



Conway Mill Trust

Formerly "Doors of Hope"

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Museum of Free Derry Opens to Visitors

After years of planning, fundraising, hard work and dedication, the Museum of Free Derry has finally opened its doors to the public. CMT Trustees Ed McManus and Sandra Haas were amazed at the finished product and gave a detailed report of their visit below:

"Awesome transformation! That's just one of many words to describe the beauty and grandeur of the newly completed museum. They say a picture is worth a thousand words.



Museum site 2004



Museum of Free Derry 2017

As we arrived at the museum, the first sight was the impressive exterior wall and view of the second-floor with its familiar marquee. Most impressive is the replication of the sound waves of "We Shall Overcome" on the facing wall. Interestingly, the pieces of steel that were removed from the Free Derry Museum's wall to create the sound waves etchings may be sent to Alabama to be installed in a museum there.

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Grants Delivered!

This past April, Conway Mill Trustees Ed McManus and Sandra Haas travelled to Northern Ireland to deliver your donations totaling £6640 (\$9008) to the various community organizations we assist. We say it often, but it bears repeating that your donations are always greatly appreciated and always put to good use. As always, the trustees who deliver these grants personally assume 100% of their expenses associated with these trips. No Conway Mill Trust funds whatsoever are used.

Conway Education Centre

Ed and Sandy met with Pauline and Elsie from the Conway Education Centre to deliver a £780 (\$1,058) grant made by our donors.

Pauline was happy for the grant in that it will purchase two of the five needed computers for the Day School and the adult IT classes. During their meeting, Pauline expressed her concerns about the impact of the current political climate as it pertains to the Education Centre's funding. Brexit and the collapse of the Stormont Executive have left organizations like the CEC in a constant state of crisis. It is very difficult to make long-range plans with any degree of confidence when funding is only guaranteed in 3-month increments.

Pauline reports that the 100% volunteer project of tutoring Syrian refugees and their children English was going well. A major problem with the Syrian children in particular is that they are thrown into the school's system with no provision for teaching English, causing them to immediately fall behind in their schooling. The all-volunteer English classes at the Education Centre have been a God-send. Pauline noted that the Centre is looking at a Level 1 Childcare and an Elder Care course.

One major distressing piece of news is that the After School/Family Project ended last June when the Centre lost funding from Children in Need. It is unlikely to be reinstated unless a new funding source is found. GCSE classes are going well and growing.

Pauline must heavily rely upon her volunteer staff to maintain the services the CEC provides. The volunteer staff consists of eight volunteer mentors, six office/administrative work volunteers, nine volunteer tutors and one volunteer therapist. She has had to furlough or place on part-time full-time staff because of the loss of the After School/Family Project program.

As with all of the organizations we assist, the CEC is working very hard to maintain their level of service to the community under increasingly difficult financial constraints. Your donations are critical to their success.

Mary Mannion Merit Grant

The Mary Mannion Merit Grant was established to assist at-need students complete the coursework and testing required to obtain their GSCE. The GSCE is the UK equivalent to the GRE in the United States. Unlike the GRE which consists of a single test, the GSCE requires students to complete several courses before sitting for their exam. The tuition for these courses is a major barrier to many people who desire to complete their education.

Please donate to the Mary Mannion Merit Grant so that we may be able to continue assisting people improve their lives and the lives of their families by finishing their education. Write "Merit Grant" in the memo of your check or money order and 100% of your donation will be included in their next grant.

Springhill House

During their recent visit, Ed McManus and Sandy Haas were able to meet with Fr. Des Wilson. As always, Fr. Des was quick to express appreciation for the generosity of our donors for the £780 (\$1058) grant and provided our readers with the following update from Springhill House and the community it serves.



CMT Trustees Sandy Haas and Ed McManus with Fr. Des Wilson

“Springhill Community House is coming to the end of the academic year and that can only mean one thing,

exam time! Our students in Maths, English and Science have spent the last year studying everything from Pythagoras theory to Lady Macbeth and even managed to fit in an experiment on the amount of vitamin C in health drinks. During this time we have arranged additional classes to support students during examination and would like to wish them all well. During the summer months we use this time to plan for next year starting in September and to recruit participants onto programmes.

At the start of May we started a horticulture therapy programme aimed at local residents that will show participants how to grow their own produce and at the same time improving their mental health and wellbeing.

Demand for our therapy clinics in homeopathy, reflexology and aromatherapy never ceases, we work with 250 clients per year each receiving 5 one-to-one therapy sessions. The clinics deal with mental health issues of victims and survivors of the conflict. We work closely with other community providers of counselling services and make regular referrals to them.

The uncertainty of Britain leaving the European Union (‘Brexit’) is having a huge impact on our community, to the fore are the issues of the economic implications and the possible reintroduction of a border with the Republic of Ireland. There is little discussion about the implication of Brexit on human rights and human rights legislation and practice in Northern Ireland after Brexit. We have organised a public meeting about the impact on Human Rights of Brexit which will be held in Conway Education Centre on Monday 12th June at 7 pm, the speaker

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Get Well Father Des

We hope you will join us in offering our prayers and well wishes to Father Des Wilson. A few weeks ago, Fr. Des fell and suffered a broken hip. He underwent surgery and is currently resting and recovering. We wish him a speedy recovery and will keep you updated on his progress.



Altram Irish Language Organization

Danny Cassidy accepted a grant in the amount of £780 (\$1,058) for Altram. Given their precarious financial position the past 2 years, it is thanks to the dedication and perseverance of people like Danny that Altram's funding is secure right now because the funding is for a three-year term.

They have added three new naiscoils this year. They provide services to 40 naiscoils and conduct six training days per year for tutors. Danny shared Altram's State of the Sector Report for Irish Medium early learning years sector to provide more detailed insight into how the sector is fairing. Six key themes are reported: Early intervention during the pre-school years, providing an opportunity for future development and accessibility; actively collaborate with other partners in a range of planning and delivery of services; partner with parents choosing to be involved in their children's Irish medium early years learning; work with the communities in the delivery of Irish medium early learning education; promote and deliver training for those delivering the services Altram provides; practice an outcomes-based approach to learning with measurable learning outcomes.

The report notes that the workforce is generally part-time and among the lowest-paid despite the importance of their roles in Irish medium early learning years education. Sustainability is the key challenge facing this sector and requires careful planning based on population trends, demographic intelligence and awareness of parental priorities.

Drumcree Community Centre

Ed McManus and Sandy Hass met with Breandan MacCionnaith and Michael Bingham of Drumcree Community Centre to deliver a £780 (\$1,058) grant for the Centre. The Centre experienced another 5% cut in their funding for 2017 but even more impactful is the collapse of Stormont Executive and the 3-month planning and funding process.

Breandan and Michael shared Drumcree's newest and most recent project – The Intergenerational Project. Sarah McVeigh, a volunteer worker at Drumcree, facilitated the project. The project involved Drumcree Community Centre's Bubbles pre-school club and Rosemount Care Home where many of the residents suffer from varying degrees of dementia. About 17 pre-school children participated by visiting the home for an hour once a week and along with the residents took part in activities such as storytelling, nursery rhymes and rhythm and movement games. The project was funded by private donations and Drumcree Community Centre. Because of its success, Sarah plans to have a second six-week session this spring.

The Centre also has a 10-week stress management project, stand-alone workshops, and chair-based yoga classes on its spring calendar.

Still Imprisoned Project

A grant in the amount of £780 (\$1,058) was presented to the Still Imprisoned Project on behalf of CMT donors.

Ed and Sandy met with the group for lunch at the cultural centre on the Falls Road in Belfast. Peter PJ Jones, Joe Austin, Loretta McKee, Siobhan Marken and Delores O'Neil were there on behalf of the men and women of SIP. They were very much appreciative of the grant and noted that it would carry them through their summer expenses.



CMT Trustees Sandy Haas and Ed McManus with the Women's Group and Joe Austin

The group mentioned they are participating in outreach programs with other republican ex-prisoner groups in Belfast and Derry and invited Ed and Sandy to a showing of a video SIP produced titled "Beyond the Wire" on Thursday evening, April 7 in The Market community in Belfast. This community is surrounded by loyalist neighbors. Ed and Sandy attended the screening to see the video and meet and greet with others in the outreach program. The meeting provided some insight into the collaborative work they do and what strategically the groups hope to achieve. Ed and Sandy were given a copy of the video as well as a video of The Market community's Easter Rising Commemoration.

If you would like to help the Still Imprisoned Project continue in their good work, simply write "SIP" in the memo of your check or money order and 100% of your donation will be included in their next grant.

Irish Republican History Museum

Ed and Sandy met with Johnny, Susan and her sister, Patty and presented the museum with a £1,180 (\$1,600) grant. As always, they were extremely grateful for the support. Susan said that the museum has been receiving countless donations of artifacts from people in the community and are in the process of cataloging them all.

Like all the other groups, they don't know what to expect from Brexit although they aren't affected financially by the exit because the museum receives no government funding. The museum is entirely dependent on donations from groups like Conway Mill Trust to keep their doors open.

Derry Museum from pg. 1

As we approached the entrance to the museum, a large group of students was also converging on the museum entrance. Once they were inside we were absolutely blown away by the all-glass large revolving door into the reception area of the museum.



Once inside we were amazed at the bright, spacious layout of the lobby area, the reception desk and counter, and modern seating with the walls finished in the museum's icon red color. To the left of the reception area is the stairway to the second floor. There also is an elevator, and Jean Haggerty noted the museum now has five restrooms!

As we entered the multi-media exhibition theatre, we were impressed with the flow of the exhibitions. Anyone visiting the former museum will recall how crowded the exhibitions were, making it impossible to create a seamless chronology of the civil rights movement and creation of Free Derry. Now, the exhibits are organized in such a way that visitors can almost experience Ireland's civil rights movement through exceptional visual and narrative presentation of an



Museum Entrance Door



Museum Main Lobby

ordinary, working-class community that endured oppression and rose up against it in the 1960s and 1970s. Central to the exhibitions of course is Bloody Sunday when 14 unarmed demonstrators were murdered and 14 others wounded by the British Army in the streets surrounding the museum on January 30, 1972.

The second floor of the museum is just as impressive as the first. It is complete with a beautiful, spacious modular conference room which can be converted into smaller rooms as needed. The outside walls are all glass with large full-length shutters to let in or shut out sunlight as desired. On each end of this floor are outdoor green spaces which also serve as second-floor emergency exits. The manager's office also is located on this floor, a significant improvement over the former office!

The staff of the museum reported they had over 5,000 visitors the first week the museum was open. The Museum of Free Derry is a "must see" when visiting Derry, The Walled City." Ed and Sandy also presented the museum with a £780 (\$1058) grant.

will be Human Rights Lawyer Niall Murphy followed by a question and answer session, and there is an open invitation to this event with a special invitation to campaigning groups.

The collapse of the Stormont executive has also created uncertainty within our community; with no executive



Horticulture Therapy

ministers in place powers have been transferred to Westminster and our community is facing 'austerity measures' which include benefits cuts and increased taxes. Organisations like ourselves who receive local government funding for programmes have also been the victims of cuts and at present only receive funding every three months because there is no executive in place.

Our work supporting victims and survivors of the conflict continues, at present we have an oral history project which works with victims to record their testimonies which will become part of a public archive.



Science Class at Springhill

On a more positive note the Ballymurphy Massacre families have a date set for a full inquest hearing into the deaths of their loved ones. This will start in September 2018, but there is still much to be done in preparation for this and a difficult road ahead for families.

With the help and support of our friends in the US our work continues, your financial support allows our project to develop programmes that would not otherwise be funded and we would like to take this opportunity to thank The Conway Mill Trust for your continued support.

Every year we present a special Award to some person or persons for having given special service to our communities. This is called the Tom Cox Award in memory of a good friend, novelist, playwright and Human Rights worker who along with his wife Vita was a constant visitor to Ireland. In August we hope to present the Award to a researcher who has identified and made available to the public so much information about the truth of what caused so much suffering during the conflict years. His quiet work has brought solace to many of those who suffered and who can now learn the truth."

If you would like to help Father Des continue his good work, write "Springhill House" in the memo of your check or money order and 100% of your donation will be included in their next grant.

Dove House

Donncha MacNiallais, Dove House Manager, was presented with Conway Mill Trust's £780 (\$1,058) grant.

Echoing the concern of other community groups, Donncha reports that his biggest worry is Brexit and its impact on Dove House and other community groups. He expects that all European Union funds will end maybe sooner than later.



L. to R.: Sandy Haas; Donncha MacNiallais, Dove House Manager, Ed McManus; Mary Nellis, Dove House Founder.

The three-month funding process also presents major challenges, trying to plan and fund activities at Dove House.

In the face of this challenge, Dove House is moving ahead with the One Stop Shop initiative. Donncha provided us with the following report on this project:

“The One Stop Shop is an initiative set up as part of Dove House youth services and is part funded by the Health Promotion Agency. The project is part of a wider drive at regional level to provide young people across the north of Ireland access to advice and support with a focus on emotional well-being and building resilience in an accessible and non-judgmental space.

While day to day we promote strategies for self-care in terms of looking after mental well-being such as connecting with others, being active, taking notice, giving to others and continued learning, we also provide practical, targeted and emotional support when young people are in crisis.

In last few months we have had to deal with the untimely death of a young person known to the service as a result of suicide, he was 18 years old. This was obviously a very difficult time for the friend groups involved and we were in a position to offer support and after care because of the relationships one of our members of staff had built with them through her work in a neighbouring youth club we have worked in partnership with since starting the project.

The circumstances were not at all straight forward, the young man in question had went missing and it was believed he had entered the river and it was nearly 3 weeks before his body was recovered.

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Dove House, from page 8

During this time we provided extended opening hours to facilitate those in his friend group to help with search along the river. This involved being there to offer emotional support and a listening ear as well as somewhere to go for a break and cuppa. This “limbo” period was particularly emotional for all involved as the nature of events did not follow the normal grieving process, i.e., death, wake, funeral.



We also provided support around the wake and funeral which again did not follow convention as due to the length of time he had been in the water the coffin had to be closed at the wake. Traditionally in Derry the body would be waked at the home before going to the chapel with the casket open and people have an opportunity to see the person and say their last goodbyes. We were very conscious that part of the way all deal with grief is by following the customs around it and the fact that this was not possible created even more distress to some of the young people.

Most importantly we feel that the after care in the weeks and months following the funeral is crucial and to that end we have stayed close and available to the young people. Part of this approach was to involve them in a project with a local community arts group and other youth services in the locality.

The programme is very much young person-led and they have designed and produced murals highlighting mental health issues and also plan to make stencils to be placed along the river and on the bridges providing help line numbers. The final piece they are doing will be collaboration with two of our other groups to produce a bench where people can leave messages of hope in the city center.”

Despite overwhelming concerns about stability of funding sources, Dove House is managing to find ways to continue its programs that have proven to be vital to the community it serves. Donations from organizations like Conway Mill Trust can provide much-needed assistance and a stream of revenue that is not bound to the changing political climate.

If you would like to help Dove House keep its doors open, write “Dove House” 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 are needed now more than ever.

Most of the organizations we assist are finding it difficult to make future plans under the three-month funding structure. Relatively small unexpected expenses, like a broken computer, can place an insurmountable burden on their budgets. The funding provided is often just barely enough to meet fixed expenses (rent, utilities, etc).

Donations from groups like Conway Mill Trust can make all the difference in the world when these unexpected expenses occur.

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.

On behalf of those organizations we represent, we thank you for your ongoing support and generosity.