



STUDENT NEWSLETTER



Scoil an Leighis Tréidliachta UCD | UCD School of Veterinary Medicine

WELCOME

Welcome to our Christmas issue of the Student Newsletter, our final issue for 2020! This packed issue arrives into your inbox as we wind down towards the end of what has been an incredible year. This newsletter has - you got it! - a Christmassy feel. We have two lovely articles from Ava and Róisín, who have both welcomed new pets to their lives this year. Rory tells us about Christmas in the Vet Hospital, and Marion talks about her passion for knitting and Christmas displays in the Vet Library. If you're staying in Dublin at Christmas, there's plenty of tips about stuff going on to celebrate the season, followed by an interesting piece of research on people's emotions around Brussels sprouts (forgive us this one!). Finally, check out the section on staying well this Christmas.

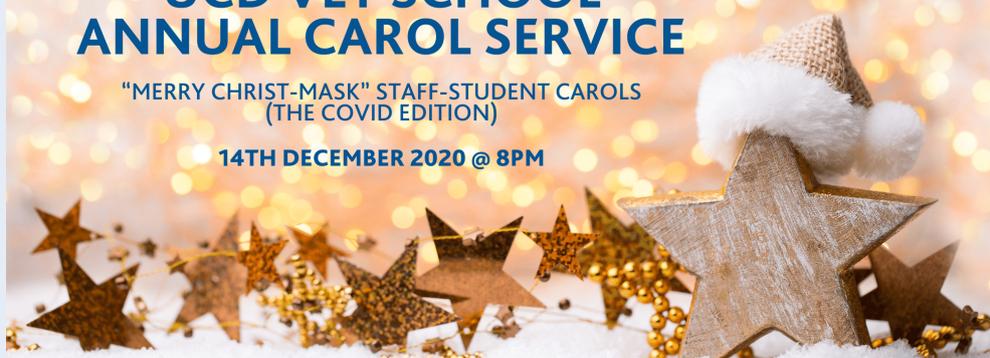
From the Student Newsletter Team to you, happy Christmas. Thank you for all your support during this year and roll on 2021. May it be a good one.



UCD VET SCHOOL ANNUAL CAROL SERVICE

"MERRY CHRIST-MASK" STAFF-STUDENT CAROLS (THE COVID EDITION)

14TH DECEMBER 2020 @ 8PM

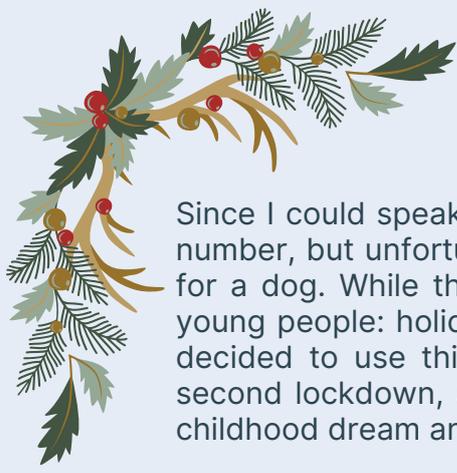


School News

The Vet School year is never complete without the Annual Carol Service, and this year marks 41 years that the event has been running! This in itself is incredible. What a tradition! The concert has brought endless joy to students, staff, the wider UCD community, and further afield for decades now. As we all know, this year put the kibosh on a lot of things, but we cannot tell you how delighted we were to see this event go ahead, albeit virtually, in a year that has been marked by uncertainty, change, significant loss, and a whole bunch of ups and downs in between. Huge kudos to the colleagues and students who took part, and particular thanks to Dr Joei Potter who was the driving force behind the whole thing. There is still time to donate [at this link](#); all donations go to Pieta House and the UCD Animal Welfare Fund.

Many of you are currently near the end of exams. If you can, take a few minutes every day to do something that resources you. The basics are invaluable - sleep, exercise and nutrition. Remember that we are all here for support; just reach out. Keep your eyes peeled on the end of exams and December 23rd when the University closes. A big rest is in order for everyone!

Call for Content: Ever felt like doing a bit of writing? Our next issue will come out early next trimester. If you'd like to contribute to that or if you have any questions at all, please don't hesitate to email niamh.nestor@ucd.ie.



Joey the Superstar

Ava O'Donoghue-Patterson, Stage 3 MVB Student

Since I could speak, I have always wanted a dog. I wished on every lucky star, statue, and number, but unfortunately, due to my family's circumstances, we just did not have the time for a dog. While the COVID-19 pandemic has been a particularly negative experience for young people: holidays cancelled, no J1s, no more concerts or festivals...the list goes on, I decided to use this opportunity to do something positive. At the very beginning of our second lockdown, after thinking long and hard about my decision, I decided to follow my childhood dream and get a puppy.



At first, I was so overwhelmed with feelings of doubt and worry: Was this too much responsibility? Will I regret this decision? Is it too much work while in college? However, once I brought Joey home and watched him fall asleep peacefully, all my fears and worries instantly evaporated. He has brought nothing but positivity and joy to a situation where it is hard to see the light at the end of the tunnel.

At the moment, he is enjoying being spoiled at home by my parents while I attempt to get through my exams! During the Christmas break we will be taking him out exploring the many beaches we have down in West Cork. He is already enjoying his early Christmas present of a bed!!

Study Shows That Dogs Are Humans' Oldest Companions

Research into dog DNA has revealed that dogs are humans' oldest companions, according to [this article](#) that appeared recently on the BBC website. The research shows that "dog domestication can be traced back 11,000 years, to the end of the last Ice Age", confirming the domestication of dogs long before any other known species. Check out the article for other fascinating insights.

If you're a cat lover, fear not! Cats are mentioned in the article, too: "Many animals, such as cats, probably became our pets when humans settled down to farm a little over 6,000 years ago. Cats were probably useful for controlling pests such as mice that were attracted by the waste generated by dense settlements", and this places the domestication of cats "in cradles of agriculture such as the Near East". Never too old to learn are we!!





Luna's Story

Róisín Walsh, Stage 2 MVB Student



Right before coronavirus really hit, myself and my friend were doing our lambing placement back home in Sligo. I loved all the lambs so much and had a fab two weeks! I especially loved looking after all the orphaned lambs and giving them all the attention they deserved. I was always joking with the farmer about having my own sheep, and he ended up asking both my friend and I if we wanted to take one home with us because the orphans were a lot of work for him. Of course I jumped at the chance, even though my parents weren't fully convinced of the idea of having a sheep (understandably!!) and brought Luna home with me which was the best decision ever!!

Luna was only a day old and absolutely tiny. I made an enclosure for her inside the house and was bottle-feeding her plenty of times a day at the start which was great craic!

She happily ran around outside and inside the house and slept on my lap when I was doing college work. She spent the whole time leaping and jumping around the place which made me so happy!! I have to laugh when I think about how spoiled she was, I made her a little jumper to wear at night and shampooed her wool every once in a while when she was still small – she looked like a little fluffy cloud! Definitely the best looked after sheep in Ireland haha.

Luna loves rubs and attention, and her favourite activity was following my dog around the place so I ended up lead-training her so she could come on walks which worked way better than I expected. I did get very strange looks from the neighbours every time I brought her down the road though; they definitely think I'm some crazy sheep lady now!! I also have two goats, so Luna lives outside with them, and they're all happy out together munching all day.

My whole family loves Luna now and can't imagine life without her. She's a little ray of sunshine in the form of a sheep! I miss her a lot since I moved back up to Dublin for college but thankfully I have my parents sending me pictures of her every day to keep me in the loop!! I can't wait to see her this Christmas.



BSAVA Conference on January 23rd



Join your fellow veterinary students on 23rd January 2021 for a one-day virtual conference from the British Small Animal Veterinary Association (BSAVA), sponsored by Hill's Pet Nutrition.

You can expect polls, quizzes, panel discussions and the opportunity to interact using an online chat platform, before, during and after the event. It even counts towards 6 hours of EMS!

The event has a small charge to students (£12) and provides an entire day of content, evening entertainment (Rosie Brandeth-Poynter is doing a live bake-off) and bonus content that is available on the Sunday (January 24th).

Book your place today by clicking [on this link!](#)



MVB/GE students, for any CEMS questions relating to this conference, please contact ems@ucd.ie.



Christmas in the UCD Veterinary Hospital

Interview with Prof. Rory Breathnach, Director of UCDVH



A few days ago, Rory, the Director of UCDVH, sat down to chat with Niamh about what Christmas is like in the UCD Vet Hospital. Huge thanks to Rory for taking a couple of minutes out of what we know is a hectic schedule! Niamh started by asking Rory what Christmas is like in the Vet Hospital.

Rory It's totally and utterly unpredictable. It can go from being very quiet to a market day in Marrakech! Prior to the Pet Emergency Hospital coming in, we only dealt with our own patients, and the only people who'd take new cases were Large Animal – Equine and Farm Animal. In Equine, say if you've get a colic or something you have to take it, and if you get a colic, you're here operating for 4 or 5 hours. A lot of practices, as you can understand, are happy to pass on cases on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, so the calls do come in, but, in fairness, most of the vets are very good. If they haven't sent those cases before, they don't just pick on you on Christmas Day!

On the small animal side, we don't actually take new cases. The Pet Emergency Hospital is here to take them. So conscientiously, we know that somebody is looking after them. But the one area that we always see a lot of over Christmas are cancer cases – you can't stop a chemo protocol simply because it's Christmas. When I come in here, I'll always find the oncology nurses in. We try and schedule the work into two days or something, and we might be a few days out, but you won't leave an animal for two weeks without their treatment.



Rory (above) in full flow as the MC for the UCD Vet School Annual Christmas Carol Service!

We have a duty of care to the patients that we have seen, who are still under our care, so if they crash, and bearing in mind the patients we see are the really sick ones and when they crash it's a serious crash; this patient would invariably be going down to ICU, so there'll always be staff on. There'll be two interns on, an animal care attendant as well, and seniors, too, and they're available by call. But we do always try to de-populate as much as we can at Christmas. Even for the dog in the family's sake! If nothing's happening with the animal, there's no point in them sitting in the kennel. But there are some animals who are just either too sick or situations where it would be a journey for a client from, for example, Limerick to Dublin. In COVID times, they might worry. We get that kind of stuff where someone might be vulnerable, and we keep the patient on a sympathetic basis over the Christmas period.

I've come in here on Christmas days and it's kind of funny because with the staff – the interns are on – and the strange thing about it is that, of course, a lot of our interns and residents are from overseas. Myself, I love Christmas with family, horse-racing and football, and all that, so I always feel sorry for those guys, but they divide the rota up between them and we work out people's holidays. So, staff are in, although it's skeleton staff on-site unless an emergency comes in.

Niamh And do you always pop in on Christmas Day?

Rory No, not always on Christmas Day. If I know there's a problem, I will pop in. What I would do is regularly pop in on the 26th, 27th, 28th, 29th. And you might say to me, "Rory, this is really good!" But actually, the Leopardstown Races are on!! They start at half twelve, so Rory pops in at 11 o'clock, "How are things?!" "Everything's fine Rory. It's really conscientious of you to come in!" But you can say to the other staff, "There's no need to go in. I'm around. The races finish at 3.30/4pm, and if there is a problem. I'll pop back in the way home. So that's one thing that I do but I don't make a conscious decision unless I think there's a problem."



The UCD Veterinary Hospital

Niamh Any memories that you have of Christmas in the Hospital or even when going back to when you were a student in UCD?

Rory I lived in Sandymount, and when we were in final year of course there was a rota for out-of-hours, and that went into the Christmas holidays as well. I told other people, "Look I'm here. I live in Sandymount. You live in Limerick. You go home. I'll do the morning and the afternoon, and I'll stay as long as it's necessary", and that's what you'd always do for anybody. I remember turning up on Christmas Eve in Ballsbridge, and the intern and the kennel people were on. They just looked at me and said, "What are you doing here?!" I was like, "Oh, ok." And they said, "It's Christmas time. Go home!" So it was very much an attitude of unless you were really needed, it wasn't necessary.

Something that's very hard is when an animal dies at Christmas. You know the thing about losing a family member at Christmas? Well, losing your family pet is very hard. I've seen a couple of occasions where literally I'm coming in and someone's walking out the door crying. I think, "Oh no, this is not good at Christmas."

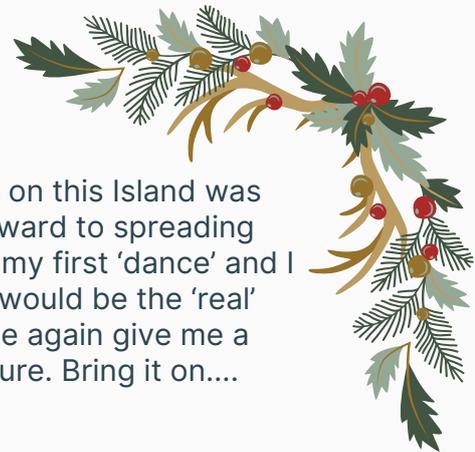
A great thing I found about Christmas when I was in practice and when I was here is that on Christmas Day, the phone rings and it's always like, "I'm really sorry to ring you", and you kind of go, "Don't worry about it. I'm on duty", but people are very receptive to anything you can offer them. I didn't go out on Christmas Day for every call because there could be another call in an hour's time, and I simply say to people, "Look I'm going to be in the practice or I'll be in the hospital here at one o'clock", and I do that at 1pm and 7pm. All clients want is access to you on Christmas Day and it didn't matter whether they'd have to wait a few hours or not, and by doing a 1pm and a 7pm, you mopped everything up. Clients are very appreciative. I've actually had many occasions when I was in practice where I'd be called out in the middle of the night, 2am, to a dog run over by a car and it'd be paraplegic. I'd explain that, show the X-rays, and explain there's nothing we could do, and the decision would be made to put the animal to sleep. But I never minded getting out of bed for a genuine case. People are very, very appreciative that you came out.



Huge thanks again to Rory for chatting to us!

Eat, sleep, knit...repeat!

Marion Drew, Client Services Team, UCD Library (now retired)



A few days ago, there was a momentous day for Ireland, as the first person on this Island was vaccinated against COVID-19. I am full of confident excitement as I look forward to spreading my wings again. More than fifty years ago, my parents allowed me to go to my first 'dance' and I couldn't wait to dance to all the songs I heard on the radio. I just knew that would be the 'real' start to my life. Now, I have my arm ready for the 'jab', which will surely once again give me a kick-start, put me into fifth gear and set me rolling towards my next adventure. Bring it on....

I retired from UCD in September 2020, having been a member of the Library's Client Services team for almost 20 years. I worked evenings in the Vet Library and became known mostly for my craft displays themed around Christmas. Usually the intrepid students had to battle their way through a myriad of knitted Christmas trees, elves, snowmen and Santas, a Nativity scene with almost 100 characters including exotic animals, some of which were spending their first and only trip out of Africa! As anyone who knows the Vet Library will tell you, space around the service desk is limited. Yet, over the years it has accommodated a dolls house with 25 occupants and far too much knitted furniture and household appliances. The *Twelve Days of Christmas* extended all around the desk, the drummers, pipers and dancers all competing for every square centimetre; thirteen working knitted clocks kept time with the season. My 2020 Christmas project will also become my 2021 Christmas project! Well, the North Pole can always be extended, and Rudolf and his buddies will have an even bigger sleigh!



A sneak preview of Marion's 2021 Christmas-themed knits



When Covid hit, like many people I became intimately acquainted with the vacuum cleaner and the sweeping brush....for about two weeks! Every day my head buzzed with ideas, inevitably involving balls of yarn and knitting needles and silly things to make. A knitted doctor in scrubs, mask and stethoscope joined the family in April. He sat on the couch as a constant reminder of (my son) Thomas and his wife, both working in London hospitals. Because of the lockdown in the UK, restaurants were closed, so I sent them a knitted take-away which even included chips, pizza, ice-cream and a miniature bottle of champagne and some flowers. My new granddaughter seems to think my knitting creations are great fun, whereas you and I know they are works of cerebral genius, to be appreciated by those with a finely tuned artistic flair!!

Now, if you were to ask me about the connection between all this knitting stuff and the life of the Vet and Vet Nursing student, I would say that they both require imagination to take a big idea and bring it to fruition. Planning and attention to detail are crucial; there are no short cuts! If things seem difficult, never throw in the towel (or in my case, the ball of yarn)! If things start to unravel, look for a helping hand. Most importantly, life is so much easier with a sense of humour!



Seven swans a-swimming, eight maids a-milking...and a partridge in a pear tree!
Scenes from Marion's knitted *Twelve Days of Christmas*

What's happening at UCD over Christmas?

The answer to this is easy: LOTS! Sooooo ho ho ho, first things first: Check out [the ChristmasAtUCD website](#) to find out more. There's something in there for everyone. Highlights include a Christmas morning breakfast, woodland walks, and Christmas movies at the UCD Cinema.

You can find event information on the main [UCD Events calendar](#) or by searching #ChristmasAtUCD on social media. (It goes without saying that all activities will operate with adherence to public-health guidelines.) Below we've pulled out two other things we wanted to draw your attention to as they look super cool.



Bleeper Bikes

Bleper Bikes are available to any student living on campus/in Dublin over the Christmas to use for FREE until 11th January! Like, how could you resist this? Here are the key deets:

- Any queries on the specifics, the person to contact is Kevin: kevin@bleeperbike.com
- There are 50 bikes parked on campus with 50 helmets available, too.
- Bikes come with a smart locking system via the Bleper app. To get set up, download the app and apply for "UCD Global My Private Scheme". Kevin will approve applicants immediately.
- Bikes are available from Monday, 14th December, 2020-Monday, 11th January, 2021.
- Students must have a valid UCD Connect email address and must [fill out this form](#).
- For info: [UCD Bleperbike application and instructions for use](#).



7 Days of Conscious Christmas

Supported by UCD SPARC

7 Days of Conscious Christmas wants to bring people together over the festive period where they can be creative and engage with other people. There is something for everyone, with 7 different workshops taking place from 16th-23rd December. It couldn't be easier to join in as everything takes place virtually. There are also lots of great prizes to be won! For more information and to book your spot, please see the workshop links below:

16th Dec. at 12noon: [Make Your Own Body Scrub and Face Mask](#) with the Rediscovery Centre

17th Dec. at 6pm: [Make Your Own Wrapping and Decoration](#) with Eco UCD

18th Dec. at 12noon: [Make Your Own Hand-embroidered Decoration](#) with UCD Purl Jam

19th Dec. at 3pm: [Make Your Own Christmas Card](#) with UCDSU and the UCD PhD Society

12th & 22nd Dec. at 6pm: [Make Your Own Crochet Christmas Ornament](#) with UCD Purl Jam

23rd Dec. at 12noon: [Make Your Own Hand-stitched Heart](#) with UCD Purl Jam



For more information on UCD SPARC, see: <https://www.ucd.ie/careers/sparc/>

FAQs on UCD's COVID-19 special arrangements can be found on: <http://www.ucd.ie/covid-19/faqs/faqsforstudents/>

Everyday I'm Brusselin'

Niamh Nestor, Student Adviser



We thought an article about Brussels sprouts would be a timely addition to this issue of the newsletter! This mini-cabbage-like vegetable, enveloped in its crunchy coats of a certain indescribable shade of green, is typically associated with Christmas. As many students will already know, having followed the journey of my cucumber plants during the summer months, the topic of gardening is one that is close to my heart. (For context, during the first lockdown and throughout the summer months, regular updates about the cucumber triplets of Cedric, Cecilia-Celeste and Cleo-Clement generated a lot of interest, and I don't think it's an understatement to say that we all became *very* invested in the C-siblings' time on this planet.) Alas, my cucumber triplets gave all they could and passed on, so my focus for the winter turned to my 12 Brussels sprouts plants. Twelve, you may ask? Yes, twelve. (It's definitely not because I thought I was planting 6 kale plants and 6 Brussels plants. No, that's not what happened at all...)

Brussels inspire all sorts of extreme reactions in people, and the world appears to be divided into people who adore them and people who can't stand them. How does this teensy vegetable provoke such love on the one hand and such hate on the other? Well, I put my investigative hat on and did a bit of digging into this fascinating topic. The internet told me that Brussels have their roots in Europe, specifically Rome, but they gained in popularity as a vegetable in Belgium in the 16th century, hence the name. The French brought the lowly sprout Stateside in 1800; notwithstanding its glorious origins and history, the poor thing continues to be the most hated veggie in the USA! But, the internet also tells me that the sprout is *becoming* loved for its 'cute shape, approachable flavour and versatility in recipes'. (That's called "clutching at straws", I hear some of you shout.)

In my extensive research, I also turned to Facebook. As we all know, anything you find on Facebook is entirely neutral and objective. My robust methodology included a two-question vox pop: 1. Do you love or hate Brussels sprouts?, and 2. If you love or hate them, can you tell me why? The response was immediate and damning. Someone called them 'Satan's snot balls'; another described them as 'gross and smelly'; and another said: 'If I could destroy one vegetable in the world it would be Brussels sprouts. The only reason I allow them to live is that they look super weird and interesting on the plant.' Things seemed bleak for the snotball...sorry, sprout.

In a neck-breaking turn of events, one brave commenter, aghast at these attacks, penned a limerick to the sprout: *A Brussel sprout said in dismay, Why can't I be loved on 'that Day', Each Christmas comes round, I'm bought by the pound, Then thrown out all wizened and grey.* The poem did the trick, and the sprout-lovers came out of the shadows. One common theme among these fans was that they declared their love for the veggie followed swiftly by a recipe. (Not part of the research questions but we didn't let that stand in the way of our pursuit of the truth.) Many recommend staying away from the Irish tradition described aptly as 'boil the veg into oblivion!', and instead smothering the sprouts in butter, bacon, melted cheese, gravy or ketchup; or par-boiling followed by sautéing with garlic and pancetta, and finally dusting with grated parmesan. One person recommended dipping the cooked Brussels in chocolate, but this was met with some derision, widespread disbelief, yet undeniable curiosity. Many said 'Brussels are not just for Christmas' and talked about having them in the house/pantry year-round, but others told sad tales of being denied the joy of a tasty Brussel by a cruel family member, only to overcome these obstacles and stealthily sneak them into the house and onto their Christmas dinner plates. Finally, some of our research participants conjured up images that were too good not to share. One said: 'What's not to love about imagining you're Gulliver chowing down on Lilliputian cabbages. Nom, nom, nom' (the last part we assumed should be roared like a giant); another lovingly wrote: 'I would just like to add that when you buy them on the stalk they look like super cute little Christmas trees.' Awww.

And so, at the end of our research (which, it must be noted, split the Student Newsletter Editorial Team right down the middle), we concluded the following: Drowning Brussels in butter (or something) is vital; eating them allows you to imagine that you are a giant in a fantasy world who likes to eat tiny cabbages; this tiny veggie may inspire hate but it also inspires poetry and love; and, ultimately, more people love Brussels than not. Which surprised us no end. Take that world.



2

This year has been non-stop crisis, and crisis takes a toll. Second up in our list of tips and tricks is this video called **FACE COVID** which gives you a set of practical steps for dealing with the COVID-19 crisis. The great thing about this video is that these steps can actually pretty much be used in any crisis life throws at us, so it's well worth a watch.

FACE COVID is an acronym meaning:

F = Focus on what's in your control

A = Acknowledge your thoughts and feelings

C = Come back into your body

E = Engage in what you're doing

C = Committed action

O = Opening up

V = Values

I = Identify Resources

D = Disinfect and distance

F.A.C.E. C.O.V.I.D.



3

No. 3 on our Christmas list is the **I am app**. We all have negative thoughts running around in our brains. Imposter Syndrome is real, especially when you're in college and under pressure with study and exams. This lovely app gives you the option to choose daily intentions and set reminders for positive affirmations to be delivered throughout the day. The practice of affirmation has been shown to rewire our brains, build self-esteem and change negative thought patterns. Available to download for free from wherever you get your apps.



Burnout is the 4th thing we want to talk about. It can rear its ugly head around this time of the year. Bear in mind that you've just finished a long and busy trimester...and done all of that in the middle of a global pandemic which has seen the whole world turned upside-down. It feels like it's been non-stop since March. We feel you and we are with you. No one is alone in this.

RTÉ recently published an article on burnout written by a resilience coach, and it contains some thought-provoking stuff. One part we loved is a paragraph on resilience, building resilience and becoming aware of our own resources. The writer says: "One way to learn and develop your resilience is to look back at previous experiences or challenges that you have been through. Ask yourself: What did you do to get through the situation? Who did you speak to? What action did you take? Ask yourself what you did and apply those strategies to get through this current phase." Remember: You are stronger than you know. Not only that but there is *always* help and there is *always* support for you if things start to feel overwhelming and out of control. See a list of supports below.



5

The internet is a goldmine of mental-health supports but there is some stuff from a couple of Irish organisations that we really love. The first is Suicide or Survive (SOS) which has recorded some great **webinars** especially for this time of year. There's one on loneliness; one on hope; and, finally, one on happiness. SOS has also created a free online wellness workshop available to all. It includes activities, videos and pdfs to help you with your wellness. The second is Mental Health Ireland which has a Season's Greetings Wellness Calendar. Click on each day to unveil a different support. Love. This!

Sometimes, we all need a helping hand. Remember that help is always available to you whether it be from family, friends, your GP, your student adviser, UCD Chaplaincy, and UCD Health and Counselling.

If you need support over the Christmas and are based in Ireland, the **Samaritans** is a 24/7 listening service for anyone in distress. Their number is 116 123. You can also contact them by emailing jo@samaritans.org. Check out their contact options here.

50808 is a free 24/7 text service, providing everything from a calming chat to immediate support for people going through a mental health or emotional crisis - big or small. Text HELLO to 50808 to start a conversation, any time - day or night.

Spunout.ie has great resources on all sorts of topics. Mental Health Ireland has information on accessing mental-health services in Ireland.



merry
christmas

