



The Blarney Stone

“Bishop McNamara’s Source for News”



January 2024

New Year’s & Catholic Schools Week Edition

JANUARY EDITION

Welcome to the January 2024 Issue of the Blarney Stone, the official newspaper of Bishop McNamara Catholic School! As the first semester of the year continues, there is much to read about, including the New Year, Winter Events, and the beginning of this year’s second semester. Additionally, multiple students and faculty members are featured in this month’s edition!

PREFECT SPOTLIGHT: JORDAN MAJSZAK

Senior Jordan Majszak has been serving as one of the Academic Prefects this year. In this capacity, she has helped to make several meaningful impacts on the school, including

workshops for different grade levels. “This year, Emily and I completed the usual academic events like the freshman success seminar, but we also created a new event for the sophomores that was a success.” The sophomore event was a mental health workshop, in which she and Emily were able to secure speaker Brandon Ringler to talk to the students. Completing events like this is one of the reasons why Jordan was attracted to this position. “I wanted to be an academic prefect because I thought it would be a great opportunity for making an impact on the school and preparing for college.” As prefect applications will be coming out in a month or so, Jordan has some advice for applicants. “If you are interested in becoming a prefect, reach out to the current prefect of the position

you want and get some more information before the applications come out.” Outside of her prefect capacity, Jordan is an active member of the senior class. Her favorite memory from the year so far is Senior Sunrise. Next year, she plans on going to college and studying Forensic Science.



Written By: Sarah Berg

PREFECT SPOTLIGHT: CHRISTIAN PROVOST

Christian Provost is one of our schools’ many amazing prefects. As a prefect Christian takes on many duties and exceeds well in all of them. Christian is a returning prefect as he was our Sacristan prefect during the previous 2022-2023 school year. I have asked Chris-



January 2024 Spotlights

tian questions inquiring about his year so far as a prefect.

Christian was first asked what it means to be a prefect, his answer is as follows, "Being a prefect means spending your time and effort into making our school a better experience for all. Each of our prefects have stood up and made the decision to work to better our school, not just for the current students, but for future generations of Bishop McNamara as well." Christian's message describes that being a prefect provides a better experience for not only himself, but he feels he is providing a better experience for the school as well.

Secondly, Christian was asked why he chose to become a prefect at Bishop McNamara. Christian responded, "I chose to become a prefect because having a larger role within the school felt like something I was meant to do. Proceeding two

siblings who were both prefects, I knew it was my responsibility to carry the lineage and create my own impact on the school." In summary, Christian not only wants to improve our school as a prefect, but he was also inspired to take on the task of being a prefect.

During this school year, Christian participates as our "House Prefect", and he explains what his jobs are as the "House Prefect". "I was chosen last March to be the House Prefect for the 2023-24 school year. As the House Prefect, I am in charge of planning House inductions, games, and other events. In addition, the House system will be putting on the Winter Ball dance on February 24th!" As Christian explains, the house prefect is tasked with all house-related events; and as Christian said, Winter Ball will take place on February 24th and all students are welcome.

Any upperclassmen student can

become a prefect and applications are available to current sophomore and junior students. But why should you be a prefect? "Becoming a prefect is the perfect way to step up your involvement in the school. Every student is called to be more, to help more, and to give more, and working toward a perfect position is the best possible way to do that. Additionally, the skills you learn from a position as great as this will surely aid in the next step of your life in college and beyond. Please do not pass up this wonderful opportunity in the coming months!!" Christian's answer is listed above, and this answer can apply to anyone. If you are thinking about becoming a prefect, sign up for the position, there is nothing to lose.

The prefect position is a challenging position to tackle, and Christian is excelling at it. Overall, Christian is doing his best job to give Bishop McNamara its most potential, and in the



January 2024 Spotlights

eyes of many it is working out perfectly.

Written By: Miles Serpe

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT: MRS. BESS

Mrs. Bess is the assistant principal for our school, Bishop McNamara. Her position entails the opportunity to work with both the junior high and high school students and their faculties. Mrs. Bess stated "The exciting part of this position is that every week and every month brings about a new task or opportunity for us to impact the students. As part of my job, I get to collaborate with the administrative team, teachers, parents, students, and community members, working with all of these different stakeholders provides for a variety of opportunities for me to impact our school."

Prior to Bishop Mac, Mrs. Bess had been in the classroom for 17 years and worked within

Special Education in multiple capacities at BBCHS. Mrs. Bess has "always been very active in creating opportunities for students to be a part of their school community outside of the classroom. Other accolades in her career are coaching competitive cheerleading, being a class sponsor, and her most proud accolade, her time as a sponsor for Best Buddies.

When asked what her goal for the student and faculty at our school is, Mrs. Bess responded: "I would like to see the staff and students of McNamara all feel challenged to move outside of their comfort zones in one way or another." Whether this is taking an AP class, seeking out service, seeking out a new sport, making new friends, strengthening your faith, or stepping outside of your comfort zone in a curriculum as a teacher, Mrs. Bess hopes to encourage and support this growth. This is what makes her such a great fit for Bishop

McNamara.



Written By: Oliver Heinrich

PREFECT SPOTLIGHT: MADELINE RUSSELL

As the 2023-2024 school year comes closer to an end, the new Prefect positions will soon be chosen. To get to know the current Prefects the Blarney Stone has decided to do an exclusive interview with the current Service Prefect, Madeline Russell. Through this, we got insights into her role. She described service as personally significant, emphasizing its role in fostering gratitude and the importance of extending help beyond school boundaries.

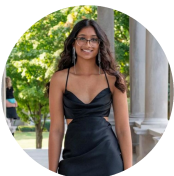
One upcoming service that everyone can partake in is the Lenten campaign. Madeline and her supervisor Mrs. Berry collaborated with Fortitude to



January 2024 Athletics

be able to support the needy during the winter. The good work that she is doing with the school shows the importance of giving back to our community, and the school's commitment to selfless contributions.

What got Madeline into this position was her deep motivation from her rich volunteering background at her church and school. This led her to want to help in new ways, by leading service projects and sharing her devotion. Her leadership is poised to make a positive impact, inspiring a spirit of selflessness and community service throughout the school.



Written By: Maya Patel

BOYS BASKETBALL: LIGHTS OUT ON BROOKMONT

On January 20th, McNamara's

varsity boys' basketball team hosted a special home game called "Lights Out on Brookmont." The night hosted many special activities such as lights out during the hype song and player announcements, players throwing prizes into the student section, and a special duck toss during halftime. The cheerleaders had an outstanding performance during halftime which added to the amusement of the night. As far as the game goes, it was a great win for Mac. The team never lost the lead and won 53-38. The night was absolutely electric, and the crowd never went silent. It was a great event, and we could tell everyone had a very fun time.

We have had a couple of rough games so far but at the end of the day, it's all part of making strides and continuing to get better every single day. I feel like we're on the right track and if we keep winning these last couple games it'll get us in good shape for regionals and

then so on and so forth." Senior starter, Abner Garcia expresses his feelings and hopes for the end of the 2024 season. He believes if the team continues to try their best, they will feel happy with their outcome, and that is all that matters. Lights out was a big win, things are looking good for the 2024 boys' basketball team.

**Written By: Cassidy Novak and
Isabelle Garcia**

GIRLS BASKETBALL: STATE FARM ANNUAL TOURNAMENT

The Lady Irish basketball team is having a remarkable season, with an astounding record of 19 wins and 4 losses. Over Christmas break, the team competed in the State Farm Holiday Tournament and went toe to toe with some of the best teams in the state. The Lady Irish brought home 4th place, the highest finish since 2019. "I was really proud of how far our team got at State



January 2024 Academics

Farm,” expressed Savana Smith, one of two seniors on the team. “In past years it’s been difficult to make a run in this tournament, so placing fourth was really rewarding. I hope that the girls have that same success going forward.”

The Irish not only brought home a fourth-place trophy, but they also learned lessons to take with them as they get the second half of the season underway. One of the most important insights was how much success they have with good communication. “We have so much success when we communicate to each other what we each need to give as opposed to what we don’t. This experience at State Farm has taught me not to be afraid to speak up as everyone here is trying to achieve the same goal.” Making such a long run in the State Farm Tournament was one of the team’s preseason goals, but it was in preparation for something more: a

postseason run. Smith feels that if the team keeps playing the way they are at the moment, it will be a very difficult team to stop in the postseason, especially for regionals. “I would say I am more confident in our team than I was before. Over the season I feel as though we have developed greatly and have found what works for us and built off of that. That has given me more confidence in our team’s ability to make a further run.”

With the end of the regular season and the beginning of the postseason approaching, make sure to go out and support the Lady Irish. The first round of the IHSA regional will take place on Saturday, February 10th.



Written By: Sarah Berg

START OF SECOND SEMESTER

Hello everyone!! Second Semester is already here and that means the final push until the end of the year. Now it may seem like the time to slack off, but I encourage you to do just the opposite. [Freshman](#), second semester grades are just as important as first semester grades. Sophomores, you need to push in order to get into the classes you may want to take your Junior Year. Juniors, take this semester seriously for this maybe the grades you submit to the college of your choice. Seniors, one final push here at Bishop McNamara; do not let 7 semesters go to waste all because you got a case of “senioritis”. Second semester also determines whether you will be spending your summer here or not. If you do not pass your classes, you will have to come back to school over the summer. Take the time this semester to get the grades you



January 2024 House & Service

want. Have a great semester!



Written By: Emily Storer

WINTER BALL THEME RELEASE

This year's Winter Ball is coming up quickly! The dance, dubbed "Disco Ball", will be held in the Bishop McNamara Cafeteria on February 24th! Tickets will be sold in the coming weeks during lunches. Additionally, voting for court will be open on the Irish Student Hub the week prior! The dance will feature 70s disco décor and will be a fun night for all, further enhanced by LED lights and a myriad of other decorations.

Written By: Claire Goselin and Christian Provost

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK

Catholic Schools has arrived, with that, we will be having a comfortable start with Comfy and Cozy day. Make sure you make some room for some Chicago Dough Pizza and Ice Cream. Also be sure to pop out for the Boys Basketball team as they'll play Marian Central Catholic.

Wednesday we will thank our school's staff and committee with an appreciation luncheon. Additionally, we will be receiving four guests for our Alumni Panel. Make sure you save some money for an order of the one of a kind cookies from Sweet Darren's.

Be creative for Thursday as we will all have the opportunity to dress up as staff members. If you're a staff member, dress up like a student.

To end this amazing week,

make sure you unleash your school spirit with an extreme spirit day. Make sure to support our yearbook club by buying a donut in the coffee shop. Baskets in the cafeteria will be available for the beginning of the Mac Pac Baskets Raffle sale. Be ready for House Games too.

Written By: Manuel Velasquez

LENTEN CAMPAIGN

This upcoming Advent Season, Bishop McNamara will be participating in an incredible project to give back to our community and its people as a whole. Service Prefects Manny Velasquez, Andrea Perucho, and myself along with Ms. Barrie will be partnering with Fortitude Outreach to provide them with even more support and donations. Fortitude is an incredible organization that supports and shelters the needy and poor individuals in our community. They assure these citizens a safe, warm, and supported place to sleep this cold winter and provide them with dinner daily at places such as the Salvation Army. [Students](#)



9th-12th grade will have the opportunity to reach out and organize these dinners for the people and serve the food. They will get a chance to interact and show love for these people, which they need just as much as their physical conditions.

This Lent Campaign is all about giving back; not only by donations and serving but connecting and outreaching. This year's campaign will allow the needy to feel valued and supported, not only by helpful organizations such as Fortitude, but by students, athletes, and citizens alike.



Written By: Madeline Russell

THE LION, THE WITCH, AND THE WARDROBE

Bishop McNamara's spring play: The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe is underway. The show will be held March 2nd and 3rd in the BlackBox Theater. In anticipation of the show, a few cast members were interviewed to give some insight into the process of putting the show together. Sophomore Caitlyn Lindner is playing Susan. This will be her 4th show at Bishop McNamara and she says she is most excited for the audience to see the finished result and the hard work put into the show. Caitlyn loves playing Susan because she can relate to the character. She says they are both independent and go out of their way to look out for their families. Next, Junior Kevin Cash was interviewed about his role as Edmund. This is his first role in a Bishop McNamara show. He is

January 2024

Fine Arts & Community

the most excited to have a fun experience with his friends and other cast members. His favorite part about playing Edmund is being able to play the "annoying" character. Both Kevin and Caitlyn are able to get into character by watching British TV shows and movies. "People should come to the show because the cast and crew put a lot of work into making it happen"- Kevin Cash. The cast and directors of this show are working extremely hard to put it all together. Congratulations to the entire cast and make sure to see the show in March.



Written By: Hailey Neill

VALENTINE'S DAY CRAFT



Materials

- ◆ Colored Paper
- ◆ Skewer
- ◆ Wine Cork
- ◆ Sharp Knife
- ◆ Hole Puncher
- ◆ Scissors
- ◆ Pencil
- ◆ Optional: Heart Stencil

Instructions

- Step 1:** Draw or trace a heart the size of half of your paper. (Feel free to experiment with size)
- Step 2:** Cut it out using scissors.
- Step 3:** Fold the heart accordion style.
- Step 4:** Hole punch in the middle of each of the folds and thread the skewer through it.
- Step 5:** With the sharp knife, cut a wine cork in half.
- Step 6:** Push the skewer into the halved wine cork.
- Step 7:** Set up as decoration on your mantel, bookshelf, or use as a centerpiece!

Credit for Idea: <https://design-fixation.com/2019/01/diy-folded-paper-hearts.html>



Written By: Sarah Hoehn

MATTEA'S JOY

Mattea Joy Freedlund was born April 13, 2009. She was born with severe medical complications, and her parents, Jamie and Gary Freedlund, were given a very small chance that she would even survive birth. She ended up living for nine months before passing away. Over the course of these nine months, the Freedlunds spent most of their time in a hospital setting. They experienced firsthand what it was like to have a terminally ill child, and they also saw how this circumstance affected many other families. Because of this, the Freedlunds made it their mission to help



January 2024

World Events

children with terminal illnesses live as comfortably and joyfully as possible. They also strive to serve the families of these children and provide support in difficult times. Mattea's Joy became a non-profit organization on April 13, 2010, and has been growing ever since. The non-profit provides dinner, snack boxes, and other support for families with hospitalized children. Mattea's Joy holds numerous events to support ill children and their families, such as the "Eat, Play, Stroll" program and "Joy Day". Care packages are handed out to children and adults on "Joy Day", which occurs once a month at Comer Childrens Hospital. Mattea's Joy also holds an annual "Princess Breakfast", where children and their guardians from all over are invited to come to meet their favorite princess, enjoy breakfast, dance, play games, and more! This year's breakfast will be held on February 24th from 9:30 to 11:30 at the Kankakee Country Club; visit matteasjoy.org for more information. Mattea's Joy has helped hundreds of families through tough times, and their mission is truly inspiring.



Written By: Reagan Kaner

NEW YEAR'S 2024

As you enter a new year, it's

important to refresh your mindset and environment. You can start by purchasing a planner. This can help you keep track of any upcoming assignments, activities, and events. Another way to start the new year off on the right foot is to begin new things. This may consist of joining a new club or trying out a new sport. Venturing out and expanding your horizons is good for everyone and can boost your confidence! In this new year try to be the best version of yourselves and repair any mistakes made in the past year. No one is perfect and every one of us can work on things like being nicer, more patient, brave, and truer to ourselves. Finally, the most important thing is to set goals! Whether they are short term or long term it is extremely important to have something to work towards. These goals can be anything from academic to athletic. We wish everyone the best going forward in this new year!

Written By: Hailey Gerberding, Rylan Barzantny, and Nora Geisler

MLK DAY

Martin Luther King Jr. Day is one of the many holidays in the United States. It is celebrated on the third Monday of each January. Martin Luther King Jr. was a chief spokesperson for activism in the Civil Rights Movement. This movement protested racial discrimination

and segregation. It mainly focused on discrimination on a federal level. After his death in 1968, a campaign started to make a holiday in his honor. It wasn't until 1983, Ronald Reagan signed a law that would put MLK day into place. Though, some states would not allow this holiday, and it was not until 2000 that the government made it a nationwide holiday.



Written By: Riley Piazza

EXECUTIVE CREDITS



Grant Naese, Class of 2024
President • The Blarney Stone



Oliver Heinrich, Class of 2026
Editor • The Blarney Stone



Cassidy Novak, Class of 2026
Editor • The Blarney Stone



Caitlin Malm • Faculty Advisor