

CELEBRATING TWENTY YEARS OF SERVICE

A message from James J. Lamb, President, IIP



I can't believe twenty years have passed since the founding of the Ireland Institute of Pittsburgh. I recall the young men and women who came to Pittsburgh under Sr. Michele's supervision on the Institute's first International Fund for Ireland program. They were unemployed, from both sides of the Northern Ireland conflict, and had little opportunity to improve their lives.

Back then, many of them were my age!! At the suggestion of my mother, I became part of Sister's informal welcome wagon to Pittsburgh. As an Irish American I was proud to be part of such an important effort to bring conflicted young people away from the conflict.

Now, twenty years later, Michele has passed on. And we are both blessed and compelled to continue this good work. So it continues. We recently hosted 18 young people from the border counties of Armagh and Monaghan, young men and women closer in age to my son than to me. They comprise our 61st IFI Program. Like the 1100 "Wider Horizons" participants who have come before them, these young people are unemployed with no prospects for work at home.

But, as was the case with our first group and the many that followed, the Pittsburgh experience will change that. Every young person from Ireland, North or South, that took the leap of faith to come to Pittsburgh on one of our programs was guaranteed something they could not get at home: an opportunity. They learned how to work, how to manage a busy day, how to set goals, how to achieve those goals, and ultimately, how to make their lives in Ireland better.

On the 23rd April, we took time to celebrate the tremendous impact Pittsburgh has had on Ireland's young unemployed people over the past 20 years. For it was not just the commitment of our board and the dedication of our staff that made this possible; it was our host families, our work placements, our donors, our academic partners, our Pittsburgh Irish organizations, and so many others who served on Sister Michele's welcome wagon who ensured that every young person from Ireland had an opportunity to make things better.

We honored Michele and co-founder Mel Madden that evening at a reception along with three special friends: Irish Ambassador Michael Collins; Steelers Chairman, Dan Rooney; and former Congressman, Jim Walsh, who wrote the Walsh Visa Program, sending 300 additional young people to Pittsburgh.

Immediately after the event, we got back to the good work of changing lives. Our first group from Monaghan and Portadown has just departed. And two more groups from the border areas of Tyrone and Donegal, and Armagh and Monaghan are preparing for the opportunities that await them in Pittsburgh later this year.

I have no doubt that someone on one of these programs will have a better experience because of you. So join us. Tell us how you would like to get involved. And tell your sons and daughters that they are not too young to help. They may find this work as I did. And they may make it a career...as I did.

Sincerely,

James J. Lamb
President

20th Year CELEBRATIONS



To mark its success, the Institute held a reception at the law offices of Reed Smith LLP, on Thursday, April 23rd. Special guests included Ambassador-nominee Dan Rooney, Irish Ambassador Michael Collins, and former Congressman Jim Walsh. Members of the Institute's Host Family Network, local employers, volunteers and friends also were in attendance.

Speaking at the event, Ambassador Collins said that “the work of reconciliation and building on the ground, of removing the borders in people's minds, of making sure that young people are given the greatest opportunity – that's a work that's ongoing and it's a work that needs to continue so the role that the Institute plays in that is indispensable. And we very much appreciate it. It's a work that must continue and we support it in every way we can.” He also referred to Institute's supporters, who he believes act as fellow ambassadors, bridging two great nations.

Pictured above are IIP President, Jim Lamb, Irish Ambassador to the US, Michael Collins, Chairman Pittsburgh Steelers Dan Rooney, Congressman Mike Doyle, and Former Congressman Jim Walsh.

Internships at the IIP

The IIP wants to thank our Fall and Spring intern – Nicole Werner (pictured). Nicole, a recent Public Relations and Psychology graduate from Duquesne worked on our Wider Horizons program, Common Ground newsletter, and various marketing activities. We wish her a fond farewell and all the best in her future career. If you know anyone who is interested in a Fall internship – have him or her send a Resume and cover letter to info@iiofpitt.org.



2008/2009 Rooney Fellow Returns to Ireland



Claire Dinsmore, our 2008/2009 Rooney Fellow, has returned home. A native of Warrenpoint, Co Down, she will return to classes at Southern Regional College in Newry this fall. Claire not only brought Pittsburgh a Super Bowl but also worked on marketing projects at her internships with the Steelers and Heinz.

Claire (pictured left with Mr. and Mrs. Rooney) remarked, “the Rooney Fellow scholarship is a once in a lifetime experience. I met so many great people while in Pittsburgh and got so much experience from my two internships. The University of Pittsburgh staff were very helpful and I enjoyed the classes that I took there. Socially, I enjoyed much of what Pittsburgh had to offer. I went on trips to Niagara Falls, Washington DC, Cleveland (to see the Steelers beat the Browns!) and San Diego for a much needed break just before returning home. I would recommend this experience to anyone who was interested and would like to wish Martin McHugh all the best for next year. Mr. and Mrs. Rooney – Pittsburgh – thank you!”

Claire has secured a paid internship with Heinz in Dundalk, Co. Louth for the summer, having impressed management during her recent Rooney Fellow experience.

The 2009/2010 Rooney Fellow was announced recently. Martin McHugh hailing from Banbridge, Co. Down will arrive in Pittsburgh in mid-August and will study at Duquesne University.

Named in honor of Daniel M. Rooney, co-founder of the Ireland Fund, the annual American Ireland Fund Rooney Fellowship is awarded each year to an outstanding student of Newry College, Northern Ireland. The fellowship provides the opportunity for a student to undertake a one-year undergraduate business program at the University of Pittsburgh or Duquesne University and to participate in an internship program with the H.J. Heinz Corporation and the Pittsburgh Steelers Football Club.

J1 Summer Work Travel Visa

This Summer the Ireland Institute of Pittsburgh welcomes seven Irish students to Pittsburgh on our J1 Summer Work Travel Program.

The program is open to students from Ireland and Northern Ireland who are currently enrolled in or have just graduated from a degree program. Students are eligible to work and travel in the U.S. for up to 4 months during their summer vacation.



Our first two students, from Cork Institute of Technology, arrived last week. “We’re looking for Engineering experience that might further our employment prospects back home,” said Don O’Connell, a 21-year-old Engineering student from Meelin, Co. Cork. His friend, and fellow Engineering student, Shane Moriarty, also 21 and hailing from Killorglin, Co. Kerry thinks the J1 Visa should be “mighty craic” and is looking forward to a fun-filled Summer. Both lads (pictured above) are looking for experience in the Engineering Field or any job that pays the bills. If you think you can help our J1 Students – don’t hesitate to call us on 412-394-3900.

The rest of our students arrive in June and their primary areas of interest are in Bar & Restaurant work.

Wider Horizons 2009



This year the Institute hosts three Wider Horizons groups. In March our first group (pictured), from the Monaghan and Portadown Partnership, arrived for an eight-week stay. Placements for the group included: The Priory Hotel (Northside), WQED, Sunking (a digital agency), P & W Mini, Rohrich Automotive, Gulliver’s Travels Inc (a travel agency) and the Holiday Inn Express (Southside). Information Technology was the focus of this group’s training at Duquesne where they learned Web Design skills. Pirates games, trips to Kennywood, the Carnegie Science Center and Washington DC were among some of their social activities.

The Ireland Institute would like to thank their supporters, volunteers and donors, including Tickets for Kids (www.ticketsforkidsfoundation.org) for their assistance with our group.

Our 2nd group of the summer, from Tyrone and Donegal, will arrive on June 22nd and depart 15th August. They will spend eight weeks working in youth and community organizations throughout the region. We will welcome our 63rd group, again from the Monaghan and Portadown Partnership in early September.

Planning Committee Convened

As peace has begun to take hold in Northern Ireland, the Institute’s Board of Directors has assembled a committee to discuss new ideas to promote reconciliation there, to explore programming in other sectarian conflicts around the world, and to enhance established links between the Pittsburgh region and Ireland, North and South. Members are working diligently on various concept proposals with help from government, corporate, and academic representatives at home and abroad. The Institute will continue to offer current programs like Wider Horizons, Summer Work Travel, and Rooney Fellowship while new initiatives and services will be introduced over the next few years.

Dungannon Links



The District Council of Dungannon and South Tyrone, Northern Ireland, in conjunction with the Western Regional College have identified Pittsburgh as a US area of interest for developing links in trade, research and development, and cultural and academic exchange. A delegation from Dungannon is planning to visit Pittsburgh this summer to formally establish these important linkages. Some commercial areas of interest to the Dungannon delegation are Pittsburgh’s clean technologies, green building products, advanced manufacturing, and best practices in sustainability.

Irish Language On-Line – Coming Soon

The Ireland Institute will be launching a new on-line Irish Language program in the coming months. The program, which will be available to purchase through our website (www.iiofpitt.org), will provide students with a basic introductory guide to the Irish Language. It will be fully interactive and will feature recorded video of an Irish teacher, vocabulary, quizzes and more. Purchasing the program will also entitle users to attend four classes held at our offices with a qualified Irish teacher that offer additional support. The Irish Language program has been developed in association with Griffith College, Dublin and will be hosted locally by Robert Morris University.



Irish Festival

Don't forget to stop by our stand at the Irish Festival this September 11-12-13 at Riverplex at Sandcastle. For further details about the Irish Festival, check out their website at www.pghirishfest.org.

IIP in Cyberspace

Don't forget to sign up to our free monthly e-newsletter, the *Common Ground*. You'll get lifestyle features, sports, news, and events from Ireland, Northern Ireland, and the tri-state area. To sign up email us at info@iiofpitt.org. You can also follow the IIP on Facebook and Twitter. On Facebook search *Ireland Institute of Pittsburgh* and 'become a fan' to find out the latest news about our visitors or upcoming events. On Twitter, follow [jlamb1410](https://twitter.com/jlamb1410). Our website is www.iiofpitt.org.

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If you would like to support the important work of the Ireland Institute of Pittsburgh in its mission of reconciliation in Northern Ireland and economic development throughout all of Ireland you can do so by making gifts of time or money. For more information on how to contribute or how to become involved with our work as a volunteer or host family, please call 412-394-3900. Ask to speak to Jim Lamb or visit our website at www.iiofpitt.org.

To designate your United Way gift for the Ireland Institute of Pittsburgh, please mark **4534** on your United Way pledge form.

We have also been designated a member of the National Combined Federal Campaign (CFC). Anyone interested in donating through CFC, please use **12438** when making a donation.