



# Nicholas Breakspear Catholic School

## DECEMBER 2009 NEWSLETTER

### Headteacher's Report

Dear Parents and Carers

We all know that good quality communication between home and school is absolutely vital. It is good to know that so many of you are now using Parent mail (80% of parents and carers) and our website has a large number of hits. We are also in contact with you frequently regarding how well your child is doing via our interim grades and academic performance grades.

The results of the recent parental carer survey undertaken at our Target Setting days show overwhelmingly that you are pleased with the education we are providing and that your children feel safe in school.

Where we do have a problem is with our telephone system which is old and reaching the end of its useable existence. We need more outside lines and internal voicemail is often routed to the wrong phone and even pops up 24 hours later! We have had this looked at and the only solution is to invest in a new telephone system. We plan to incorporate the cost of this into next year's budget so that we can improve our capacity to receive and deal with your enquiries. I know that it can be very frustrating sometimes if it takes a long time to get through but please bear with us, we will get back to you and try and help.

As a very efficient school, our teachers are in the classroom for the majority of the day teaching the children and it is not always possible for them to contact you straight away. We often have commitments either with the students or with our colleagues immediately after school as well. Please do not think we are deliberately delaying a return call. It is often simply a case of when it is practical to do so.

I understand from conversations with you that sometimes the delay in speaking to us becomes the issue rather than the original reason for you contacting us and, if this has been the case, I am very sorry.

Please be assured that being in contact with you in order to resolve any issue, big or small, is very important to us as we always try to work in partnership in the best interests of your child.

I wish you and your family a happy and peaceful Christmas.

Yours sincerely

P Jakszta  
Headteacher

### Advent Prayer

O God, you have sent  
your servants to prepare your way.  
Fill our hearts with love  
and strengthen our hands to work,  
that we may make ready the way  
for the coming of the Lord,  
Jesus, this Christmas.

Amen.



The school has recently signed up to ParentMail, an email and text message service enabling us to contact parents without the cost of postage and associated costs.

For the parents that do not have an email address, a paper copy will still be sent out although we want to aim for this to be the exception rather than the norm. We, therefore, encourage all parents to sign up to this service and have put a link on the website.

If you are already registered please ensure that your details on ParentMail are up to date.

### Bishop gives St Albans school's new sixth form block his blessing

The Right Reverend George Stack officially opened and blessed the new sixth form centre.



The Pope John Paul II 6th Form Centre boasts state of the art accommodation and ICT facilities.

The Right Reverend George Stack, who was ordained an Auxiliary Bishop for the Diocese of Westminster in 2001, cut the ribbon at Nicholas Breakspear School at the official opening on the 11th November 2009.

The Headboy Raymond Chabvuka, Headgirl Laura Graccefa and Year 7 students welcomed the invited guests and VIP's. Laura said that she was very impressed with the new centre: "The range of facilities and the huge amount of space is fantastic. We feel a lot more independent."

Headteacher Phil Jakszta said: "We are delighted to have such a fantastic facility for our sixth formers who thoroughly deserve it. We are also honoured that the bishop was able to open and bless the centre for us - he has become a great friend of our school.

Angela Chisholm, Business Manager, thanked the contractor and suppliers for their commitment to the project including A Caulfield, Crossbrook Furniture and IA Computing.

During this term we are also pleased to have refurbished the Design & Technology area and graphics classroom as well as investing in four more interactive whiteboards and a bespoke Media Studies room.

**2009 Examination Certificates** are ready for collection. These are important documents that will be needed for future reference. If you have a certificate to collect please come to the Exams Office.

### !!!Important information regarding school bus passes!!

Please be aware that any pupil attempting to board a school bus without a valid bus pass will NOT be allowed to travel. This includes using a broken bus pass, one that has been defaced (ie: drawn on) or even if it has simply been forgotten that day. This means that until a replacement has been obtained alternative travel to and from school must be sought. This is a decision made by the individual bus companies and the school will not be able to intervene.

If you think your child may need a new bus pass, temporary replacements can be obtained from the main school office, please send in a £5.00 cheque with your child's name, form and bus number on the back - made payable to: Herts County Council  
**PLEASE DO NOT SEND IN CASH!**

### School Car Park

When visiting the school please park in the marked bays only. Please do not park in the middle of the car park as this obstructs delivery vehicles and school buses. If the car park is full, alternative parking can be found in our Trinity car park or you can park along the road.

Please also note that morning drop off and afternoon pickup must take place in the Trinity car park only. Extra curricular pickup can be made in the main car park

Many thanks for your co-operation

### Term Dates

#### Spring Term 2010

Monday 4th January Staff Inset Day  
Tuesday 5th January Students return  
15th to 19th February Half Term  
Thursday 1st April Term Ends

#### Summer Term 2010

Monday 19th April Staff Inset Day  
Tuesday 20th April Students Return  
31st May to 4th June Half term  
Friday 23rd July Term Ends

#### Autumn term 2010 - Provisional

Monday 6th September Staff Inset Day  
Tuesday 7th September Students Return  
25th to 29th October Half term  
Friday 17th December Term Ends

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### Nicholas Breakspear celebrates *Black History Month!*

October saw the annual national celebration of *Black History Month*. Whilst we strive to make sure people from all ethnic backgrounds are treated equally in school all year round, (whether they belong to our community or whether we study them in lessons) we also recognise that *Black History Month* is an important celebration, because it tries to re-balance the fact that ethnic minorities have not always been treated equally throughout our country's history. We decided this year at Nicky B to focus on Black British role models. Here are some of the ways that we took part this year:-



**Head Boy** Raymond Chabvuka and history teacher Mr Laing put together and took **assemblies** for all years about role models. **Author and screenwriter Catherine Johnson** spent a whole day taking workshops for various years using creative writing. **Motivational speaker "Action Jackson"** gave an assembly for years 10 and 11 and then took workshops on setting goals and knowing your potential for about 50 students from years 9 – 12. The LIC made an **interactive display**, which included a range of our books about Black British role models, and **research** done by students in KS3 library lessons. We also bought a selection of **books** on this theme to add to the collection. A range of Afro-Caribbean dishes were on offer as part of the **lunch menu** in the canteen. Tutor groups talked about role models during tutor time.

### Year 12 Business Studies Revision Conference

Year 12 had an exciting day out in London last week. Students had a great day learning about the new AQA Business Studies Unit 1 Module for January exams and met entrepreneurs Levi Roots who appeared on Dragons Den with the product Reggae Reggae Sauce and Philip Taylor (remember him as Pants Man from The Apprentice?). They spoke about their new businesses and was very motivational. Students had a great day learning and found it really useful.

A big thank you goes to Mrs Persaud who organised the trip!

Mrs Gwilt Teacher in Charge of Business Studies



### NICHOLAS BREAKSPEAR SPORTS COLLEGE PLAYING THEIR PART IN LONDON 2012'S INTERNATIONAL LEGACY

Tanya Angus ( Partnership Development manager ) and Amanda Robinson ( Competition manager ) have just returned from a visit to South Africa as part of London 2012 International Inspiration, a key strand of the international legacy of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games for children and young people around the world.

Launched by Prime Minister Gordon Brown in India last year, International Inspiration uses the power of sport to change the lives of children and young people around the world. It empowers young people, many in difficult situations in their countries, to become leaders in their schools and communities, building their confidence and self esteem, as well as encouraging them to realise their ambition and full potential. They then become powerful advocates for change, helping others to improve their lives.

Our partnership is with Segale Middle School in the North West province; about 5 hours drive North of Johannesburg. It is a rural school set in a tribal village with approximately 400 students many of whom travel miles each day to get to school. During the visit we were involved in taking assemblies and teaching new activities to students, teachers and sports coaches including rounders, parachute games and multiskills activities. We also organised competitions and worked with some of the students to train them as young leaders to ensure they would be able to support competitions in the future.

"The students were so keen and enthusiastic to learn, had a great respect for education and were totally inspired by our visit – a truly humbling experience for us both"



We were also honoured to be greeted by the King and watch a traditional dance performance by the students. The rest of our time spent in South Africa included visiting and speaking to students in the surrounding primary schools before returning to Johannesburg for a day conference with representatives from the South African Department of Education and Youth Sports Trust.

We are now in the process of developing a 3 year plan to develop the link between the two schools and create greater opportunities for students in both schools. In March 2010 we look forward to welcoming 2 staff from Segale to spend time with us at Nicholas Breakspear.

As Seb Coe Chair of London 2012 said: "Our vision is to use the power of the Games to inspire change – and changing lives is the driving force behind our plans. We took a very clear promise to Singapore – to encourage the youth of the world to choose sport – and Nicholas Breakspear's involvement is another key step towards delivering that promise. Sport can be a great force for good, and the International Inspiration programme will play a real role in improving the lives of young people around the world through sport."

### U16 Table Tennis Competitions

Nicholas Breakspear's Under 16 table tennis team emerged triumphant in the School Sports Partnership competition held on 18<sup>th</sup> November at St Albans Girls School. This was the first round of the Butterfly National School Team Championship and involved a number of schools from across the district.

The boys then went through to the second stage of the competition, the County Final, to battle it out against 11 other teams from across the county, one team from every School Sports Partnership from across Hertfordshire. The competition was held at Hitchin Boys School on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> November. Schools were split in to 4 pools and fought hard to beat other schools in the same pool. The 4 boys won their pool and went on to play in the semi finals. Unfortunately they were beaten by Watford boys in a very close match and came 3<sup>rd</sup> overall. Watford Boys went on to win the County Final and will be playing in the Zone Finals in January.

The competitions were organised and run by Amanda Robinson, Competition Manager for St Albans and Harpenden. Local table tennis clubs Sandridgebury Table Tennis Club, Watford Jets and Urban Progress Table Tennis Club were on hand to provide advice, information and guidance to players.

The standard of play was exceptionally high and some of the games could only be decided by points. Nicholas Breakspear did extremely well and should be congratulated on their achievement, well done boys.

### Nicholas Breakspear awarded Artsmark Silver Award

Arts Council England has awarded an Artsmark Silver to Nicholas Breakspear in recognition of the school's commitment to, and excellence in, arts education.



Since Artsmark began 9 years ago, almost 10,000 awards have been made, with 1649 schools receiving the award this year.

Phil Jakszta, Headteacher of Nicholas Breakspear Catholic School in St. Albans, said: "I'm delighted that the Arts Council has recognised Nicholas Breakspear's dynamic arts education programme. Our students have really enjoyed working with painter, Simone Wallace and Mo Marijata, former member of the world famous band Osibisa, who have both lead workshops at the school, and I'd like to thank all our staff for their hard work in achieving this award."

Alan Davey, Chief Executive, Arts Council England, said:

"Arts Council England is committed to great art for everyone and we believe that the earlier children are creatively inspired, the more likely they are to have a lifelong engagement with art."

"Artsmark sets the standard for an outstanding arts offer in schools and it's great to see so many new schools attaining the Artsmark award this year. The award recognises Nicholas Breakspear's passion for the arts and belief in the power of creativity."



Any school in England can apply for Artsmark at: [www.artsmark.org.uk](http://www.artsmark.org.uk). Simone Wallace left the school four years ago, and gained a place at an Art College in Surrey. She is now an internationally renowned artist in her own right, selling and exhibiting work in Europe. Her trademark style is currently beautifully crafted black and white linear drawings of urban landscapes.

## 2008/2009 Academic Year Trophy Winners

Trophy	Name	Trophy	Name	Trophy	Name
Wooding Cup for Musical Effort	Jake Kingston	Ellis Cup for Musical Achievement	Max Laurie	Angela Warren Cup for Art	Juergen Gwanzura
Allan Award for Business Studies	Daniel McGurk	Ray McHugh Trophy for Drama	Carl Davidson	James Horan Trophy (Sports Boy)	Elliott Johnson
James Horan Trophy (Sports Girl)	Megan Shine	Priya Patel Trophy for Hockey	Adrienne Horn	Damian Westrope Trophy for Football	Paul Lennon
Derek Coughlan Trophy for Sportsmanship	Callum Chamberlain	RE Award for contribution to Catholic Ethos	Penny Hever	Patricia Jenkins Trophy for contribution to Year 7	Bethany Davidson
Brother Michael Wheatley Memorial Trophy for Contribution to 6th Form	Anthony McHugh	Hill Cup for a Special Contribution by a 6th Form Boy	Carl Davidson	Wright Cup for a Special Contribution by a 6th Form Girl	Lucy Salazar
RE Award for contribution to Catholic Ethos	Rima Lallbeeharry	Micheal Moore Cup for SEN	Carla Fusco	Canon Keenan Cup for GCSE Achievement	Susan Johnson
Headteacher's Prize for A-level Achievement	Nora Abiero	Alex Curtis Memorial Trophy	Sean Cassidy	MSC Trophy	Lucy Salazar



### [www.hertsexterndedschools.org.uk/albanway](http://www.hertsexterndedschools.org.uk/albanway)

The Alban Way Extended School website is here to help you! Please visit it to find out how we can support parents/carers and what activities are on for children and young people. You can find out about adult education/training courses too. Under our 'Young people 11-19' heading you can access Channel Mogo – full of brilliant information for teenagers, and MogoZout – where by simply putting in your postcode you can find out about loads of activities for young people in your area, wherever you live in Hertfordshire.

### **The Alban Way Extended Schools is offering a First Aid course for teenagers....**

A four hour accredited course for young people who babysit or care for children run by MGM Training. This course is being held on Saturday, 6th February 2010 from 9.00am to 1.00pm at Fleetville Junior School and is offered to anyone aged 14 years and above. We require £15.00 (total cost of the course) to be submitted when booking your place. Cheques payable to camp School please. To book a place please contact Annie New, Alban Way Extended Schools coordinator on 07904 254990 or [annie.new@camp.herts.sch.uk](mailto:annie.new@camp.herts.sch.uk)

### **Former St Albans pupil dies during round-world trip**

A mother and father have paid tribute to their teenage son after he died while "living his dream" of travelling the world.

Former Nicholas Breakspear pupil Ryan Harrison, 18, died in his sleep during the early hours of October 25 in Seattle, USA, just two weeks into a six-month trip across the globe. His cause of death has been given as eosinophilic myocarditis, a natural cause brought about by a viral infection that inflames the heart muscle and can lead to it failing.

This week his parents, Ian and Teresa, who live in Potters Bar, spoke of their loss and called for more awareness about heart risk in young people. Teresa said: "At least he got to do his travelling," "One of the last things he said to me when he was out there was 'Mum, I'm living the dream'."

Ian described Ryan as the "perfect kid" and said: "He was my son and my best mate. He never really caused us any trouble. He had time for everyone." His funeral on November 9, at Our Lady and St Vincent Church in Mutton Lane, was attended by around 600 people and not everyone could fit into the church. Ian said: "It gives an indication of how well-known and well-loved he was by everybody."

Ryan, who is also survived by older sister Sammy-Jo, was a keen DJ and played football for Potters Bar United (PBU) and Nicholas Breakspear's Old Boys team. His former headmaster, Phil Jakszta, said the school was deeply shocked by his death and that he had remained very much in touch with them through the Old Boys football team since completing his education there two years ago.

He continued: "Ryan was a lovely guy who we all thought the world of and his cheery personality would brighten any day. The last time I saw Ryan was a summers evening just after he had finished training and we were chatting about old friends and old times. "He looked so well and so happy it is unbelievable that we won't be seeing him again. I will keep the memory of that summers evening forever as that is exactly how he was day by day as a student here at Nicholas Breakspear School."

Deputy chairman of PBU, Dave Lennon, said: "He made a big impact on all who knew him and his teammates at Potters Bar Utd and the parents involved will never forget Ryan." It is estimated 12 people under 35 die every week due to sudden cardiac death. Both Ian and Teresa want to highlight the work of charity Cardiac Risk in the Young, in the hope that others might be able to detect heart problems before it's too late.

### **MFL Gifted and Talented Programme**

The MFL Gifted and Talented programme has now been launched and students have been notified. They should all have a diary detailing the events to be held over the forthcoming year. Reading sessions are held for all every Friday lunchtime in addition to various cultural events. We look forward to seeing you all there!

### **Primary Festival**

On the 24<sup>th</sup> September 2009, the 4 primary schools in the Nicholas Breakspear Family competed against each other in the annual KS1 and KS2 festival. Each school was divided into year groups and provided with a carousel of activities to complete. There were a few new events this year, including Orienteering and Concept 2 Indoor rowing, which was a great success. From this students at both the Primary school and Nicholas Breakspear have had the opportunity to further develop their skills through an orienteering club. Other activities included speed stacking, tri- golf and relay events.

Overall the day was a great success with individual, year group and school achievements. The results were extremely close this year but the overall winners of the event were St Adrian's and St Bernadette's.

On behalf of myself and the partnership, I would like to say congratulations to all the students that took part.



### **Christmas Liturgy**

This will be a liturgy of the word which will be enhanced by music, dance and multimedia presentations from the students. Every year our students give to charity through the hamper collection and the presentation of these hampers will be part of the ceremony.

### **Assemblies**

Father Alan gave a very moving series of assemblies for world aids day. Our non uniform day took place in support of the MSC Aids Hospice in South Africa. Some outstanding form assemblies on Christmas traditions around the world have also taken place recently.

### **Father Alan's baptism and first communion group classes**

These classes meet every week. We look forward to the First Communion of three students in the new year. We would also like to mention those students enrolled in confirmation and ask for the prayers of the school community for these young people who are about to become adult Christians in the Church.

### **Gifted and Talented**

Our new KS3 gifted and talented GCSE in Hinduism which gives the students the opportunity to explore and study another World Religion. This happens every Thursday lunchtime

## Donations

Thank you to all staff, parents and pupils who continue to donate books to the LIC collection. This is a great way to support the school and let all pupils have access to a wider range of books. If you're having a clearout, or get any unwanted Christmas presents, please think of the LIC! We love donations of fiction, non-fiction, magazines and audiobooks.

## Kids Lit Quiz

We took a team again to this year's *Kids' Lit Quiz*. Our team competed against 18 other schools from the South East and answered all sorts of questions to do with books and authors. They also had the chance to meet various authors who were the markers and scorers. As always it was a lot of fun, although the questions were quite hard this year!



## Author—Graham Marks

Year 9 pupils got the chance to meet author Graham Marks, who came in to talk about and sign copies of his latest book, *I Spy: The Constantinople Caper*, as well as answer questions about what being a writer is like. He also stayed at lunch to chat to pupils in the LIC. Graham Marks' career has spanned publishing and journalism as well as writing a variety of books, including both fiction and non-fiction. You can find out more about him and his books on his website – [www.marksworks.co.uk](http://www.marksworks.co.uk)



## Bookclub - Keren David

Our new bookclub for y9 and 10 pupils is going from strength to strength. This term we have been donated proof copies of a book to read before it is even published! *When I was Joe* is actually out in the shops after Christmas, and author Keren David came to talk to the bookclub about her book. Everyone in the bookgroup really enjoyed reading it and talking to Keren about her inspiration and about what might happen in the sequel. We are planning to have Keren visit more pupils next term to sign copies when it is published. The bookclub recommends it!



## Bookfair

Local bookseller Brenda Parkhouse came in to do a bookfair for the LIC. It was very well attended and pupils were excited to get their discounted old favourites and brand new fiction. The bookfair will return for World Book Day in March.

## Times Books for Schools

Do you read the *Times*, or does your company or workplace have a copy in the waiting room or staffroom? We are collecting tokens from the *Times* and *Sunday Times* which will mean FREE books for the school! Please send all vouchers to the LIC!

**Agricultural Science Department** - We have the following produce for sale: eggs 78p half dozen; beeswax polish £1.40; beeswax lip balm; beeswax soap; spinach; strawberry plants. We may also have some bay tree saplings and some herb plants, and some red and black current plants. Firewood - we have a good supply thanks to Mr Forbes who used his chain saw to cut another load we found. Prices vary depending on bag size, weight and quality of wood. Later in the year we shall have pork, mutton and possibly chicken for sale.

**Items wanted** If anyone has an enamel saucepan of which they want to dispose, or a large (wide rather than deep) saucepan of any type, we would be grateful to receive them.

**Cycling** - There area number of safe routes to school mapped out and I hope to add more. Students are advised not to use the old railway track (Alban Way) alone. Students should make sure they have lights in winter. There is a good bike stall most Saturdays in St Albans market, in front of Boots and the Town Hall.

## DRAMA - SOULED

"Feast your eyes on our cabaret!" the camp yet evil Lucifer (by Matthew Wright) asked the audience and indeed they certainly did. But as if the audience had a choice. The weird but wonderful adaptation of Christopher Marlowe's Dr Faustus encapsulated its audience from the minute the lights came up.

The contentious play did raise some eyebrows and blood pressures... wink wink! A man renouncing God? Selling his soul to the devil? Not in a catholic school surely? Despite these controversies, the play was a huge success. There were high expectations from an extremely talented cast, involving the wide range of students from year 8 to year 13. Pressures began showing themselves during the intensive cast rehearsals, particularly through Mr. Borrill's and Ms McMeel's receding hairlines. Nevertheless they pulled it out of the bag! The first night sees a few technical hitches such as the fire alarm going off-twice. But of course this wouldn't stop Sase and Sean's professionalism and they performed through it all. Eight out of ten! said Ms McMeel after the first night's performance. Could they exceed this? Of course they did! Friday, arguably the one of the best performances the school had ever seen left the audience in hysteria, particularly at the Rastafarian take on Sloth from Michael Ifiti. "Nine out of ten guys, you were brilliant!" said Ms McMeel. The standards were set high, yet the cast did not disappoint. This ability to continue to improve and grow was the strength of this year's production. Not one night ever had the same atmosphere. "Innovative, intelligent and creative" commented an audience member.

However we should not to forget to take into account all the different elements of the production which contributed to its success. On paper the music looked like a recipe for disaster, The Killers, Marilyn Monroe and T-rex? Through the broad variety of music, Souled was able to cater to all of its audience from the young to the old. Ms Saxby had the pleasure of listening and attempting to improve a cast of croaky squealers into a singing sensation. On the other hand, the production was blessed this year with some talented singers such as Kara and Fiona. Kara's rendition of the Killers- Human and Fiona's sexy remake of a Marilyn Monroe classic has widely praised. But were would we be without this years brilliant band? Well done to all off band members and a big thanks to Ms Saxby.

Big thanks must always be given to the design team. The school mundane stage hall, into an impressive surreal home of Faust. The art department as well as the Technology department really excelled themselves. Although minimalist in nature, the set managed to liberate the audience's imagination. Much of this praise must be given to stage manager Mark Walsh and the stage crew whose efforts brought the play to life.

All in all, Souled was a huge triumph. The drama department out did themselves this year and have set the benchmark for future productions. Congrats to all those who were involved, cast, stage crew, design team as well as Mr Borrill and Ms McMeel for putting on a spectacular production!

