



Children's Friendship
Project for Northern Ireland, Inc.
"Promoting Understanding Through Interaction"

U.S. Newsletter – Fall 1998

1998 HAS BEEN EVENTFUL!!

These are just some of the many highlights:

- 1997 CFPNI teens were given a special tour of the USS Halyburton in July while it was docked in Belfast.
- 1998 teen pairs were hosted in 13 different states.
- CFPNI teens hosted in Eastern Pennsylvania and New Jersey were invited to attend Sen. George Mitchell's Liberty Award ceremony in Philadelphia on July 4.
- More than 40 teens participated in a United Methodist sponsored 2½ day program in Washington, DC on diversity and division in the U.S. Part of the program involved community service (e.g., working in a soup kitchen and homeless shelter). Given the universally positive review of the seminar, the seminar managers have committed to expanding the number of seminars in 1999 to at least one other area where groups of CFPNI teens are being hosted.
- 48 teens were hosted at the White House by First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton.
- The day before the teens returned, a large car bomb exploded in Omagh, Co. Tyrone. None of the immediate family members of our teens were a victim, but many lost other relatives, friends, and neighbors.
- CFPNI teens were invited by the State Department to participate as volunteers at the Vital Voices conference in Belfast at the end of August. Fiona Hughes, a 1998 CFPNI teen, was asked to introduce Mrs. Clinton as the keynote speaker of the conference. CFPNI was mentioned and one of our teens was featured in the speech. (Fiona's introduction and the First Lady's speech were broadcast on TV in N.I. and in the U.S.)
- Nearly 500 people attended CFPNI's 1998 Reunion on October 24 in Dungannon, Co. Tyrone, Northern Ireland. Over 30 Americans traveled to Northern Ireland to join in the celebration.
- The first annual Barrett Award was presented to Cherith Boyd and Mary Wilson, a pair of 1997 teens who set an outstanding example of the program's ideals, at the 1998 Annual Reunion in Northern Ireland. Pictured above with the winners, Cherith Boyd and Mary Wilson (center), are (from left to right) Lilah Graham, N.I. Principal Coordinator; Peggy Barrett, President Emeritus; Warren Muir, President, and Eric Rothe, Coordinator and Chief Judge



Reflections

Dear Friends,

I have really enjoyed getting to know many of you over this year as President, even if, for most, it was only by phone. Thanks for all your support.

Many things are going well for the program. We have a fantastic group of coordinators here in the U.S. (27 representing 16 states, along with two transportation coordinators). We now have eight talented and dedicated coordinators in Northern Ireland, representing all six counties. We also have a N.I. Administrator and a Membership Coordinator to facilitate a N.I. newsletter and reunions after the first year following the teens' summer in the U.S. We have wonderful host families, most of whom plan on hosting again in the future. We have developed a large group of former-teen alumni, who are spreading their cross-community spirit and good works, and are spreading the word about the program to their friends. This year, CFPNI had more publicity than ever before, had the teens hosted by First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton at the White House, and had our teens actively involved in President and Mrs. Clinton's recent visit to Northern Ireland. Plus, we have elected a new board of directors who we feel confident will bring new strengths to the program.

In addition, the Good Friday Agreement has brought a hope for peace in Northern Ireland that was only a far-off dream when this program started. Moreover, the military presence and the threat of paramilitary violence has diminished significantly over the past few years, not withstanding the firebombing of the Quinn children and the Omagh bombing this summer.

Despite all this truly great news, I have concerns about the program. First, even if the peace process moves forward and all violence in Northern Ireland ceases, the people will remain terribly divided. I understand that housing is more segregated than at any other time in this generation. The schools remain largely divided along religious lines. Those opposing peace are very effective at instilling fear, mistrust, and misunderstanding between the Catholic and Protestant communities there. Second, so long as the worst of the violence doesn't return, less coverage in the news is likely to result in fewer Americans focusing on the divided people of Northern Ireland. Third, even with maximum visibility, it is getting harder to find hosts in the U.S. for the teens, largely because fewer and fewer households have an adult around to provide daylong supervision for the six weeks.

Thus, I am convinced that CFPNI is going to be badly needed for the foreseeable future and that to fulfill this need we're going to have to lower significantly the hurdle to hosting. As has been demonstrated so effectively in Northern Virginia, where the burden of raising the airfare for the teens has been largely removed from the hosts, more families come forward to host than where hosts have to raise the full airfare--families that have shown themselves to be every bit as committed to the program.

So, even though we've had a successful year, I urge each of you to consider making a generous (tax-deductible) donation to the program, so that we can greatly reduce the burden on host families of raising the teens' airfare. We need

to increase the number of hosts to sustain this important program to address the long-term needs in Northern Ireland.

Finally, if you plan to host next summer, please get your applications in now. We have teens paired last year awaiting hosts and many more being paired at the moment. It makes the program much more effective.

Sincerely,
Warren R. Muir, Ph.D., President



Dear Friends,

It is with much pleasure that I report on another successful summer during which 126 of our teenagers had the opportunity of experiencing the American way of life for six weeks. Our programme continues to enjoy popularity and enthusiasm with all those teenagers who have become involved.

For many young people, this project provides a first ever neutral-setting, where they may explore and appreciate the cultures of others who share the beautiful island of N. Ireland/Ireland with them. Before becoming involved with CFPNI, mixing and sharing accommodation would have been out of the question—now this is common ground.

All teenagers are matched up as soon as possible and attend all CFPNI activities, weekend residentials, ten-pin bowling, etc. before and after their six weeks in America.

This year, however, one event dominated the summer.

The tragedy of the Omagh bombing on Saturday 15th August affected everyone and indeed all 126 teenagers were preparing to depart from the USA on Sunday 16th August. We had just heard the news flash at around midday and immediately called Warren (and the other CFPNI officers) to ask if he had heard the news, which he had not. We immediately began contacting host families for information regarding relatives and friends of the teenagers. Their help was greatly appreciated.

The evening our flight departed, no one on board was really sure of what to expect when they returned home. There was silence on the bus journey back from Dublin – not the usual excitement. It was later discovered that some of the teens had lost aunts, uncles, cousins, and other members of their families.

CFPNI does promote understanding through interaction.

We are indeed very grateful and thankful to all our host families and, indeed, our sponsors, whose generosity permits us to continue this wonderful programme of appreciation and reconciliation in our divided society here in Northern Ireland.

A special thank you to all our coordinators in Northern Ireland and U.S. for all their hard work and all the endless hours that they dedicate to the project. Thank you to all the families who helped at the airports on the outgoing and returning journeys, and to all the chaperones.

Again, many thanks to all.

Yours sincerely,
Lilah Graham, Principal N.I. Coordinator



Promotional Gift for Donations of \$50+

Help support CFPNI in two ways: by making a generous donation and by wearing our T-shirt. People making donations of \$50 or more before Dec 31, 1998 may request a free 100% cotton CFPNI T-shirt from Northern Ireland (\$15 value). Please specify navy or white and size (M, L, or XL).

Donations

All donations received by CFPNI in 1998 in excess of \$50 will be acknowledged at the end of the year on our website and in the next newsletter, by class:

- Friend \$50-99
- Supporter \$100-499
- Sponsor \$500-999
- Peacemaker \$1,000-4,999
- Patron \$5,000+

unless the donor asks to remain anonymous.

All donations and raffle ticket money can be sent to Peggy in the enclosed envelope.

Thanks From Peggy

Many thanks to the more than 200 of you, who contributed to the extraordinarily generous gift last Spring to Jack and myself, and also to those who donated to CFPNI in Jack's memory.—Peggy Barrett

In Their Own Words

"Here I am today with friends I never knew, trying to make amends for the things we ourselves didn't do.

We're trying to understand each difference we have, but instead we realize all the likes we have inside.

Today I realize that when we are all together we can put the problems aside and perhaps look for a better future." – 17yr old CFPNI girl

"[My partner] and I have developed more than a friendship-almost a brothership. Through our experience in America we have developed a closeness which can straddle any religious or political divide-a friendship of a lifetime. I would willingly trust my life in his hands and his in mine. ... We established an understanding about Northern Ireland and its problems and share a friendship which can never be broken." -- 17 yr old CFPNI boy

New Directors

We are very pleased to announce the election of seven new members to the board of directors. They include:

- Paul Arthur, Bangor, Co. Down - Professor of politics and course director of the master's program in peace and conflict at the University of Ulster, Ulster Television's political analyst, Senior Fellow at the U.S. Institute of Peace, and member of numerous advisory boards on justice and conflict resolution.
- Eugene Boyle, Rostrevor, Co. Down - leader of a reconciliation project sponsored by the Programme for

Peace and Reconciliation, author of a widely acclaimed book, Adventures in Reconciliation, recounting the stories of 29 Catholics whose lives have been transformed through their relationship with Jesus Christ, fourteen years on the staff of the Christian Renewal Centre in Rostrevor.

- Mary McCarthy, Short Hills, New Jersey – former Director of Corporate Contributions for Time Warner and predecessor companies, Inc. and Secretary of the Warner Foundation, involved in numerous other philanthropies, and supporter of CFPNI.
- Gary McGuirk, Clairton, Pennsylvania - President and CEO of Liberty U.S.A., President of Sub Express, President of Libcom; two time CFPNI host, former Honorary Director of CFPNI.
- Peter McLachlan, Belfast – founder, leader, or director of numerous social and cross-community non-profit organizations in Northern Ireland including: Bryson House, Partnership Care (West), Ltd., N.I. Federation of Housing Associations, Habitat for Humanity, Ltd., Community of the Peace People, N.I. Conflict and Medication Association, Fellowship of Reconciliation, N.I. Hospice, Dismas House Ex-prisoners Residential Project, N.I. Federation of Victim Support Schemes, and Thanksgiving Square Belfast.
- Kathy Valyi, Yonkers, New York –chief development officer for several non-profit organizations (most dealing with children) including: the Hackley School in Tarrytown, NY, the U.S. Committee for UNICEF, INFORM, and the Cathedral School in New York City, former business executive and analyst with a focus on international issues.
- Ian Young L'Derry, Co. L'Derry - Managing Director of J. Young & Son, Ltd., President of the Londonderry Chamber of Commerce, and member of Rotary International, head of a major conference in 1997 on mediation to resolve community conflicts in N.I..

Kathryn Gundersheim

Our sincere condolences go to the family and friends of Kathryn Gundersheim of Lambertville, NJ. Thank you to the many people who contributed to CFPNI's Kathryn Gundersheim memorial fund established in her memory.

In Their Own Words

"These young people are the hope of the future. They're raised in a segregated society and can really benefit from these programs that bring people of different religions together." – Senator George Mitchell, July 4, 1998, Philadelphia, PA on accepting the Liberty Award. CFPNI teens were invited and attended the ceremony

Books on the U.S. for Northern Ireland

A suggestion was made last year to consider compiling a reading list of recommended books on the multi-cultural aspects of U.S. society for CFPNI participants. We queried a number of public and private high school teachers of US history and literature, as well as asked the buyers of a national book store of what texts they would encourage visitors to our country to read. Some CFPNI families are offering to donate a selection of these books and ship them off to the different CFPNI coordinators who would then circulate them to the prospective CFPNI teens in their county.

Some of the history books include:

- Brave Companion: Portraits in History (D. McCullough);
- Eyes of the Nation: a Visual History of the U.S. (V. Virga);
- Don't Know Much about History (K.C. Davis);
- Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee (D. Brown);
- Letter from Birmingham Jail (M.L. King, Jr.).

The selected American Literature texts include

- Native Son (R. Wright);
- To Kill a Mockingbird (H. Lee);
- Ragtime (E.L. Doctorow);
- The Man in the Grey Flannel Suit;
- The White Dawn (J. Houston).

If you would like to help us establish these 'mini-libraries' of US literature, please send us your donation and we shall purchase the texts and send them on to Northern Ireland, in your name. If you have any additional suggestions, or would like to know the complete list of books, please contact Warren Muir by phone or e-mail. Thanks. – Lilian and Frank Samolis

Mission Statement

(Composed, and adopted for themselves, by the CFPNI teens who attended "Breaking Down Walls and Bridging Gaps" Seminar Washington, DC July 1998)

"We will create an environment where people express, respect, and accept each others' opinions, traditions, fears, etc. through education, integration and interaction. To regain and achieve peace, we need to compromise through honest and sensitive dialogue. The key is time, patience, and hope for a brighter future."

Sign Up Now to Host in 1999

If you know that you would like to host next summer, please sign up now. There are many teens who have been paired since last year and who are anxiously awaiting hosts and many more being paired at the moment. Contact Peggy Barrett or the coordinator nearest you (see below) to get a 1999 application form.

How to Reach Us

Prospective host families should contact:

Peggy Barrett, President Emeritus
1538 N. Penryn Road, Manheim, PA 17545
Tel.: 800/786-8788 or 717/665-6559
E-mail: cfpni@ptd.net

Warren Muir, President
9426 Forest Haven Drive, Alexandria, VA 22309
Tel: 703/619-0561, Fax: 703/780-7783
E-mail: director@cfpni.org

U.S. Area Coordinators for 1999:

Northeast

- John Leech, Millville, MA, (508) 883-1566
- Kathleen O'Rourke, Setauket, NY, (516) 689-9816
- Cindy Rayner, Andover, MA (978) 474-4258

MidAtlantic

- Hilda Aland, Annapolis, MD, (410) 267-0511
- Steven Baust, Perry Hall, MD (410) 529-3134
- Beverly Cassel, Yardley, PA, (215) 493-8511
- Pat Guzewicz, Stroudsburg, PA, (717) 421-8930
- Dan Lamar, Shiremanstown, PA (717) 730-7269
- Tom Mc Carthy, Catonsville, MD (410) 744-0102
- Richard Sinclair, Charleston, WV (304) 345-0303

Midwest

- Kay Ambre, Davenport, IA 52803, (319) 326-6083
- James King, Dublin, OH (614) 225-4356
- Marie Mengel, South Bend, IN, (219) 272-2883
- Brian Pekovitch, Moweaqua, IL (217) 768-4660

Southeast

- Sharon Carroll, Sarasota, FL, (941) 351-9852
- Sharon Harroun, Oak Hill, VA, (703) 860-9417
- Jerry Hogan, Savannah, GA, (912) 355-6419
- Virginia M. Jones, Oak Ridge, TN, (423) 483-8944 & Boca Grande, FL, (941) 964-1738
- Sue Melnick, Virginia Beach, VA, (757) 368-2332
- Bernie O'Brien, Tampa, FL, (813) 961-4092
- David Reynolds, Elkton, VA, (540) 298-8250
- Betty Scholz, Powder Springs, GA (770) 514-0510
- Katy Volponi, Charlotte, NC, (704) 542-8122

Southwest

- John Brown, Rio Rancho, NM (505) 891-0489
- Cathy Gotway, Richardson, TX, (972) 699-1206
- Eric Rothe, Jacksboro, TX, (940) 567-2483
- Suellen Turner, Richardson, TX, (972) 231-4057