

## HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM ST MICHAEL'S

It was a very busy end of term for St Michael's in the run up towards Christmas. Here are some of the things we got up to:

### Friday 18 November - Children in Need Cake Sale

St Michael's supports Children in Need thanks to the work of the Student Council and members of staff. Over £900 was raised on the day, which is a wonderful achievement. Although school raises money for lots of different charities, the School Council wanted to put their efforts into raising money for such a good cause. Highlights of the day were the sumptuous cakes and the skilful and closely fought 'staff versus student' football match!



A special thanks to Laura Bowman, Katie Mowbray, Miss Reay and Miss Leighton for organising the day.

### Amber thanks St Michael's for their Support

Fresh back from her adventures in Borneo, Amber Plummer an ex-student from St Michael's came back into school, as a thank you to staff and parents of students who had helped raise money towards her trip. The trip was organised through Outlook Expeditions in conjunction with Queen Elizabeth College, where Amber is now a sixth form student. Borneo is part of the Sabah province of Malaysia and 20 students from QE went to do some essential repair works at the Sepilok Sun Bear. Sun Bears are the smallest and most endangered species of bear in the world.

Amber spent the day with pupils studying Geography in years 7 and 8, telling them about the island and its inhabitants. She provided them with lots of information about the eco-system of the island (which are as diverse as rain forests to the sprawling capital of Kota Kinabalu), the range of wildlife – including the work that they did at the

Sun Bear Sanctuary, its people who were very warm and welcoming and their diet of rice and noodles. Mrs Featherstone, Head of Geography commented that 'Amber's experience has not only provided students with an insight into a Country many won't ever have the opportunity of visiting, but also inspire them to think about taking up a similar opportunity when they go to college.'

Another ex-student from St Michael's, Emily Aston was also on the trip.



### **Thursday 24 November – Christmas Fayre**

This was the first time that St Michael's had held a Christmas Fayre at school. We were lucky to be joined by 35 stall holders with a range of goods to sell from crafts, candles, cakes, toiletries, ceramic and wooden gifts. Mulled wine and hot chocolate was served by kitchen staff, while people took the opportunity to browse and buy the unique goods on sale that they wouldn't find in larger stores.

The event was organised by the PTA, which raised over £620 and they are hoping to repeat this event on an annual basis. Pat Chambers, Chair of the PTA, said 'this is a fantastic event, which is an opportunity for school to work with local small stallholders with quirky goods and items to add to a loved one's stocking. It's also an opportunity for St Michael's to welcome parents and the community into school to develop wider networks with people.'

(Pat don't know what I have done with the photos do you have any?)

### **Friday 2 December - Blessing of the Christmas tree**

Pupils from St Michael's Catholic feeder primary schools were invited to attend the 'blessing of the Christmas tree', at St Michael's on Friday 2 December. Mr Ramsey, Headteacher, welcomed our visitors to school and commented that it was a great opportunity not only to strengthen links with the schools, but also to give the children an insight into what goes on in the Academy.

The right reverend Father John Butters from the Parish of St Thomas of Canterbury presided over the event, blessing the tree for school. The children were then invited to write their wishes onto a piece of paper that displayed the nativity scene on one side and hang them on the Christmas tree. The Children's wishes ranged from poignant messages for peace in those countries that are suffering from oppression and war, to better health for family members and for Christmas to be a joyful time when families can come together and celebrate the festive season.



Our visitors were joined by students from year 8 who also participated in the ceremony. The pupils and their teachers were then invited to stay for lunch, which they thoroughly enjoyed.



## **Monday 19 December – Christmas Carol Concert**

Everyone loves a Carol Concert and St Michael's is no different. Mr Hird (Head of Music) and Mrs Hutchinson (Music Teacher) ably led the school choir and orchestra in delivering the Christmas Carol concert to parents, carers, students and staff. Mr Ramsey (Head) who taught Music and is an excellent pianist also joined in.

Students sang a variety of Carols and then treat the audience to some more popular Christmas songs from recent years.



## **Tuesday 20 December - Non-Uniform Day**

Maintaining its tradition for holding a non-uniform day every term for a charity, St Michael's students and staff donated to the NSPCC a total of £600.

## **Christmas Cards for Bradley**

Many people will have no doubt heard about a wonderful and brave young man called Bradley Lowery, who lives in Blackhall, Co Durham. Bradley is only 5 years old and has suffered from Neuroblastoma (a rare form of child cancer) since the age of 2. Although he has bravely fought this disease since such a young age and went into remission, sadly for both him and his parents the cancer has returned.

In December, a campaign was launched to get as many Christmas Cards sent to Bradley as possible. Soon the word spread, eager to help the students and staff from St Michael's decided that they wanted to do their bit for Bradley. On the 20 December a group of students visited Bradley's home to drop off the cards. Although Bradley wasn't there the students, posed for a photograph with his mam, Miss Mahoney (Deputy Head) and Miss Barrett (PA to the Head). We have since heard that Bradley received over 250,000 cards, which we think is an amazing achievement.



## Food Bank Donations

The Academy feels that it is very important for its students to remember those less fortunate than themselves at any time of the year but particularly at Christmas. Over the last few weeks, students and staff have been collecting tinned food, toiletries and other items to donate to the local food bank.



### **Wednesday 21 December – Christmas liturgy**

As a Catholic school it is important for us to remember why we celebrate Christmas and on our last school day of the autumn term, pupils from year 8 re-enacted the nativity as part of the liturgical celebration, which also included many popular carols.

### **Heading into the New Year**

The Academy re-opens to staff and students on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2017. May we take this opportunity to wish everyone a 'Happy New Year'.

### **Wednesday 11 January 2017 – Celebration of Achievement**

St Michael's are looking forward to welcoming back students from its 2015/16 cohort who left school following their GCSE's in June 2016, for the annual 'Celebration of Achievement' Event.

This is a great night when former students are recognised for their endeavours and achievements over the five years they attended St Michael's. This year's Guest Speaker is Matty Hynes, Great Britain & England International athlete who hails from Middlesbrough.

The evening will be presided over by Mrs Cyndi Hughes, (Chair of Directors, Carmel Education Trust, Miss Maura Regan OBE, DL (Chief Executive Officer of Carmel Education Trust), Mrs Mary Toth, Chair of the Local Management Board, and Mr Andrew Ramsey Head of St Michael's Catholic Academy.