

## Former CFPNI Participant Speaks to NH High School Students



1999 CFPNI participant Claire Hanna (above) was warmly welcomed at Derry, NH's Pinkerton Academy on October 22, 2003 to speak at one of their Diversity Week presentations. Claire spoke to the high school students about life in Northern Ireland, and about her experience with CFPNI and how it made a difference in her life.

Addressing the students, Claire spoke about what it was like to grow up in Northern Ireland during the troubles. "On meeting people I'd find myself being asked where I was from or what school I went to", she told them. "For us the most important thing to learn when meeting someone new was which side they were on."

Claire went on to describe what it was like coming to the United States with CFPNI and her partner, Victoria. "Victoria was a protestant to me before she was a person. Away from that environment our beliefs were no longer important. As we began to see our similarities we became more accepting and understanding of our differences."

Claire was awarded the Pedro Arrupe Scholarship For Peace to attend Georgetown University from August 2002 to May 2006. She is majoring in Theology with a Minor in Justice and Peace Studies. Last summer she spent a month volunteering at Corrymeela, a center for peace and reconciliation, located in Ballycastle, N. Ireland.

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Claire was invited to speak by the producers of “A Song for Ireland”. “A Song for Ireland” is an original rock opera set in Northern Ireland. It is a story of hope, courage and forbidden love. Real people, places and actual events that took place in L’Derry, Northern Ireland at the end of a two-year calm during the summer of 1996, inspired the story.

Back row from left: John Murphy, co-star (Kerry), Annette Griffin, co-star (Moirá) and CFPNI host mom, Brian Todd, co-star (Ercan), co-producer and director, Claire Hanna, CFPNI participant, and Laurie MacPherson, writer and co-producer.