duties over the course of her employment.

Angie Whinney: "Every morning you would get a good morning from Carole with a smile when she cracked on with her duties. She had a lot of time for her family and loved looking after her grand kids. She was very caring, always asking after others who were going through tough times."

Mr Henderson: "Carole was often the first person I would see on a morning on arrival to school and it was such a lovely way to start the day. Only ever a brief conversation but just such a lovely and caring lady; she is such a miss around the place."

Mrs Johnstone: "Whenever I saw her around the school she always said hello and asked after the family. She was always, kind, quiet and unassuming and working hard!"

Miss Talbot: "For the past five years or so Carole Allen's was the first face I saw when I arrived at school in the morning which was the very best start to my day. She would always have time to give me a smile and say hello as I carefully stepped over her latest sweeping or polishing.

Prior to that we had had the pleasure of having Carole as our very own designated cleaner of the MFL classrooms for a number of years which allowed us to get to know her as the hard-working, honest and modest person that she was. Carole was quiet but never stand-offish and I was delighted when she accepted the invitation to the 50th birthday celebration of Mrs Collins and myself where we all kicked up a storm at the ceilidh in the school hall.

On the day of her funeral I cried as I stood outside of school with all the other teachers and students to pay my respects to a much-loved and much-missed colleague. I cried but I was proud to be there, as I was to know her."



ANNUAL DONATION TO BAY FOOD BANK

Just before Christmas, St Thomas More staff and students made their annual Christmas donation to the Bay Food Bank. Some of our Form Representatives and Ambassadors came along and helped hand over more than three shopping trolleys overflowing with tins, jars, packets, and Christmas Decorations.

Jackie, from the Food Bank, was delighted with the haul and after our students had helped her unpack all the bags and boxes they were given a whistle-stop tour of the facility. She answered our questions and explained the referral system that works through GPs, Social Workers, Citizens Advice and even Schools. The importance of the facility was demonstrated by the fact that forty three families received food parcels from them the day before we visited. In February we received a thank you letter from the Bay Food Bank, saying how grateful they were for our help. They said that in a year they feed approximately 5000 adults, 2000 children and 130 babies. Thanks to everyone who donated. - Mr Keys, Science Department



LOURDES FUNDRAISERS 'HAVING A BALL'



This year it was a great honour to be celebrating our Annual Lourdes Ball to raise funds to travel at Easter for the fifth consecutive year. The event was a roaring success, raising just over £10,000 through ticket sales, auctions, sponsorships and donations. The event was a sell out with hundreds of guests in attendance. This year 'The Ball' was sponsored by PSG Wealth Management and Paul Gilsean. Through this support and that of other local businesses the STM Lourdes Groups are able to provide families and children with the opportunity to enjoy a fun and safe week in Lourdes.

The students of STM worked very hard prior to the event, sourcing items for the auction and raffle from businesses including Barbour, Close House, The Crab & Lobster and SAFC. They worked super hard on the evening welcoming guests, collecting donations and most importantly keeping the evening running seamlessly.

The trip to Lourdes itself provides families with much needed respite and recuperation time. The children return with memories, confidence and a lasting impact on their lives. As a helper/Group Leader, mum and

teacher at St Thomas More Academy it is a privilege to see the children in our care flourish and grow in confidence, self-determination and reliance. It is an honour when the child who has had trouble trusting adults, puts her hand into yours and walks with you, or the child who hasn't been able to talk to anyone starts sharing their stories, or gives you a special look that shows you how much of a difference the trip has made. - Mrs Merchant, ICT & Business

YOUNG CARERS RAISING AWARENESS

A young carer is a person under the age of 18 years old who regularly looks after someone in their family who is ill, disabled, misuses drugs or alcohol. At times young carers can feel isolated and worried. Some of the tasks they might do include helping the person to wash, dress and move about, doing the housework, administering medication, looking after siblings or providing emotional support. Trying to do school work and homework adds to our stress, which can sometimes be overwhelming. Young Carers are resilient, but sometimes we need support.

Last year STM Young Carers took part in an 18 week social action project funded by Comic Relief. We started by sending out questionnaires to find out how much people in school knew about young carers. Following this research and further discussion, we decided to focus upon the stress that young carers often feel as well as on awareness amongst our peers. We designed and produced posters, wristbands and stress balls. Our posters are displayed around school, the local library, primary schools and doctor's surgeries. In January we were invited to a Young Carer Awareness Evening, where we presented our project to an audience of professionals, parents and other carers. Doing this project makes me feel proud.

- Jade Buglass, Year 10



A WAY WITH WORDS

DRIFTING by Sam Blakey

I awoke inside the wreck of Shuttle 1903. Inside was not quite the word. The oxygen tube was still connected to my suit. It was the only thing holding me to the wreckage. I was floating in the cold depths of space facing the burning world below. There was a little girl stuck in an airlock, crying for her father. I found tools and really, I tried to help but I couldn't. We spoke a lot, about how it began, if someone would come for us. This is Jason Todd, Shuttle 1903. If someone gets this, please save the girl.

HUNGER PAINS by Molly Hay

When I woke, skeletal bodies lined the street. I wasn't much different except I was alive... and I wasn't alone. The hairs on my arms were plentiful, they had to be because I was starving, my stomach always hurt. Still, I walked and talked particularly to Sandy, the only girl I cared about, the only person actually. Together, that's how we worked, how we survived. Sometimes we ate vegetables but most of the ground had been overworked to the point that it crumbled before you even thought about food. Still... I survived.

IT'S TOO DARK by Niamh Brown

I cautiously opened the basement door. It caught on an old tricycle but it gave way after a shove. I had expected light outside. There was none. Only a yellow light flickered across the grass. On the street opposite me, a small party of people were running from something. The thing was running on its hands, using its strong back feet. Its hair was falling out in clumps. "Hey!" I screamed at it. It turned its attention to me. Rearing its head, it leapt in my direction. I saw the people run too, as the creature ripped out my throat.

A selection of Year 9 entries to the 'Mission Catastrophe' short story competition, for which eight of our students have been shortlisted.

FIRST EPQ COHORT COMPLETE THEIR PROJECTS



In the autumn term, we submitted our final reports as part of our EPQ projects. For the past year, we have been independently researching a topic of our choice, involving some taught lessons, regular supervisions and 90 hours work outside of lessons.

Students chose a wide variety of subjects, from coral reefs to the potential cures for Alzheimer's disease to BitCoin; one student completed the artefact option of the project, making a remote control plane. I produced a report on the absolutism of Louis XIV, allowing me to enrich my interest in both history and politics.

The EPQ helped many students to develop a skill set that will be essential for further study, as well as developing time keeping and organisational skills. It was thoroughly enjoyable to research an area that we are interested in, while also boosting the quality of our University applications.

- Hannah Baldwin, Year 13

YEAR 7 STUDENTS TAKE A WORKSHOP WITH A POET



On Wednesday 6th of March a poet, Jake Morris Campbell, visited our school and ran an exciting poetry writing workshop with some Year 7 students. We really enjoyed reading poems about our local area and even wrote our own. We based our own poems on places we knew and memories that we had. He also encouraged us to enter a poetry competition run by Newcastle University Centre for the Literary Arts.

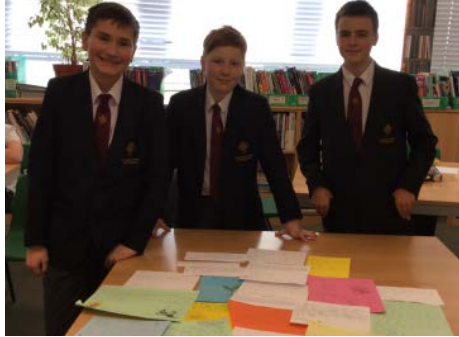
- Hannah Miller, Year 7

STM 'WRITE FOR RIGHTS'

In recent PSICHE lessons, some of our Year 11 Ambassadors led our Year 7 and 8 students in the Amnesty International 'Write for Rights' campaign, focussing on 'at risk' individuals around the world. Each form group discussed a specific case and then designed cards with messages of support. Our messages of hope are being sent across the world from Vietnam to Iran and Venezuela to Brazil. Many of

these individuals at risk are themselves campaigning against human rights abuses, for example, Nonhle Mbuthuma, who was defending the rights of her community in South Africa, and has been threatened with death.

- Daniel Swabey, Year 8



YEAR 10 MATHS FEAST

On Thursday 28th February, a team of four Year 10 students competed in the annual AMSP Maths Feast at Northumbria University. Charlie Goodacre, Neil Maromo, Jack Barnett and myself battled it out against fourteen other North East schools in an enjoyable and challenging competition testing mathematical, team-working and communication skills. We completed a variety of individual, pair and group tasks, including the Relay, where we relied



completely on the accuracy of team mates before we could complete our section, finally finishing a respectable seventh place, the highest STM has ever achieved. We'll settle for that... until next year!

- Abel Arnold, Year 10

YEAR 7 ENTERPRISE

At Enterprise Club after school each Wednesday we learnt all the skills of an entrepreneur and how to make a successful business. We used the owner of Virgin Group, Richard Branson, as our inspiration as it was his business who gave us the money to start ours. We set up a stall at St Cuthbert's Primary School Christmas Fayre, where we sold home-made cupcakes, cookies and hot chocolate. We really enjoyed the challenge and the fayre was much busier than we had expected it to be! After "cashing up", we had raised over £60 for the Great North Children's Hospital in Newcastle.

- Harriett Aitken,
Amelia Whitehead and
Elizabeth Johnson, Year 7



Year 13 Psychology students have visited London, students have read many millions of words through the AR scheme, Year 11s have 'tasted' industry and staff have taken some time out to relax.

IN OTHER NEWS



YEAR 7 GIRLS WIN THE NORTHUMBERLAND CUP



On 23rd January 2019 the Year 7 (Under 12) girls football team took part in the Northumberland Schools 5-a-side County Finals. The St Thomas More team consisted of Erin Cockburn, Jennifer Devine, Lainie Heathcote, Jenni Francis, Faye Newton, Kate Durie and Lucy Fitzpatrick.

We kicked off the tournament with a game against Ovingham Middle School, a tough game that we managed to draw. Our next two games saw us beat Chantry Middle School 5-2 and Richard Coates Middle School 1-0. With two games to go we were starting to feel confident. Gosforth Junior Academy was our next opponent – another win 2-0! We knew if we won our last game we would win the Northumberland Cup. It was against our local rivals, Valley Gardens, who we knew were going to be hard to beat. The score was 0-0 with only a couple of minutes to go then Kate Durie scored a brilliant goal to win the game! We had won the Northumberland Cup! - Lucy Fitzpatrick, Year 7

Update: The girls did fantastically well in the Regional Finals, finishing joint top of the league and only missing out on qualification for the National Finals to Macmillan Academy by a goal difference of 3.

NORTH SHIELDS DANCE FESTIVAL

On the 4th, 5th and 6th March, students from Years 10 to 13 took part in an extraordinary display of dance at the Parks, focusing on the theme 'Stage and Screen.' We performed multiple pieces with a different interpretation of the theme, including Grease, Cabaret and other stories. Each year group performed with extravagance and showed how the theme could be interpreted in different ways. Our Gifted and Talented students also performed a piece using 'How Far I'll Go' from Moana. Overall the festival was a great success, well done to all involved! - Olivia Smith, Year 11





“Laura & Martin were selected as 2 of only 13 Sport Newcastle Rising Stars this year from 35 nominations covering a wide range of sports. They really are outstanding individuals to be chosen for this prestigious award.”

- Mike Booth, vice chair, Sport Newcastle

RISING STARS OF THE SPORTING WORLD

Every year, Sport Newcastle recognise the Rising Stars of the Sporting World at their Gala Awards Evening. This year we were delighted that two of our current students have been recognised for their talent and success.

Both students have featured on our website, and articles can be found at www.stmacademy.org.uk (use the search facility in the top right)

Martin and Laura have both been awarded a Bronze grant award which entitles them to £250 to help support their sporting successes. They were presented their award by the Lord Mayor of Newcastle. We wish them every continued success.

Martin Bland is a 15-year-old Trampolinist, based at Apollo Trampoline Club and currently studying at St Thomas More Academy. Since 2016 Martin has won a range of competitions. In two UK competitions he achieved gold and silver at level 8, he then went on to qualify for the British finals in 2017 and competed in the Alsheer cup in Amsterdam, where he was placed best for his age. In 2018 Martin won all three of his UK National competitions and represented England in Sweden, achieving a silver medal. Martin was part of the England junior team and has now confirmed his place in the national squad for the year ahead.

Laura Nelson is a 13-year-old gymnast, based at the City of Newcastle Gymnastics Academy where she trains 23+ hours a week with her coach Paula Thomas, who competed at the Sydney Olympics. In September's National Team Championship Laura helped her team finish in second place. During the National Challenge Cup, she finished second overall due to winning a gold in floor and silver on vault. This has guaranteed her a place at the British Championships in March 2019. Her next aim is to be selected for the England Squad.

Many thanks to Sport Newcastle for the information and photographs.



EX-PUPIL SUCCESSES

We hope that the range of successes achieved by our ex-pupils inspire our current students, showing them the range of opportunities available to them. As always, if you would like to share the success of a former student, please contact alogie@stmacademy.org.uk and you could feature as early as the summer issue of More Life.

JOSEPH O'BRIEN 2009 - 2016

I have just started my studies at the Venerable English College, England and Wales' seminary in Rome. In 2016 I completed my A-Levels at St. Thomas More and decided to take some time to think about my potential vocation to the Priesthood. I spent ten months in India working in an orphanage with the Salesians of Don Bosco, returning in February last year. I am thankful to God for all of the opportunities He has given me and I am ever grateful to the people of the Diocese; it is only through their help, support and prayers that I am able to be embarking on this wonderful journey with God. Please keep me in your prayers as I continue my studies and training. (Joseph appears third from the left)



ABBEY FRAZER 2012 - 2014

Having attended a different High School, where things weren't going too well, moving to St Thomas More Sixth Form really changed me and my life for the better. Initially upon arrival I was very indecisive about my future, until I was given the opportunity to travel to Ghana with a small group of students. This experience changed my outlook on life. With the support from my teachers I attended Northumbria University, where I studied for three years to achieve a 2:1 in Mental Health Nursing. I have now successfully secured a job within the addictions service, working in the community with those addicted to substances or alcohol. We work to help clients reduce and stop their use, running one-to-one and group sessions to teach clients how to survive independently. I honestly cannot thank my teachers enough for the help they gave me to be where I am today. Without them I do not know where I would be on life's journey.



STEPH TOWNS 2002 - 2007

After St Thomas More, I attended Northumbria University, studying Culture and Society, then went on to Sunderland University for my teaching degree. I'm a qualified Sociology teacher but currently work as an Academic Mentor at Tyne Met College Sports Department so that I can focus on hockey. I have recently been selected to be part of the Great Britain Women's Ice Hockey team, competing at the World Championships in April in Dumfries. I am also assistant captain of the GB Women's senior Street Hockey squad, competing at World Championships in June in Slovakia. As well as Hockey, I have a keen interest in History and am currently working on an exhibition for the Old Low Lights heritage centre in North Shields based around the legacies of slave ownership in the North East.



When asked to comment on his sister's success, Mr P. Towns (yes, that one) said 'We are so proud of her! Ice & Street - double whammy!'

NEXT ISSUE SUMMER 2019

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