



Conway Mill Trust

Formerly "Doors of Hope"

P.O. Box 101529
Pittsburgh, PA 15237

March 2016

1916 - 2016

April 2016 will mark the 100th anniversary of the Easter Rising in Ireland. In Ireland and everywhere the Irish Diaspora reside, it is a time for us to commemorate, honor and reflect upon the sacrifices made by the men and women who gave it all in the pursuit of Irish freedom. It is also a time to actively imagine Ireland's future.

We all have a part to play in making Ireland's future better and brighter. Let's make 2016 our best year yet.

Irish Republican Museum

As you can imagine, the Irish Republican Museum is hard at work planning activities and exhibitions to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising. We received the following update from Susan Hickey:

"As you know the centenary of the 1916 Easter Rising is fast approaching, in order to commemorate this hugely important event the Irish Republican History Museum will be holding a special exhibition. The exhibition will commence on the 27th March and will run to the end



of the year. It will deal with Ireland's Revolutionary Period with a particular focus on the Easter Rising itself. The exhibits will include uniforms, artifacts, documentation, etc.

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome visitors from home and abroad, also we would like to thank the Conway Mill Trust for their generosity and support over the years."

If you are planning a trip to Ireland, we encourage you to place the museum on your list of sights to see.

Conway Education Centre

As always, Pauline Kersten, Manager of the Conway Education Centre, is working hard to make Conway Education Centre a place of learning and healing. We received the following update from Pauline on the Centre's accomplishments and needs:

"We have just started our new semester and enrolled 255 new students for 22 new courses; this brings our total intake of students for the academic year 2015/2016 to 665,



Conway Education Centre class

a record number! The government has announced new budget cuts of between 5% and 10% for organisations like ourselves, it is unlikely that our elected representatives will be able to change this, but we will continue to do our very best to provide quality community education for the people of West Belfast.

We have been successful in obtaining small pots of funding to provide courses specifically suited to people with mental health issues. As you probably know, West Belfast has the highest number of people suffering from depression, anxiety and related mental health issues in Northern Ireland. For many people the suffering they endured during the conflict; loved-ones killed, imprisoned, living in constant fear, has affected their mental health. Although the conflict is over, many people



English class at Conway Education Centre

are faced with the consequences which includes long-term unemployment because they weren't able to finish their education, weren't able to get or keep a job, weren't able to gain experience or to build a career. This has caused untold hardship and poverty on the generation that lived through the conflict and on their children and grandchildren. These courses, we call them 'Learning for

Wellbeing', are very popular and for many of the courses we had to put on a waiting list.

Our other adult education courses too are going very well with an increased number of students doing GCSE English and Maths, the essential qualifications one has to have here in order to compete for a job. Our GCSE Maths class has a 98% attendance rate! Our new Business Administration course and Accountancy & Bookkeeping course are also very popular, these courses provide a very useful qualification for people wanting to work in an office environment or build a career in financial administration.

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The personal support provided to our students plays an important role in preventing students from dropping out and helping them to successfully complete courses and obtaining qualifications. Many have commented that they wouldn't have been able to complete their course without the encouragement and support of their volunteer mentor. The volunteer mentors are assigned to students who have fallen behind, or who need that extra bit of support and it is working very well.

Our Afterschool Club is going strong and is a popular volunteering opportunity for trainee teachers. Around 20 children make their way to Conway Education Centre each afternoon to get support with their homework, have an opportunity to work with computers, to make new friends and most importantly, increase confidence in their own ability and to support their enjoyment in learning new things.

With our increasing success, also comes increasing demands. Our small staff team is absolutely fantastic, working well over the hours they get paid for and taking great pleasure in our students, young and old, gaining qualifications, gaining more confidence and feeling more able to cope with what life is giving them.

Request to Conway Mill Trust:

Our poor photocopier, who is nearly ten years old and at the heart of our office, dearly beloved by staff, tutors and students for copying endless pages of reports, exams, worksheets etc. has become too old to deal with the demands of our busy centre. It is frequently breaking down and we have been told there are no more spare parts to fix it.

It has proven extremely hard to get funds for office equipment and we would respectfully like to ask for your generosity to help us raise enough money (£3000) to buy a new photocopier, a new heart for our office, which would allow us to continue to do our work efficiently.

We are very grateful for your continued support. It is very encouraging to know that you believe in our work and many times your aid and generosity has kept us going in very difficult times."

If you would like to help the Conway Education Centre obtain a new copier, write "CEC" in the memo of your check or money order and we will include 100% of your donation in their next grant.

Dove House One Stop Shop Moves to City Centre

Despite dramatic cuts in funding, the Dove House continues in its mission to provide support services to all members of the Derry community. Most recently, they are pleased to announce that they have opened a new youth space in Derry's city center! We received the following update from Bronach McMonagle, Manager of Dove House:



Youth Transition Project at work

“The Youth Transition Project, One Stop Shop has been working hard for the past few months in partnership with Education Authority to move to a city centre location. In mid January we moved the service to the Our Space building in Waterloo Place right the middle of Derry's city centre. We are now offering a Drop in from 12 – 6pm Monday – Friday and 2-6pm Saturday, as well as an inclusion club on a Thursday and music events on Friday evenings, all for young people aged 11 – 25 years old to access advice, support and signposting to services. We have a room with music equipment that they can use and many other ways to improve their emotional well being. We offer music lessons, we run a walking club and at all times encourage young people to take their 5 steps to well being, Connect, Be Active, Keep learning, Take Notice and Give. We also have an outreach element of the programme and we take education programmes out to other areas of the city to support young people through transition periods of their lives.

Since moving to the new premises on 18th January 2016 we have had 331 different young people through the doors, 168 at the Drop In, 49 at Guitar lessons, 10 at the Youth Advisory Group, 9 at Foyle Youth Council, 10 at the Youth Advocacy Programme, 25 at the Inclusion programme and 60 at our first music event. The premise itself is a very inviting and welcoming space and the young people have made it their own.

The Youth First Youth Club still remains in the heart of the Bogside and is still going from strength to strength, with new members joining every week, we continue to have one full time worker and 3 part time workers and a team of 10 volunteers who go over and above to provide innovative youth work programmes to young people aged 4 – 18 years of age.”

Bronach also noted that a new Women's Hub is under construction and will open as soon as it's completed. As with many other community groups, Dove House relies on donations from groups such as Conway Mill Trust to operate. If you would like to help them, write “Dove House” in the memo of your check or money order and 100% of your donation will be included in their next grant.

Still Imprisoned Project

The Still Imprisoned Project provides support to those members of the community who continue to suffer the effects from imprisonment during the conflict. Post Traumatic Stress is all too common among those who were imprisoned and their families. The effects are devastating and there are few places for those in need of help to turn to. The Still Imprisoned Project is dedicated to help these men and women rebuild their lives. They receive no government support and rely solely on donations from groups like Conway Mill Trust to continue operating.

We received the following update from Still Imprisoned staff:

“We have been extremely busy and will be very involved in lots of events coming up, as this is the Centennial year of the 1916 uprising. Our women volunteers have a successful group running weekly for moral support and community togetherness. They have put together a play about 1916 which has already booked several venues.

Some of the people we have helped in the past to fit back into society are now helping us with the celebrations and events such as tours, mural visits, parades and exhibitions for the centennial year. Our object is to get people involved, feel less isolated, and to feel part of the community. These events have a major effect on people as they are communicating and feeling connected to society again.

We thank you for your kind support and donations in the past, as we can do more to help P.O.W. who continue to suffer from the effects of imprisonment. I am looking forward to meeting up with you both when you visit in April.”

If you would like to help the Still Imprisoned project, write “SIP” in the memo of your check or money order and 100% of your donation will be included in their next grant.

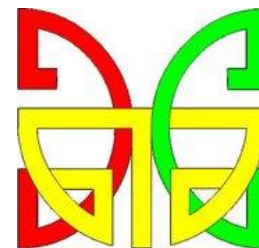
Want to Make A Difference?

Your donations can any of the worthy organizations we support to succeed.

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.

Drumcree Community Centre



As we reported in our previous newsletter, construction on the new Drumcree Community Centre was completed last year. We are happy to report that the centre is thriving. There are services and events for every segment of the community – from small children to senior citizens. We received a report detailing the many activities the new centre hosts. The following is an excerpt from that report:

“Everyone will be well aware that the major works to the Drumcree Centre were finally completed in June allowing us to move back to our premises in time for the annual summer scheme.

The result of this welcome development is a bright, spacious and modern facility which is both fit for purpose and fit for the future of the community for years to come.

The community centre now incorporates a dedicated and fully equipped children’s room, a youth room, drop-in/social area and a computer room.

The centre also has a large and well-equipped kitchen.

The extended main hall, fitted out with sports flooring and under-floor heating, can be partitioned into two set fully separate areas. New chairs and folding tables have also been acquired for the hall.

As has been demonstrated by a number of events held in the community centre since last summer, the main hall is capable of very comfortably catering for up to 140 people seated at tables.

We are pleased to report that, since completion, there has also been a very noticeable increase in the use of the centre by local families for various family events, with some bookings having been made in well advance until April/May 2016.

Drumcree Community Trust was founded 25 years ago in February 1991 and emerged from a number of local community initiatives started in the area in the late 1980’s.



Those initiatives included the Drumcree Community Education Project, the Faith and Justice Group, Drumcree News and, of course, the original Cabin Club youth project.

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Those involved in establishing Drumcree Community Trust in 1991 sought to address the high levels of social and economic disadvantage which many families and individuals within our local community faced at that time.

From the outset, those founding members of Drumcree Community Trust shared a common vision which was quite unique in terms of



community development at the time and, more importantly, they had the determination necessary to see that vision become a reality.

Their first major goal was to provide a community facility in the area which led to the building of Drumcree Community Centre in the early 1990's.

However, the overall aim was to create not just a stand-alone social facility, but to develop a series of inter-linked projects under the umbrella of Drumcree Community Trust that would provide opportunities to assist in sustaining, advancing and progressing the lives of many people in this community.”

We will keep you updated on the centers activities throughout the year. If you would like to contribute, write “Drumcree” in the memo of your check or money order and 100% of your donation will be included in their next grant.

Get Well Father Des!

We received word from Northern Ireland that due to illness, Father Des was unable to provide an update from Springhill House for this edition of the newsletter. We know you'll join us in wishing him a speedy recovery.

Father Des is passionate about helping the people in his community through Springhill House. If you would like to donate to Springhill House, just write “Springhill” in the memo of your check or money order and 100% of your donation will be included in their next grant.

Go raibh maith agaibh!

From all of us at Conway Mill Trust, and on behalf of those organizations we support, we would like to take a moment to recognize and thank all of our 2015 donors. Without your ongoing generosity we would be unable to continue in our mission to help rebuild lives in Northern Ireland. Your support means the world to us.

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Happy Saint Patrick's Day!