



HENLEY BANK HIGH SCHOOL

Friday 13th December 2019

Dear Parents and Carers,

Friday 13th, unlucky for some they say but not for students at Henley Bank High School, where we are committed to offering our students experiences and opportunities that allow them to explore their interests and raise their aspiration to levels that they may not have considered possible. One way in which we deliver this offer is through our Ivy League Lectures. These lectures are delivered to students by well know professionals in their specific areas of employment. All of them have either studied at the most reputable universities or have been apprentices in some of the country's leading companies. Each of the lectures gives our students an opportunity to hear how hard work and commitment can promote huge success and in many cases on a world-renowned platform. Students get to hear about how these leaders in their own fields progressed through education to their current post, exposing them to inside information about and direction for potential career opportunities. This week our Ivy League Lecture was delivered to students in years 9, 10 and 11 by Professor Matthew Leigh of Oxford University. A Professor of Classical Languages and Literature and fellow of St Anne's College, Professor Leigh mesmerised our students with his huge depth of knowledge about The Classics and Ancient History both of which he studied at Exeter University. With a broad interest in Roman culture, Latin literature and Roman history he certainly took some of our most talented writers to a whole new level of appreciation for his area of expertise.

Students from our Year 10 Health and Social Care class were invited to Millbrook Lodge on Wednesday to visit the 'Dementia Bus'. This is a virtual tour of the world we live in but tweaked to be seen as if through the eyes of someone with dementia using sensory tools, lighting and equipment. Our students came back overwhelmed by what they experienced with Aaron describing it as the most disorientating thing he's ever done. Thanks to this experience, they can now go on not only to include their experiences in their BTEC coursework but will be able to help those in our community who may be struggling with this awful disease. Thank you to Miss Bick for taking our students and to Millbrook Lodge for inviting us. Long may this new relationship continue.

The Year 11 Pre-Public Examinations closed this week with Ms Williams` Hospitality and Catering team of student chefs producing a two-course meal that showcased their knowledge and food and cooking skills. The examination took the whole day on Thursday and it was great to see our students hard work in such a focussed kitchen. The smells permeated the entire main building and drew a lot of attention at breaktimes as staff and students alike flocked to observe and sample the dishes that were so expertly delivered.

Our Year 8 and 10 netballers took to the court this week against Barnwood Park School and both match reports describe games of serious competition and great teamwork. Year 8 defeated their opponents 10-5 with Skye receiving Player of the Match and Year 10 lost in a closely fought battle that ended at 9-10. Well done to all that stepped into the arena to give their all. Thank you.

Last week I mentioned Mr Delahoy`s poem, The Fragility of Stained Glass, that was read brilliantly by our very own Jack in year 7 at Gloucester Cathedral last week. I am really pleased to include it in my letter this week and hope you enjoy reading it. A wonderful piece of writing that keeps the festive feeling buzzing.

Wishing you a fantastic weekend decorating Christmas trees, shopping for gifts or just taking it easy.

Kind regards,

Mr B. Nash





The Fragility of Stained Glass by Sean Delahoy

All around us
The miracles of Christmas are illuminated
In patterns of coloured glass.
Saints and apostles, Eden and the Ark
All herald a new-born child destined to wear a crown of thorns.
From these windows we witness the wonders
And harmonies of multi-coloured light.

In each tiny pigment and every coloured shard
In each fragile fragment and every subtle shade
A myriad stories radiate and shine.
Tales of diversity and difference, sacrifice and faith
Remind us of the collective comfort and togetherness
That is our humanity.

They tell stories of lives that are as intricate
And delicate as the carefully connected glass.
Like us, they cast iridescence from fragile forms
As they join together; an infinite mix
Facing out whilst also looking in.
Like us, they radiate kaleidoscopes of colour
Into the darkest corners of our existence.

And like them, we must offer light to the lost
Creating beautiful open spaces
Between walls that separate and segregate.
Like them, we must offer transparency and openness, honesty and grace
And our dominion must ask for nothing in return.

And just as Christmas offers us the fragility of stained glass
We must also remember that our fortitude and courage
Our beauty and humanity
Will always be strengthened by our communal colour.

