



# Conway Mill Trust

Formerly "Doors of Hope"

P.O. Box 101529  
Pittsburgh, PA 15237

Summer 2011

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## Back to School!

### *Education Grants to be Awarded in Fall*



*Learning computer skills at the  
Conway Mill Education Centre*

Conway Mill Trust is pleased to announce that we will again award Mary Mannion Merit Grants to deserving students from the Conway Education Centre. The grants will be awarded in the fall semester and your donations are needed urgently. These grants help GCSE students procure what is equivalent to our GED, in order to continue their education or better prepare for entrance into the work world.

Conway Mill Trust received this letter from Pauline Kersten, Manager of the Conway Education Centre:

Dear Friends,

Could I start by thanking you all so much for your continued support for Conway Education Centre, our students and activities. It is very much appreciated and it has allowed us to provide services and support students in ways that would otherwise have been absolutely impossible.

At the moment we are working hard to present a worthwhile menu of activities and courses to the community in West Belfast. Our adult education courses include:

**IT & employability courses:** Computer courses for all abilities, Web Design, Driving Theory, GCSE English, GCSE Maths, Essential Skills Numeracy & Literacy, Life Coaching

**Health:** Caring for Carers, Introduction to Homeopathy, Bach Flower Remedies

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## Conway Education Centre, cont.

**Languages:** Conversation Irish, GCSE Irish, ESOL (English for speakers of other languages), GCSE English, Sign Language level 1

**Creative courses:** Art for beginners, Paper Craft, Personalising your wardrobe, Pottery, Creative Writing, Cake Decorating, Digital Story telling

**Personal Development:** Introduction to IT, History of Belfast, Life Coaching

**New courses:** Managing Conflict, Working in the Community, Basic DIY (electrics, plumbing, tiling, joinery/power tools)

Increasingly we are working in partnership with other organisations and share resources (such as rooms, equipment and tutors) to work more effectively and enable us to continue to provide quality services in spite of serious government cutbacks to our funding.

The academic year 2011-2012 is not going to be easy. Our core funding has been cut by 5%, funding for an advanced computer class, necessary to increase chances of employment, has been taken away and the funding for our Afterschool Club has been cut by 50%.

We are well used to providing services on a shoe string budget and through making efficiency savings, we can just about absorb the 5% funding cut for our core cost. But the funding for the advanced computer course (£1000) and Afterschool club (£12,500) is very hard to replace.

The advanced computer course (called European Computer Driving License or ECDL) is a very useful qualification for people seeking employment, showing potential employers evidence of competency in a range of software applications.

Our Afterschool Club is very important to the children in our area and provides much needed support for homework in an area where education is not always valued and where aspirations for further education are low. Besides homework support, the Afterschool Club, staffed by two part time project workers and a volunteer, provides a safe environment for play, arts & crafts, supervised access to computers and educational trips. The children attending our Afterschool Club show a real improvement in their social skills, their attention span, their academic achievements and their school attendance.

Your support for these activities would be invaluable.

With warm regards,  
Pauline Kersten

*If you would like to make a tax-deductible donation to the Mary Mannion Merit Grant, please write "Merit Grant" in the memo of your check or money order. Our mailing address and directions for making donations via our website can be found on page 4.*



## Praise for the 2011 Altram Conference

The Altram Annual Conference took place on Friday May 20th 2011 and was attended by more than 80 delegates. Altram were proud to receive positive feedback from the naíscoil delegates and the representatives who had been invited from other organisations. Everyone felt the Workshops provided by the Altram staff were very worthwhile and useful to early years' workers in the field.

Representatives included those from Foras na Gaeilge, Comhairle Contae Dún Geanainn and the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI). Altram attended an information session with the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) in April 2011 where 'transition' was highlighted as an area for improvement and development within the early years sector. As a result of this Altram made 'transition' the focus of the 2011 conference. In their workshop Aisling and Caitlín focused on 'transition' as reflected in Taistil, Bia and Eadaí while Brídín provided an informative workshop which addressed transition using wall displays in the naíscoil.

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## New setting for Naíscoil Cois Feabhail

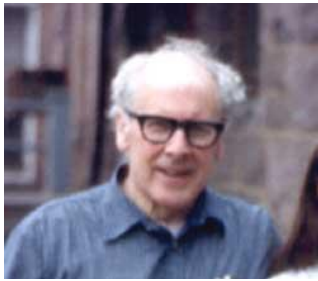


Altram would like to congratulate Naíscoil Cois Feabhail on securing a brand new state of the art setting! Well done! The new Naíscoil was opened by Fr. Pat O'Hagan on the 8th May 2011 with more than 200 people in attendance. Situated inside the Greencastle Community Centre the Naíscoil was funded by the IFT and the UCIT.

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## Welcome!

Altram are delighted to announce that two new Managers were employed in February 2011. Maureen Murray as Head of Curriculum Development and Patsy McAlister as Head of Policy and Planning.



## Update from Father Des

Father Des Wilson has been living and working in West Belfast since 1966. For forty years he has drawn inspiration from the community around him. In turn he has inspired and supported many people to develop their own responses to the many social, economic and political crises confronting the community

I was surprised a few days ago when Jim Neeson told me there was now a second theatre in the Mill. One theatre is in the education department and the other is going to host a conference soon. Two visitors are arriving from the US next week - they were great friends to us during the difficult times - and I had to confess that someone else had better show them around because I would lose my way in it now! Springhill House is going to have some events during the next year to mark the fortieth anniversary of the founding of the Community house which has worked in cooperation with the Mill for many years.

Economically N. Ireland is struggling just as other people in other places are struggling. Because of the overweight of public sector jobs here - in relation to private enterprise jobs - there has been some rather artificial stability in the economy as a whole. But now the government in London is cutting back on public sector jobs and this affects N. Ireland in a special way. The resulting proposed strikes and other public protest actions are making people nervous because none of us can be easy with the thought of it. There is a strong opinion here in favour of reducing tax on businesses so as to match the lower tax level in the rest of Ireland- that would help N. Ireland in the long run but only slowly and will affect an enterprise like the Mill indirectly.

Hopefully all this will underline the need for as much local enterprise as possible and hopefully also the Mill will be recognized as a stimulus for this. We have put forward the idea for a long time that government should offer as much encouragement and help to local enterprise as to companies coming in from abroad, because in our areas local enterprise has always been the most important stabilising factor. The Mill has a mix of enterprises and that is good - we could hardly be happy if, say, one very large one used up the available space, however attractive that would be in the short term - people are very aware of the importance of many smaller businesses which act as a cushion for each other if things go wrong for some of them!

Thank you for all your help and encouragement. There are signs that somebody somewhere is going to say, Recession will soon be over! Hope !

### 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](http://www.conwaymilltrust.org) and click the DONATE button to donate securely online through PayPal using your checking account or credit card.



## Drumcree Community Trust

As many of you are aware, the months of June through July brings added tension to many communities in Northern Ireland. The Drumcree Community Centre, located near the Garvaghy Road in Portadown, provides young residents with the opportunity to engage in positive activities and trips. In a letter

to Sandy Haas of Conway Mill Trust, Breandan Mac Cionnath, Director of the Drumcree Community Trust has provided an update on the Annual Summer Scheme.

These programs are of vital importance to the young residents in and around the Garvaghy Road. Your donations can help the centre continue its good work.

Sandy,

The annual summer scheme, organised by Drumcree Community Trust, commenced on Monday July 4th with over 250 children registering to take part in the scheme's activities.

Young people are always important to the development of any community and that is also true within our own, where a large percentage of the population are under 21 years of age.

Often, young people are seen as being problems rather than as having needs.

At Drumcree Community Trust, we recognise that despite the external, potentially negative conditions, to which they are subjected particularly during tense times such as July, young people are bright, passionate, capable, eager to learn and the key to the future of our community.

There are several programmes, of which our annual summer scheme is just one, developed by our staff and volunteers for children and young people which support that aim.

Each year, a full range of activities is on offer during the school holidays throughout July and August. This year the Summer Scheme includes activities based in and around Drumcree Community Centre, as well as a full range of one-off activities and trips.

So far, an average of 200 children and young people are participating daily with, for example, ninety children going on a day trip on July 14th to the zoo. Throughout the rest

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## Drumcree, cont.

of the summer, children and young people will be provided with a wide range of affordable experiences that they would not have received anywhere else – these included family day trips.

And from August 2nd – August 4th, our mini-world cup football competition will take place. Each year hundreds of young people of all ages participate in this annual competition organised over several evenings and, of course, they bring with them a ready-made fan base in the form of parents, grandparents and other family members.

Throughout our 20 years of existence, Drumcree Community Trust has been involved with many groups, both inside and outside the community centre.

We have always strived to provide the best possible services to all who come through the doors of Drumcree Community Centre through the provision of club-based sessions, training, and many forms of sporting, art and play activities.



Children of all ages enjoying the “hands-on” activities organized by the Drumcree Community Centre as part of Summer Scheme 2011

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**[trustees@conwaymilltrust.org](mailto:trustees@conwaymilltrust.org)**

You'll receive our next newsletter via email. It's faster, complete with color photos, and without the cost of print.

**Sign up Today!**