



Conway Mill Trust

Formerly "Doors of Hope"

P.O. Box 101529
Pittsburgh, PA 15237

March 2012

Grants Awarded to Community Groups

Your Donations At Work!



Conway Mill Trust Board member Ed McManus meeting Danny McAree in the newly renovated theater at the Conway Mill

In January, Conway Mill Trust board members Sandra Haas and Edward McManus travelled to Northern Ireland to deliver grant money to the organizations we support.

These visits provide us the opportunity to meet directly with the people who lead these organizations so that we are able to ensure that your donations continue to have a positive impact on the lives of people in Northern Ireland.

Ed and Sandy had a very busy schedule of meetings. In total, they delivered over \$7500 in grants to various groups. The amount granted to each group is determined by how much in designated donations it receives. As a donor, you may elect to direct your donation to any of the organizations we support. Every organization expressed their heartfelt gratitude to our donors for their continuing generosity. You are making a real difference in peoples' lives.

It should be noted that the entire cost of these visits are absorbed by the board members themselves. Your donations are not used in any way to support these trips. So we would like to thank Ed and Sandy for being so generous with their time and money.

Conway Education Centre Update

Pauline Kersten, Director of Conway Education Centre, was presented with a grant totaling over \$3100 (£1935). Of this amount, approximately \$2100 (£1315) went to the After School and Day School programs, and \$500 (£310) each for the Woodworking shop and Health Matters. Pauline has expressed her thanks and wrote an update for our donors. See page 6 for Pauline's update.



Day School children learning to cook

Springhill Community House

A grant in the amount of \$500 (£310) was delivered to the Springhill Community House. Springhill works to provide educational and health services to the Ballymurphy community. CMT met with Fr. Des Wilson, Kiernan Cahill and Noelle Ryan.

One of the challenges facing Springhill is to facilitate services that provide support for people suffering from mental illness. In a two week period in January, there have been three suicides in the Ballymurphy estate. In one case a son and father committed suicide within a few days of each other. Springhill works with a program called PIPS (Public Initiative for the Prevention of Suicide and Self-Harm.), a parent support group of suicide victims. PIPS was established in 2003 following the suicides of 14 people under the age of 18. Their mission statement is, “to save lives, offer advice and support those affected by suicide and self-harm.”

Noelle noted that complementary therapies help relieve some of the stress and anxiety people are suffering, but that all too often, there are no signs of an impending suicide.

If you would like to help Springhill Community House continue to provide its invaluable services to the residents of Ballymurphy, you can make a donation through Conway Mill Trust. If you would like to direct your donation to Springhill Community House, just write “Springhill” on your check or money order.

A Message from Father Des Wilson

One of the earliest hopes of Springhill House and Conway Education was to open more communication between university, schools, colleges and their local communities – let the university share its riches with the community around it, let the local community enrich the university with its experience and expertise. In different parts of the world that exchange takes place also while in Northern Ireland a chaotic situation sometimes helped, often hindered.

Two symbols now of local community and those with educational resources co-operating: the latest health weekend in Conway where the Health Initiative begins another year with students who recognize that their primary task is fostering health, making the curing of illness efficient but less necessary; And Springhill Community House sponsored a public lecture about a Bishop of the local diocese who was executed along with a companion four hundred years ago, in 1612. The Lecture was chaired by the University College President who has encouraged interaction with the local community in the most practical of ways.

These events reflect what is happening elsewhere. In medicine the chasm between doctor and patient is becoming less; patients are not sheltered from learning what is right and wrong with them, they discuss it with their health specialists. More people now have the skill and will to know about their health and more opportunities are coming to integrate health care into everyday education.

Education in Springhill so often had to emphasize work, employment, and economic survival, knowing that this often pushed other considerations out of the way – work or lack of it often damaged health, but now personal care, health fostering, knowledge, work, enjoyment are seen as part of our normal dignified life. And none exists in isolation, each one enriching the other. We have reason for optimism!

Dove House Presents Annual Report

Dove House provides a wide range of services to the Derry community. One of their primary areas of focus are issues affecting the youth, such as alcohol and drug abuse, teenage pregnancy, poor academic achievement and poor relationships at home and in the community.

Bronagh McMonagle recently succeeded Deborah Cross as Project Manager. Bronagh reported that each of Dove Houses' projects are in a tenable position, in that all projects are funded until March 2012. This includes funding for 38 staff members. Dove House has various funding sources, depending on the program, but also relies on money generated through staff fundraising initiatives. CMT presented a grant in the amount of \$500 (£310) which was received with gratitude and thanks.

Our board members were presented with a copy of their Annual Report, dated July 2011. In it, Dove House Chair, Tony Doherty, reports that the neighborhoods surrounding Dove House continue to suffer from the effects of social deprivation, poverty, petty crime, domestic violence and drug/alcohol abuse. The report gives a clear picture of the challenges faced by Dove House and well as the successes they've achieved.

One program that Bronagh spoke of in detail was the Hidden Harm program, which is part of a larger umbrella program called DIVERT.

DIVERT is the lead service provider for drug/alcohol education, prevention and early education program in Derry, Strabane, Limavady and surrounding areas. Hidden Harm aims to provide a safe space and "time out" for children under 18 who are impacted by parental substance abuse. Last summer, the participants organized an under-18 music festival attended by 1500 young people, and included booths with educational materials on drugs and alcohol.

DIVERT also held its annual Halloween intervention event – "All Treats, No Tricks" as well as a Christmas event titled "More Cheer, Less Beer". The Halloween campaign highlights the risks of underage drinking and excessive alcohol use. The Christmas campaign is directed at parent's alcohol consumption and its impact on the home.

Bronagh also reported that demand for their Citizens Advice Services, particularly debt counseling, is growing. Funding for this program was renewed but at a decreased level. Funding is the number one challenge this organization faces.

Museum of Free Derry is Expanding!

The Museum of Free Derry is about to begin Stage 2 of the building project. Because of the construction, they must secure a temporary location for the museum displays until construction is completed. Anyone planning a visit to the museum in the fall of 2012 should check beforehand to confirm the new address.

CMT presented Adrian Kerr with a grant in the amount of \$500 (£310). Adrian is confident that the funding for Stage 2 development will come through.

Altram and Naiscoil na Rinne

Strengthening Minds and Bodies!

Altram is a community-based regional support organization representing the Irish-language early years naiscoils across Northern Ireland. It provides a range of services and publications including training materials, certification training, immersion education, nursery books, homework and support publications as well as support packs for parents who are not bilingual.

CMT met with Danny Cassidy, Project Manager, who reports that Altram is “struggling but surviving” at the present time. Two grants for Altram and Naiscoil na Rinne, each in the amount of \$500 (£310) was presented at the meeting.

As we reported in our last newsletter, 25 workers have successfully completed the Immersion Certificate Program. They are also planning to hold a national conference on second language learning at McGee University in April 2013 as part of Derry City of Culture 2013. He plans to invite policy experts to speak on second language learning. The primary audience will be naiscoil staff of Northern Ireland, the Department of Education, and the Department of Health.

Altram has also launched a new program for the naiscoils; a fitness program written in the Irish language. The program is designed to help combat childhood obesity, and offers three stages of activity: Basic, Standard and Challenge levels.

The program promotes and improves teamwork with active child participation. It also facilitates listening; concentration and memory skills; promotes social interaction and self-confidence; improves motor skills, flexibility and coordination; while further developing the children’s use of the Irish language. The program provides extensive instruction to naiscoils on the launching and operation of the program. To date, the program has received a very positive response and is increasing in use.

Naiscoil na Rinne has increased the number of students enrolled. In addition, 200 new homes are being built in Creggan and Danny has taken the initiative to market the Naiscoil with an attractive registration brochure.

Overall, Altram is optimistic about the future of the Irish language schools in Northern Ireland. Your continuing support will help them continue their survival.

During our meeting at Altram, we learned that the Creggan GAA Club was completely destroyed by fire in late December. The GAA Club is the heart of the Creggan community; over 300 adults and children have been negatively impacted by this loss. The building was covered by insurance, however, the equipment and uniforms were not. Replacement of the jerseys alone will cost in the range of £25,000 (jerseys are used by players for 2-3 years). The community is working hard to secure sponsors to rebuild and equip the program.

Although the CMT is not accepting donations for this program, a facebook page has been launched to organize information and support for the rebuilding effort. If you would like to learn more, go to “Support Sean Dolans GAC” on facebook.

Conway Education Centre

*A message from Pauline Kersten, Director
of the Conway Education Centre.*



Conway Education Centre (CEC) provides affordable, innovative learner centred education, health and community resources in a safe and supportive environment enabling individuals and those most in need to realise their full potential.

Conway Education Centre operates an Open Door policy and welcomes people of all ability and all backgrounds. We continue to strive to create that open space in the context of community change and peace building.

The importance of adult/community education in a time of recession cannot be underestimated. International research has established that community education is a key driver of economic recovery and social development. It is also a vital part of community development. It builds the capacity of a person to have choices regarding learning and employment opportunities. It has an effective role in ensuring access to learning, transfer to other learning opportunities and progression across all areas of the education system.

In order to safeguard these opportunities for our community in a time of economic recession and funding restrictions, Conway Education Centre works hard with the very limited means at its disposal and is depended on donations to provide vital services.

The past year has not been without change and challenges. Woodwork tutor Sean Rooney and Management committee member Eilish Rooney stepped down and we thank both of them for their many years of hard work and dedication.

The number of learners in CEC has shown a significant increase over the last four years and we expect that to continue. Throughout the 2010/11 academic year Conway Education Centre facilitated 304 adult learners with a range of popular accredited and non accredited courses. These courses varied from GCSE, Essential Skills, IT and Return to Study courses, to Cake Decorating, Yoga, History of Belfast, Homeopathy and Bach Flower Remedy. Computer courses have proven to be very successful, from the beginners class right the way up to ECDL. Driving Theory & Hazard has been very beneficial, with 90% of participants passing their Driving Theory exam first time.

Due to a small class size, we did not receive funding to run the GCSE English class last September. Because a GCSE English certificate is essential to get a job, CEC is committed to running a GCSE English class every year. To make this possible for the 6 people who were eager to study for this, the Mary Mannion Merit Grant from Conway Mill Trust, which provided valuable bursaries in previous years, was this year used to pay for the GCSE English teacher. All six students have sat their first controlled assessment and are working hard for their exams in May and June.

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History of Belfast Class

Our holistic classes which promote healthy lifestyles and encourage people to look after the well being of themselves and their families, remain as popular as ever with an increasing number of students each year.

In May 2011 we carried out a community survey in the local shopping centres. The results allowed us to dove-tail our services to what is needed in the community and to gather much valued feedback on the services that CEC provides.

The Day School, which provides education to vulnerable young people, increased its intake from 10 to 12 young people and continues to work with a waiting list.

Due to cutbacks, the funding for our Afterschool Club 'Improving Futures' was cut by 50%. This was devastating for children, parents and project workers. Donations have made up for some of the shortfall, but the project, which delivers real and tangible benefits to children from a disadvantaged background, needs and deserves appropriate resources. The Afterschool club provides much needed academic support to children and to some provides a valuable respite from difficult home situations.

All in all, like many other organisations, Conway Education Centre and its staff, work hard to continue to provide valuable services with decreasing resources.

The continued support from Conway Mill Trust over the years has made a real difference, not only has it made a significant financial contribution, it is also such a huge boost to our morale. It is fantastic to have such dedicated supporters who believe in our work and understand the difference it makes in the lives of people in Belfast.

Many, many thanks.

With warm regards,
Pauline Kersten

Irish Republican History Museum

CMT presented a \$1400 grant (£865) to museum Director, Johnny Haddock who expressed his gratitude for the continuing generosity of our donors. Your donations will ensure that the museum continues its invaluable work of preserving the history of the struggle for Irish freedom.

Drumcree Community Centre

CMT Board members Ed McManus and Sandra Haas met with Brendan MacCionnaith and Michael Bingham of the Drumcree Community Centre. A grant in the amount of \$500 (£310) was presented and received with gratitude.



Mayfair Business Centre is a flagship for Enterprise Awareness Program.

One recurring issue faced by the centre, is the fact that funders do not appropriate money for daily operations and expenses such as insurance and program materials. Insurance is a major concern, because without it, they cannot open the doors to any program.

The Mayfair Business Centre, which is owned by the Drumcree Community Trust, helps with the funding shortfalls. Mayfair is an incubator program for small business and is currently 80 percent occupied. It provides a range of services for small business including managed workspaces and business skills training.

Community centers like Drumcree are working hard to keep their doors open to provide help to their neighbors who are struggling with a wide range of issues. You can be assured that your donations are making a real difference.

Tell Us What You Think!

Our quarterly newsletter allows us to keep you up to date on the programs we support with your donations. We also try to share with you the impact your donations have on the lives of the people served by these programs.

We'd love to hear any and all suggestions or feedback you have to offer. Feel free to send us an email or write us a letter!

Thank you for your continuing support.

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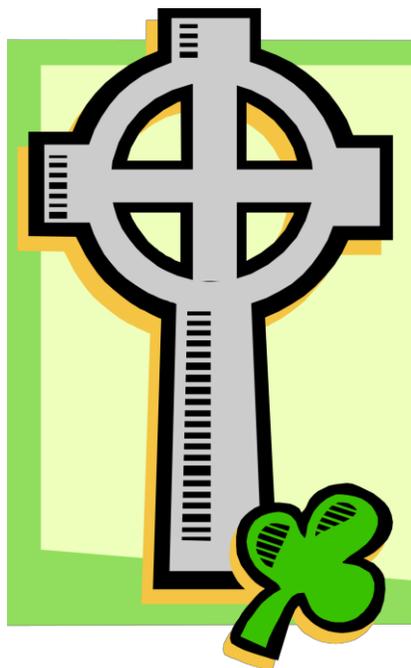
Want to Make A Difference?

Please partner with Conway Mill Trust and send a tax-deductible contribution today to Conway Mill Trust Inc., PO Box 101529, Pittsburgh, PA 15237-8529.

If you wish to direct your donation to a particular group, write the name of the group in the memo of your check or money order and they will receive 100% of that donation.

Or go to www.conwaymilltrust.org and click the DONATE button to donate securely online through PayPal using your checking account or credit card.

Lá Fhéile Pádraig Sona Daoibh



Happy Saint Patrick's Day