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**CHILDREN'S FRIENDSHIP PROJECT  
FOR NORTHERN IRELAND**

Glenn Martinsen, *Treasurer CFPNI*  
7 Olde Manchester Rd  
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# Children's Friendship Project

F O R N O R T H E R N I R E L A N D

WINTER 2005-2006



## BARRETT AWARD WINNERS

George Demass, CFPNI Board Chair, presented the 2005 Barrett Award to Helen Beck and Claire McGrillen. The pair is from the Banbridge group, and spent last summer with the O'Brien family in New Hampshire.

Helen and Claire's strong bond has created an intermingling of their friends. They speak out against prejudice and use their friendship as evidence that two people can become friends based on respect and interests, regardless of their religion or culture. Their experience of serving in a soup-kitchen taught them the value of cross-community work and they both aspire to partake in activities that they hope will lead to a promising future for Northern Ireland and a fascinating adventure for them.

All Barrett Award nominees are put forth by their host families. Further consideration is based on the teens' efforts to promote the ideals of the CFPNI program. Nominees from the summer of 2004 included Richard Boyd and Peter O'Keane, Scott Campbell and Peter Doherty, Elaine Sheerin and Ashley Wilkinson, and Helen Beck and Claire McGrillen. All teen pairs are complimented on their commitment to build lasting relationships with their partners, and for mentoring other teens into the CFPNI programme.

Nominations for the 2006 Barrett Award will be accepted after July 1, 2006. All teens who have completed the 2005 program are eligible.

## A Year to Remember, the 2005 CFPNI Reunion



On October 15, 2005, CFPNI teens, parents, coordinators, officers, board members, and even some host families, gathered together at the City Hotel in Derry/Londonderry to celebrate another successful year!

The day began with acknowledgements to the Northern Ireland Coordinators and US Coordinators present for all their hard work with the teens throughout the year. Several US Host Families were also present, and they were thanked for their generosity and kindness. The CFPNI Officers and Board Members were also introduced and received a round of applause for their dedication over the past year as well.



Next came the presentations by the teens! Each Northern Ireland group put together a skit based on what they had learned over the year. They varied from group to group, but the common theme was the change that had taken place in each of them. The presentations covered stereotyping, differences in cultures, racism, and the "CFPNI Transformer". They were both

thoughtful and entertaining, and their hard work showed!

After the teen presentations, the 2005 Barrett Award was presented. Unfortunately, Peggy Barrett, founder of CFPNI was not able to make the presentation this year for medical reasons. However, the spirit of the award was captured in this year's recipients. George Demass, CFPNI Board Chair, awarded this year's Barrett Award to Helen Beck and Claire McGrillen, who stayed with the O'Brien family last year in New Hampshire (see related article).

Our guest speaker this year was Mr Bertie Faulkner. Mr. Faulkner is presently the Vice-Chairman of the Youth Council for Northern Ireland and was Chairman of the Western Education and Library Board during its last term. He has had a life-long interest in youth work having set up a cross-community Scout troop many years ago. It was a fine speech encouraging our teens to not let their commitment to reconciliation stop just because they have completed their year with CFPNI. He thanked the teens and their families for participating in the program, and acknowledged the courage it takes to step forward and try a new and different way of looking at things.



We were thrilled to have Nobel Peace Prize Laureate John Hume, MP join us for lunch. Mr. Hume, along with David Trimble, MP received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1998 "for their efforts to find a peaceful solution to the conflict in Northern Ireland" and their work on the Good Friday Peace Agreement. The Hon. Mr. Hume shared some history with us of the city of Derry/Londonderry and its links to the United States, and talked about the character of the city and its people. We were then quite honored to have him sing "O'Danny Boy".

## In Friendship We Trust

CONTRIBUTED BY CFPNI BOARD MEMBER JOHN MCKINNEY, NORTHERN IRELAND

Not—a title for a new song or romantic thriller but a serious challenge for the population of Northern Ireland as we move from a position of conflict towards genuine peace and reconciliation.

The violence that has dominated much of our recent history is giving way to a new optimism for the future. We have reached new milestones within this small corner of Europe with the passing of a relatively trouble free summer, the decommissioning of IRA arms, the start of demilitarization, and the announcement on the 30th Oct 2005 that the LVF made a decision to stand down

and is ready to destroy its weapons.

However, the removal of the apparatus of conflict does not necessarily herald the immediate creation of a reconciled society. The foundations for trust between our communities have been rocked by 35 years of conflict. We must identify and pursue the means by which trust can be rebuilt.

After decommissioning one wag when asked by his mate over a pint of the Black Stuff what he thought of this decommissioning lark was heard to say 'decommissioning arms that's OK what about minds!'

*continued on page 5*

## CPFNI 2005 U.S. SUMMER PROGRAM



Across the country in 12 states, 59 Host Families welcomed 102 teens from Northern Ireland this past summer. Whether the teens were in an area where there was a CPFNI group or not, all the teens agree it was a "once in a lifetime," "life-changing," "eye-opening" experience. Here are just a few of the highlights.

### CALIFORNIA

On July 7th, 2005 eight teens from Northern Ireland were invited as the first personal guests to the Los Angeles residence of the British Consulate General, Bob Peirce. On this very emotional morning peace and friendship was the focus as the teens shared this incredible experience together. With the events in London unfolding moment to moment, the teens were even more close than usual. The teens spent time getting to know each other as well as sharing their feelings and concerns about the recent tragedy in London. After a delightful lunch and relaxing swim, Bob was able to steal a few moments away from his very hectic day and present situation to speak personally to the teens. He addressed the events of the morning, reassured the teens as much as he could of the precautions the government was taking to secure the country and the importance of their participation in C.F.P.N.I. Mr. Peirce addressed the teens directly and specifically told them how proud he was of them. The discussion was very touching and emotional. The teens were honored by the invitation and touched by the kind, uplifting and very emotional words of Mr. Peirce.

### VIRGINIA

It was another successful summer in Northern Virginia with teens participating in four group events including George Mason University's Hemlock Overlook Ropes Course, a visit to Capital Hill, as well as several community service opportunities. In addition, the Northern Virginia group once again held their Diversity and Conflict Resolution Workshop. During the workshop, the teens were introduced to Islamic speakers. The exchange between the group and speakers cleared up false information the teens had, and was extremely beneficial. Again this year the group invited Newark based New Community Corporation to facilitate conflict resolution activities that included discussion about gang culture, non-confrontational ways of communicating, and cultural acceptance. At the end of the day teens were asked to share their summaries of the entire summer experience with their host families and special guests.

### NEW HAMPSHIRE

The ten teens staying with host families in New Hampshire gathered together for four group events this summer. The events included a Cultural Diversity/Peace Workshop sponsored in part by War Child USA, a non-profit organization providing emergency aid and effective on-going support to children and their families affected by war or conflict, a tour and workshop in Boston with Mytown, Inc., a non-profit organization that uses the process of sharing local history to empower young people and build appreciation of urban neighborhoods, sponsored by the Peterborough United Methodist Church, a day at Lake Winnepesaukee courtesy of twelve time host family the Muirs, and a day at WaterCountry, an amusement park in Portsmouth, who donated the tickets to our group. Thank you to all our generous donors and volunteers!

## From the President



*From Left, George Demass, CPFNI Board Chair, Christine Robidoux, CPFNI President 2006, Nobel Laureate John Hume, MP, Florence Brunt, CPFNI Principal Coordinator, Northern Ireland, David Reynolds, CPFNI President 2004-2005*

it into our U.S. news), the need for true reconciliation and understanding is greater than ever. If you know of folks who would make good host families, please tell them about CPFNI and give them our website address: [www.cfpni.org](http://www.cfpni.org). The need for host families is great.

It's been one of the great privileges of my life to have served this truly amazing organization as its President. As I step down from that role, I look forward with great anticipation to the leadership that Christine Robidoux will give. But, most of all I look forward to still more quality leadership for this all-volunteer organization coming as always from the ranks of host families and area coordinators. So, if you'd like to become more involved as an area coordinator in areas of the country where we have none, or assisting a current area coordinator, please let Christine know.

Again, thank you all for what you're doing. God bless.  
David Reynolds, *President*

## 2005 First Time Host Family Shares their Experience

(EXCERPTED, FOR THE COMPLETE LETTER PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT [WWW.CFPNI.ORG](http://WWW.CFPNI.ORG))



*Sean, Chris, and Conor*

Our family had thought of many reasons why we could not be a CPFNI host family. Our house was too small, our son was too young, our schedules were too uncertain, the cost was too high, and we were too private. In 2004, the Kroder family had stepped forward to host. At mass, Tim Kroder spoke about their experience and some things became obvious. Their house was too small, their children were too young, their schedules were too uncertain, their finances were no different than ours, and they, too, seemed like private people. They, however, stepped forward and were able to offer their home to two boys. In reward, they had made friends with two families in Northern Ireland and knew that they had helped build a bridge to a more peaceful future.

It was one of those moments when I knew that my husband, Ron, and I were thinking the same thing at the same moment. I turned to him and he said, "Let's commit to this right after mass so we don't come up with any excuses this time."

We started the process to become a host family and we waited to hear about the two teenagers who would spend July with us. Our son, Conor, hoped that we would have boys, as we requested, and was very happy the day I came to pick him up from school and showed him the pictures of Sean and Chris. Sean and Chris both lived in

Dear Friends,

I just want to say thanks to all our teens, their families, all our U.S. and N.I. coordinators, and especially to all our wonderful host families for another great year for CPFNI! God bless you all for all that you have done and will continue to do for peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland through this program. As you can gather from elsewhere in this newsletter the need for this amazing project remains. Although, there is relative "peace" in Northern Ireland, and less sectarian violence (at least that makes

Banbridge, County Down, Northern Ireland, but as we soon learned, they came from two very different communities. Sean attended the Catholic High School and his life centered on Gaelic Football. Chris attended the Protestant High School and his life centered on music. When they arrived, we were surprised to discover that they had different accents! Sean had the classic Irish "brogue" and Chris had a more British accent. While I found Chris easy to understand, I had trouble with Sean's accent. This later became a running joke. Sean discovered that I didn't always know what he said and had fun catching me when I faked agreement. Sean brought the local Irish newspaper, geared toward the Catholic community to show us. Chris brought photos of a bridge that is constructed in the center of their town each year by the Orangemen. We discovered that Sean considered himself Irish and Chris considered himself both Irish and British. Sean carried an Irish passport; Chris carried a British passport.

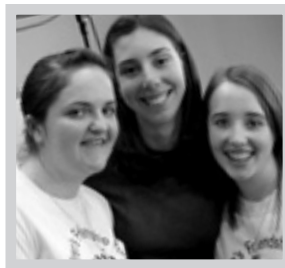
July went quickly, too quickly really and all of our excuses now seem foolish. Our time together was over before we were ready to see the boys go. Sean and Chris left with a better understanding of each other and of us. They also learned about opportunities for their own futures they had not considered. It was only a month, which now seems a small amount of time to give, especially when we know how much Chris, Sean, and our family benefited from the time together. As it turns out, our house wasn't too small, our son wasn't too young, our schedules could be adapted, the cost wasn't too high (especially with St. Paul's sponsorship), and we were happy to have these two boys become part of our family.

# A Letter from A 2005 Teen

My name is Audrey and I was one of the lucky teenagers from Northern Ireland to be privileged enough to be part of the C.F.P.N.I project this year, 2005. Through the help of C.F.P.N.I, I have met fantastic new people. I feel as though I now have four family types. Firstly, my own family who I live with, my family by birth. Secondly, my group family the people I have been blessed to have got to meet on Wednesday nights and the leaders who guided us there. Alastair and Terence were amazing! So fun and inspirational! Thirdly, my host family I got to know in America. They were amazing and gave me hope. In America I learned a lot from both them and my partner Johanna. I feel as though I've grown so much as a person. I'm now looking through a new set of eyes back home and with a more loving and hopeful heart! Fourthly, my fellow CFPNI teens, especially those who were in my region in America! I am ashamed to say that before this project I had very few catholic friends whereas now I have many! I love them all lots and I hope to continue my friendship with every one of them because I couldn't imagine life without them! I know that sounds strange because I've only known some of these people for four weeks but its true. I love them all and they all own a place

in my heart. As a person I've learned so much. I feel more independent and wiser. My partner Johanna and I have got on so well that it feels strange not having her around but we've been texting and we're planning to meet as soon as possible! She is more of a sister to me now than a friend. She's amazing. I just want to thank C.F.P.N.I and all those who make the project possible because if it hadn't been for you guys I would never have had this incredible indescribable experience of a lifetime!!! So what I'm trying to say is a thanks, and I want to encourage all those who help raise money, or those considering hosting teens, those wanting to take part in the project, etc. to definitely get involved! It's an amazing project, something that will remain with me for life! Thanks for everything. I will always be in debt to those who made it possible.

Thank You,  
Audrey  
xx, C.F.P.N.I ROCKS!!!  
**Summer 2005 best time of my life!**



## CFPNI Seeking Volunteers for Alumni Program

In 2004, CFPNI enlisted the help of Professor Maurice Stringer and Dr. Teresa Murphy-Cowan from the School of Psychology at the University of Ulster, to do an independent review of our organization to determine how we can best achieve our mission in the future.

The review looked at the current situation in Northern Ireland, and found that in general "holiday schemes by themselves... do not translate back into the home environment". CFPNI as an organization currently addresses this issue by providing pre and post holiday reconciliation activities for the year that the teens participate in the program.

These events allow the friendships to develop in a safe Northern Ireland environment, with authority figures (coordinators and parents), as role models in support of cross-community contact.

The report also suggests that providing follow-up programs is critical to maintaining the friendships and promoting neutrality. CFPNI is pleased to announce that Gertrude Carey, former CFPNI Coordinator from Derry/Londonderry has agreed to help get the alumni program up and running and mentor the CFPNI participants/leaders. The program will be set-up and run by former CFPNI participants, along with the support of Ms. Carey as the CFPNI Coordinator/Mentor. The goal of

the follow-up program is to encourage the participants to not only maintain their friendship with their partner, but also widen their circle of friends by participating in and organizing cross-community events and community service projects in their area. It would also provide them with a support network so that they do not slip back into their "old" habits of social segregation. Many former CFPNI teens have already contacted us and volunteered their time in getting it started!

If you know of CFPNI alumni that might be interested in getting involved, please e-mail Gertrude Carey at gertrudecarey@hotmail.com.



2005 CFPNI Alumni at the Reunion in October

continued from page 2

### PENNSYLVANIA

Eastern Pennsylvania teens were quite busy this summer, not just with CFPNI events, but they were quite "in demand" with the press! Teen pairs were featured in several local media outlets, including some TV coverage. Teens were also thanked for their community service work at the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen (TASK), and the American Red Cross, in both organizations newsletters. The community service work was part of a 2-day mission seminar presented by the Peace Center and the Children's Home Society. Teens also had the opportunity to work at Chandler Hall Health Services. Here's what a few of the PA teens had to say about their CFPNI experience:

*"The experience of helping in the soup kitchen, that feeds the hungry, changed me so much as I have seen another type of American, for there is an image of Americans being quite greedy people."*

*"Honestly I feel CFPNI is improving the communities in Northern Ireland, helping build a bond between Catholics and Protestants. The programme is a truly great investment and is making a difference."*

*"When I go home, I plan to spread the word about CFPNI to family and friends. I'd like to join cross-community projects and by so doing help my own community."*



### FUNDRAISING NEWS

#### VIRGINIA

Mark your calendars! The 2006 Annual Auction is scheduled for March 11, 2006.

#### PENNSYLVANIA

Visitors to the 14th Annual Irish Fall Festival in Wildwood, NJ on September 23-25th were in for a treat of Irish Soda Bread and Scones made by current and former

host families the Guziewicz and Dougery. It was quite a successful day! They sold out of the scones and sold 275 loaves of bread, raising \$1465! Congratulations and Thank You!

In Newtown (Upper Makefield), PA, guests enjoyed a fall afternoon with Alice Murray of **With a European Touch** as she presented a benefit program called **Fabulous Flowers**. The afternoon was spent enjoying a floral design presentation featuring table arrangements and special occasion flowers. There was also live music, raffles, door prizes, and of course some yummy treats. All proceeds from the event went to CFPNI courtesy of host mom Alice Murray.

#### US - NATIONAL

Thank you to everyone that participated in this year's raffle. This is the only national fundraiser here in the U.S., so we really appreciate your support. And the 2005 winners are:

- Kevin McKenna, Elkridge, MD .....\$500.00
- James Lee Flory, Dayton, VA .....\$500.00
- Mathew Mullan, Red Bank, NJ .....\$500.00
- Maureen Lewis, Warrenton, VA .....\$500.00
- Sharon Nolen, Albuquerque, NM .....Belleek China Bowl
- Alice Murray, Washington Crossing, PA .Belleek 4 Seasons Bowl
- Mrs. Mary King, Tampa, FL .....Belleek Killarney Vase
- Mr. Jim Twohig, Albuquerque, NM .....Belleek Tara Vase
- Judy Biffen, Stroudsburg, PA .....Belleek Harp Bell
- Mrs. Nancy Wilson, Keedysville, MD .....Belleek Colonial Pot

## SPOTLIGHT ON OUR COORDINATORS

### U.S. PRINCIPAL COORDINATOR

**Londi Arndt**, Coordinator in Northern Virginia, has been named Principal Coordinator in the U.S. Londi will be working with the officers in support of US Coordinators, particularly new coordinators, and assisting host families in areas where there is not currently a coordinator. We are excited about this new role and appreciate Londi's continued hard work and dedication toward reconciliation, and her commitment to the young people and volunteers in the program.



### U.S.

#### **Chuck Keady, Vice President**

Chuck Keady's great-grandfather, Micheál, was born in the small hamlet of Seannagurran near the village of Án Spideál, Co. Galway, to Pádraig and

Ellen (nee Riley) Keady on October 1, 1847 (during the height of the Great Famine). Reluctantly, he emigrated onboard the Steamship "Jason" and, at the age of 12, arrived at the Port of New York on November 2, 1859. He settled in Wakefield, Massachusetts married and raised a large family. Their first born, Patrick, was Chuck's grandfather.

In 1989, Chuck was introduced to CFPNI by a close friend, John Brown, who suggested that a CFPNI chapter in New Mexico be formed under the "umbrella" of the New Mexico Irish/American Society, of which there are, approximately, 350 members. This allowed access to a "captive audience", whose membership is provided with a monthly update in their local newsletter of our CFPNI activities. Initially, their group consisted of a secretary, a treasurer, a couple of advisors and Chuck!

They began with the basics; raising funds, acquiring host families, contacting various media, etc. Their first year (1990), six teens were their guests, two boys and four girls. Over the years, 70 teens, representing all six counties in Northern Ireland, have been welcomed to New Mexico.

Following the unexpected passing of our dear friend, Dan LaMar, last year, Chuck accepted the role of CFPNI's Vice-President. His primary responsibility is to oversee the processes of investigating the backgrounds of new, potential host families. For the summer of 2006, CFPNI has awarded a contract to an independent investigating firm to conduct in-depth, comprehensive, nation-wide family criminal background checks in a timely manner (see related article).

Chuck's dedication and experience have been and continue to be a vital part of our organization. Thank you Chuck, for 16 wonderful years (and counting)!



### NORTHERN IRELAND

#### **Terence and Alastair**

Derry/Londonderry

**Alastair Dunn** has worked for 20 years in cross community work in Derry/Londonderry,

Northern Ireland. He is currently a Director for another cross-community program called Reach Across, of which he is a founding member. Alastair met Gertrude Carey, former CFPNI Coordinator, now Alumni Program Coordinator, through the program and she asked him to help her with CFPNI for one week; that was four years ago! He was very impressed, and even though he was busy with his own radio communications business he got attached. Alastair finds CFPNI a time consuming but a very worthwhile cause.

*continued on page 5*

## WE NEED HOST FAMILIES AND VOLUNTEERS

To apply online, or download an application, go to [www.cfpni.org](http://www.cfpni.org) today!

For more information, or to volunteer call **1-888-524-0648** or contact a local coordinator.

### IN THE US:

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Founder & President Emeritus

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### TO MAKE A TAX-DEDUCTIBLE CONTRIBUTION:

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*CFPNI is an all-volunteer 501(c)(3) organization.*



# WWW.CFPNI.ORG

## From the Chair

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I want to commend and thank our 2005 teens for their participation in this past summer's program. Thank you to our co-ordinators on both sides of the Atlantic for their diligent work and dedication to the project and to our host families for a job well done, and to the families of the teens for entrusting them to us.

We appreciate the diligent work of our past president, David Reynolds and N. I. Principal Coordinator, Florence Brunt.

Congratulations to our new President, Christine Robidoux and U.S. Principal Coordinator, Londi Arndt. This all-voluntary organization continues to work for the reconciliation and peace of N. Ireland and we thank you for your continued support.

George R. Demass, *Chairman*

## Investigating Firm Awarded Contract

CFPNI has awarded a one-year contract to a private investigating firm to conduct background checks on potential new host families for the summer of 2006. The company will provide nationwide, in-depth investigations with results reported to CFPNI within days, rather than 2-6 weeks, as has been encountered in previous years.

Formerly, host families were required to provide the total cost for the investigation of each individual (18 years or older) residing in their household, during the period of time when the teens would be under their custody. Generally, this fee has ranged between \$20-\$30 depending on the particular state of residence and/or the use of private agencies in the area.

The investigating firm will charge a fixed amount of \$65 for each individual investigation. Considering the promptness of the reporting period, coupled with an improved, nationwide coverage and thoroughness of investigation procedures, CFPNI has agreed to offset a portion of the higher rate by contributing \$35 towards the cost of each investigation.

CFPNI volunteers are thrilled to be providing this more comprehensive service for the protection of our teens, and to be able to process host family applications much more efficiently. We hope to be able to match teens with host families much sooner, thus allowing the bonds between families and teens to begin long before the teens arrive in the U.S.

## In Friendship We Trust

*continued from page 1*

Many a true word was spoken in jest and the above is a good intro to the real challenge facing the people of Northern Ireland and that of rebuilding trust between our communities. The host families are the backbone of the Children's Friendship Program in America and an invaluable asset in recreating a climate of trust amongst our next generation of citizens.

Trust cannot be directly manufactured but we can eliminate the impediments. The Children's Friendship Programme enables our young people to gain new perspectives from new environments and situations. A simple change of scenery and habit can have a fundamental and beneficial impact by breaking existing negative mindsets.

The population of Northern Ireland recognize and thank the Host Families for the giving of their time, resources and hearts to allow our teens to find that precious space, a quality space removed from the legacy of the conflict and in an environment that encourages the finding of common ground, the understanding of each others culture, the building of lasting friendships, the shaping of the future, the understanding and challenge of diversity – diversity of thought, belief and opinion.

Building trust and being open to that concept as in any change process requires leadership and here again the programme offers real opportunities to develop leadership skills that are not lost on return home but reinforced making our teens the agents of change and the real hope for the future.

If lasting friendship is a measure of success and we believe it is, then in this context the program and the proposed alumni program for our teens will reinforce this message and act as a barometer to measure the rate of change and trust levels between our youth—the next step forward on this journey of reconciliation and lasting peace.

### Trust Changes Everything

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#### WE NEED YOUR PHOTOS!

Do you have CFPNI photos you would like to share? We would like to put them on our website. Please send photos along with a brief description to [webmaster@cfpni.org](mailto:webmaster@cfpni.org) or mail them to Glenn Martinsen, 7 Olde Manchester Rd, Derry, NH 03038 USA. *Please indicate whether or not you would like your photos returned.*

## News from Northern Ireland

CONTRIBUTED BY FLORENCE BRUNT, PRINCIPAL COORDINATOR, NORTHERN IRELAND

Another year of CFPNI is at an end and the next one is already underway with posters and information out in the schools for recruitment for 2006.

I was very pleased that we had new groups in Antrim and Omagh for 2005. Carol Scott along with Joanne and Joe McConville worked with the Antrim group while Dawn Lawther and Michele Martin started up the Omagh group again after a gap of four years. I helped with it because Dawn gave birth to a little daughter in April.

In the Fermanagh group Lynsey Cathcart took a year out to travel to Australia and Sonya Johnston gave birth to a son in April so I worked for most of the time on my own. I am delighted that both are back now and helped the group prepare their presentation for the Re-Union.

All the Coordinators give a tremendous degree of commitment to the programme both in time and effort. I am very pleased to head up a team that works voluntarily with such dedication. Fiona McFarlane continues in her role as administrator setting up the Database and looking after the Insurance along with many other tasks and is at the end of the telephone with advice when required.

All in all it has been an extremely busy year for me working with two groups as well as my role as

Principal Coordinator but the reward is in seeing young people developing their communication and leadership skills. When I read the Evaluation Reports it was very reassuring to see how well the programme is working for the majority of young people. One teen wrote and I quote, "We learned so many things from people who gave up their time to talk to us because they believe in the program and place their hope in us to bring home the things we have learned and put them into practice. I will certainly do my best to honor their wishes and hope that others will too."

The Re-Union, which was held in the City Hotel, Londonderry on 15th October, was a great success. We had a presentation from each of the groups taking a theme that we had addressed during the year. It was wonderful to see how the teens could write the script for a serious subject such as prejudice, stereotyping or discrimination and portray it in a fun way for the audience to learn from their experience.

Helen Beck and Claire McGrillen have won the Barrett Award from the Banbridge group of 2004. I hope that next year more host families will feel the need to recommend their teens from 2005 for consideration for this prestigious award.

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## SPOTLIGHT ON OUR COORDINATORS

**Terence O'Kane** has worked with youth through a local youth club, football teams and all his nephews and nieces. He presently works as a construction lecturer at a local college. Gertrude invited him to a reunion meeting in Belfast, where he was introduced to both USA and Northern Ireland Coordinators. The following day he got to witness teens sharing their friendships through sheer enjoyment. His first memory was that it was difficult to recognize who was Catholic and who was Protestant. "This is habit that we have in Northern Ireland, don't ask why, but we need to change it!"

Although Terence didn't need any more commitments in his life, this day sold the project to him. It was something that impressed him and made him even more committed. He believes and continues to believe that CFPNI is a positive force for change in Northern Ireland. He realized that "some day every teen that comes through the program will reflect and realize what the program is all about. This will help to break down fears and attitudes towards other people's views."

There has been 30 years of violence, and Terence believes "if it takes 30 years to bring peace, what do we have to lose. As a father of two children, nothing would give me any more pleasure than to see them travel anywhere without the fear of trouble. Wouldn't any parent?"

When one first meets this Coordinator pair from Londonderry/Derry, one would think they have been life-long friends. One protestant and one Catholic, they appear to be more like brothers. "Both of us were introduced to the CFPNI project through a friend who was already a volunteer leader, we both joined the same year. We live within minutes of each other and had never met before CFPNI. Now we have become good friends and show each other the respect that we deserve. We work well as a team and share the work load evenly."

"When we were told that we had been chosen to chaperone the teens to the USA this year, we decided that we would like to participate in some group activities that teens take part in during their four week 'summer job'. We wanted to meet host parents, share stories with them, promote CFPNI to any people who would speak to us, promote Northern Ireland, and of course promote how much the host families are helping our teenagers respect each other and life."

They decided to contact as many USA Coordinators as possible to map out a route that would enable them to fulfill what they hoped to achieve. It wasn't long before they got responses and made plans. "We were as excited as the teens."

While in the US, Terence and Alastair participated in community service projects including soup kitchens and retirement homes, attended group workshops, church services, etc. They both agree that kids do interact with each other no matter what religion. "We found these to be rewarding for the teenagers, ourselves and the future of Northern Ireland. We hope that all the host families get something from these times, as they are very important to the program."

"The trip has left us with memories of what CFPNI is all about."

Thank you Alastair and Terence, for being so generous with your time, and for all the "craic". It is a pleasure working with you both!

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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