



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

U.S. Newsletter – Winter 1999

Host Families Needed for this Summer!

Reservations have been made on two different flights on July 3, 1999 to bring pairs of Catholic and Protestant teens from Northern Ireland this summer to be hosted by families across the U.S. Hundreds of teens in Northern Ireland (like those teens who traveled last year to New Mexico- below) have applied to participate this summer and nearly two hundred have been paired. They are getting to know one another and are participating in CFPNI sponsored group activities. By pairing the teens early, our coordinators in Northern Ireland are able to observe that the pairs are getting along well and can support their commitment to friendship and understanding. As a result, more teens than ever, are paired and seek an opportunity to make friendships in a safe, neutral setting.



What we need are U.S. families to host these teens for six weeks this summer. Can your family host? Do you know other families that might be interested? Host application forms are available at CFPNI's website www.cfpni.org or by calling 800/786-8788. If you know that you want to host, please do not wait to submit your application. The earlier that we can match the teens to host families, the more effective and rewarding the program will be for everyone.

Also, we have enclosed a press release and church notice. Please circulate them to your local papers, radio stations, civic groups, and churches. Anyone with questions about hosting should call Peggy Barrett at 800/786-8788.

Special bonus: Everyone (other than CFPNI officers and coordinators) who submits a completed application, including new host reference letters, will be entered in a raffle. The winner will receive air miles certificates good for travel for two to the 1999 CFPNI reunion on October 23, 1999 in Dungannon, Co. Tyrone, Northern Ireland.



In Their Own Words

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

Mission statement of CFPNI teens attending the "Breaking Down Walls and Bridging Gaps" seminar, Washington, DC, July 1998

CFPNI Endorsed by Nobel Peace Prize Winners

Member of the European Parliament and leader of the Socialist Democratic Labor Party in Northern Ireland, John Hume, and Northern Ireland First Minister and leader of the Ulster Unionist Party, David Trimble, were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in December 1998. En route from Northern Ireland to Oslo, Norway to receive their award, John Hume and David Trimble visited Washington, DC where they jointly signed an endorsement of the CFPNI teen mission statement (above) and of CFPNI's program objectives.



Northern Ireland Survey Results

Last year, we wrote to all the parents of teens who have participated in CFPNI since 1987 and asked them to respond to a brief questionnaire. Here are some of the results: [Note: percentages are higher in recent years.]

- Are your child and his/her partner still friends?
86% yes, 14% no
- Are the two families still in contact with each other?
74% yes, 26% no
- Did CFPNI participation lead to greater tolerance and understanding of the other community? 100% yes
- Did participation in CFPNI lead to other cross-community friendships? 70% yes, 30% no
- Is your child still in contact with her/his host family?
71% yes, 29% no
- Is CFPNI worth the effort? 100% yes



CFPNI in Northern Ireland

This is the time of year when each of you is asked to consider hosting a Catholic-Protestant pair of boys or girls from Northern Ireland for six weeks in the upcoming summer. Clearly, many families are motivated to host CFPNI teens by their ability to contribute directly and personally to the promotion of trust, understanding, friendship, and peace in the world. But, our ability to do so depends not only on our ability to provide a safe-neutral setting for friendship, but also upon the effectiveness of CFPNI program activities in Northern Ireland. So, we thought that you'd like to learn more about CFPNI in Northern Ireland.

CFPNI has eight local area coordinators in Northern Ireland in locations across all six counties. Each recruits and pairs teens in their locality. Until recently, the coordinators maintained a relatively low profile, because of the very real threat to their safety for being involved in cross-community work. Now CFPNI has a higher profile in Northern Ireland (as evidenced by the endorsement by N.I.'s Nobel Peace Prize winners—see p. 1--and by the distinguished new directors from N.I. on our board).

CFPNI uses the lure of an American summer to leverage a commitment to active friendship and to attendance at CFPNI pre-summer events. In addition, teens are paired earlier than the past, (some are already paired for 2000). Thus, the pairs should have a good start on a friendship by the time that they arrive in the U.S.

With the support of a grant from the Short Brothers Foundation and with other pending awards, CFPNI has greatly expanded post-summer follow-up activities. These include both local area and Northern Ireland-wide activities. They now involve not only the teens, but also their families and other friends. Meanwhile, the teens from Co. Antrim are designing CFPNI Christmas cards and a 2000 CFPNI calendar. The 1999 Fermanagh teens have formed a company and meet weekly to design and market tea towels. (See next page.) In addition, many of the activities are part of an effort to have CFPNI teens become cross-community service volunteers and leaders in Northern Ireland. (See article on next page.)

Finally, Joanne Busby has been appointed CFPNI's membership coordinator. She will oversee CFPNI reunion activities more than one year after their U.S. summer and will coordinate publication of a CFPNI newsletter in N.I.

Thus, being a host is a pivotal part of a much larger effort to promote trust, understanding, friendship, and peace in Northern Ireland. Please join the effort, by hosting.



Visit CFPNI's Website

Program information can be found at CFPNI's World Wide Web Site. Visit us at: <http://www.cfpni.org>
E-mail us at: director@cfpni.org

Reflections

Dear Friends,

Since its inception, CFPNI has been an all-volunteer, grassroots program. Families each year volunteer to host pairs of teens and take on the primary responsibility for not only supporting them for six weeks, but also for raising the airfare for teen travel from/to N.I. Some of us get more involved by helping to promote the program, to recruit hosts, and to work with the volunteers in Northern Ireland. It is a simple, straightforward program that is making a big difference in the lives and futures of some wonderful young people.

Coordinators and the other officers try to raise money to help reduce the financial/fund-raising burden of the hosts. Fortunately, many individuals, civic organizations, and churches have generously helped hosts to cover the airfares. (See the broad range of 1998 contributors listed on the pages that follow.) This broad-based support is a source of strength that we don't seek to change and that should allow us to continue fostering friendships, understanding, and hope for future generations in Northern Ireland for years to come.

On the other hand, we are well aware that many families do not volunteer to host for fear that they will be unable to raise (or to afford) the teens' airfares. Thus, our ability to promote peace and understanding is being limited by our expectations of hosts.

Over the past year, we have been working with the U.S. Coordinators to help hosts meet the cost of their teens' airfares, with donations received by the national program and with contributions from the previous summer's teens. We will continue to do so this year.

However, we seek to change the explicit understanding with prospective hosts by no later than 2000. By then, we seek to say to hosts "we expect you to go to churches and civic groups in your area for support; we expect you to sell raffle tickets, cookbooks, and other CFPNI items; we expect you to help your local coordinator to run local fundraising events; and, if you are relatively wealthy, we expect that you will help pay for the airfare yourselves. If you do so, we will cover any short fall in the airfares, and you need not fear being out-of-pocket for other than the costs of hosting the teens in your home."

If we can make this change, we should be able to greatly extend the reach of the program and to include many wonderful families, who now are reluctant to sign-up. To achieve this goal, we will be seeking more travel funding from N.I. and will be asking all of you to join the effort, by becoming "members" of the Children's Friendship Project for Northern Ireland. Memberships will run from Oct 1 to Sept. 30, starting 1998-9. So do not be surprised when you receive such a request in the near future, and, please accept the invitation when it arrives.

Sincerely,

Warren R. Muir, President

In Their Own Words

We do appreciate...the opportunity to take part in CFPNI. As parents of participating teenagers we could not but be 100% enthusiastic about...the scheme. As well as broadening their horizons their levels of tolerance, respect and understanding of those of different beliefs, backgrounds and culture to their own has taken on dimensions that no indoctrination, nurturing or local attempt to bridge divides could ever achieve. It has developed within them a maturity and perspective to look beyond and above local differences and petty discriminations.

Parent of a 1997 CFPNI teen

Promotional Gift for Donations of \$50+



Help support CFPNI by making a generous donation. Donors of \$50 or more before April 15, 1999 may request a free CFPNI tea towel from Northern Ireland (\$12 value) designed by the 1999 CFPNI teens from Co. Fermanagh.

Did You Know?

- All donations to CFPNI are fully tax-deductible.
- Promotional gifts (e.g., tea towels or T-shirts for larger donations) do not diminish tax-deductibility.
- All properly documented CFPNI hosting expenses are tax-deductible.
- Raffle ticket and CFPNI item purchases are not tax-deductible.
- CFPNI's newsletter mailing list is not shared with any other organization.
- CFPNI appreciate those who have included it their wills. For such purposes our legal name is "Children's Friendship Project for Northern Ireland, Inc."

How to Reach Us

CFPNI is an all-volunteer organization with no rented offices. U.S. Coordinators are available across the country to answer most questions about the program. Contact either of the numbers below for the coordinator nearest you.

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

Prospective donors, volunteers, and those seeking information about the program should contact:

Warren Muir, President

9426 Forest Haven Drive

Alexandria, VA 22309

Tel: 703/619-0561

Fax: 703/780-7783

E-mail: director@cfpni.org

CFPNI – A Breeding Ground for Cross-Community Service in N.I.

CFPNI has undertaken a number of program initiatives in recent years to stimulate participating teens to contribute to the future of Northern Ireland. For example, host families have been encouraged to have their teens get involved in local community service activities during their six weeks in the U.S. (The picture below is of 1998 teens doing yard work and planting trees at a low income housing complex in Washington, DC.)

During the summer teen pairs are asked to plan some cross-community service activities upon their return to Northern Ireland. To be accepted into the program, all 1999 CFPNI teens have been required to commit themselves to participate in such post-summer service.



In some cases, community service is done in conjunction with the N.I. coordinators. For example, in Co. Tyrone, all 22 CFPNI teens from 1998 have formed a service organization that meets weekly with Dierdre Timoney, the local coordinator, to work with the Omagh bomb victims and with the handicapped. For example, they have donated a cup to each school that lost students in the bombing to be given in his/her memory to honor annually a student for cross-community service. This Spring they are being trained in sign language to be able to work with the deaf. In other cases, Co. Antrim teens performed at a fundraising event for the mentally handicapped and Co. L'Derry teens provided Christmas meals to the elderly in conjunction with the local Rotary Club. This week many of the teens are helping to promote Save the Children in Northern Ireland.

Many other teens are actively involved in peace, housing, civil rights, environmental, and other cross-community organizations. Thus, CFPNI is becoming a breeding ground for future cross-community service and your hosting is part of a much larger effort to make a difference.



Children's Friendship
Project for Northern Ireland, Inc.
Warren R. Muir, President
9426 Forest Haven Drive
Alexandria, Virginia 22309-3151

NON-PROFIT ORG. U.S. POSTAGE PAID MT. VERNON, VA PERMIT #56
--

Barrett Award

In 1997, the Board of Directors of the Children's Friendship Project for Northern Ireland, Inc. created the annual Barrett Award to honor the tireless efforts of Peggy and Jack Barrett in bringing hope and understanding to the Catholic and Protestant teens of Northern Ireland and in guiding CFPNI since its inception in 1987.

The Barrett Award recognizes each year the pair of teens that best exemplifies the spirit of CFPNI a year after they return from a summer in the U.S. Each winning pair will be acknowledged at the annual CFPNI reunion a year after their summer in America. The second award will be made to a 1998 pair at the CFPNI reunion in fall 1999.

The evaluation criteria include:

- Maintaining and furthering the pair's friendship,
- Extending their friendship to make other cross-community links, by bringing other friends and family members together,
- Attending CFPNI follow-up activities,
- Encouraging others to participate in CFPNI,
- Keeping in close contact with their American host family, and

- Participating in other cross-community activities. The Award will include individual plaques, inclusion on a Master plaque, and dinner together for the two teens and their parents. Winners will be featured in the CFPNI Newsletter and a press release.

The initial nomination for a pair may be made by anyone and should articulate what the teens have done to promote the ideals of CFPNI and how they meet the evaluation criteria. Letters of support can be submitted by anyone and should come at least from the U.S. host family and N.I. Coordinator. The teens themselves need to summarize their friendship and activities together, apart from the summer in the U.S.

Nominations should be made after July 1, 1999 and before August 15, 1999 for the 1998 teens. All nominating materials should be sent to either Lilah Graham, in Northern Ireland or Warren Muir, CFPNI President, 9426 Forest Haven Drive, Alexandria, VA 22309-3151, (703) 780-7783 (fax).

Nominations will be reviewed and the winning pair selected by a committee of judges, to be appointed by the President.

If you know of a qualifying pair, please nominate them for this special recognition.

