

TWENTY YEARS! NOW WHAT?

In 1989, when the Institute started, it seemed that the "Troubles" would never end. Times were tough. Paramilitaries in the north, on both sides held absolute power over many communities there. And thousands fled a backward economy looking for a better life, as generations of Irish had done before.

But over the next ten years Ireland became a different place. Government policies on tax and education began to bear fruit as foreign companies streamed in, creating good jobs and lifting Ireland to a its highest standard of living ever. And the US government helped broker one of the most imaginative and effective deals in the history of international diplomacy. The 1998 Good Friday Agreement brought enemies together to debate their differences and to seek common ground.

Of course the next ten years (1999-2009) would present new challenges. The Irish economy continued to grow, outpacing expectations year after year. Ireland was able to quickly absorb workers from across Europe. New immigrants to Ireland earned three-to-four times the wages of their homelands. And many of the Irish that had left a decade earlier returned to participate in the powerful "Celtic Tiger" economy. The Republic had reached the pinnacle of economic success. For the first time in modern history, the standard of living was better in the south than in the north. And then came September 11, 2001. On that day, the US response to terrorist activity changed dramatically. Dissident groups across the world began to question not their goals but the ways and means toward those goals.

The strong Irish economy and the US response to terrorism had important impacts on Northern Ireland. Scores of combatants on both sides surely saw the improving lifestyles of their neighbors across the border. They realized that policy, not pistols, brought the south to the top. They surely felt the pressure from the US Government to step away from armed struggle. With an agreement in place, the call to decommission weapons proved to be the right way forward. And the British government's decision to decrease military presence in Northern Ireland has been a welcome incentive for that decommissioning.

The peace process continues to challenge leaders and their constituents to reach out, to compromise, to share and forge a vision of reconciliation. Peace has come to Northern Ireland. But reconciliation is only now beginning. Too many remain segregated. Young people still have too few opportunities to meet, to talk, to develop meaningful and lasting friendships. Meanwhile, as the global economy fell last year, the impact in Ireland was catastrophic. Unemployment, falling land values, and an over-extended government see Ireland lagging behind, while most of Europe begins to show signs of growth.

These are the new challenges for the Ireland Institute of Pittsburgh. Collectively, we have the resources—the time, talent, and treasure—to bring the traditions of Ireland together and to boost the all-island economy. By doing so, we improve our own economy and help prevent the spread of terrorism. We can do this. And we will. Our Wider Horizons Programs, our trade initiatives, our partnerships with local and Irish organizations all address these two primary challenges. I hope you read about them here and find a way to participate with us in these important undertakings.



James J. Lamb
President



Fall Intern

The IIP was delighted to welcome Ms. Jessica Plachta our Fall 2009 intern. Jessica, a sophomore at Chatham University, is studying International Business hoping to pursue a certificate in Middle Eastern studies. During her time with us, Jessica worked on donor reports, interacted with the Wider Horizons students, researched business opportunities, assisted with administration and other projects. If you are interested in an internship experience at the Ireland Institute, please forward your resume to rtierney@iiofpitt.org. The IIP also welcomes volunteers Kathy Uranker and Dana Mallon. Both ladies are assisting in various administration duties.

Visitors to Pittsburgh

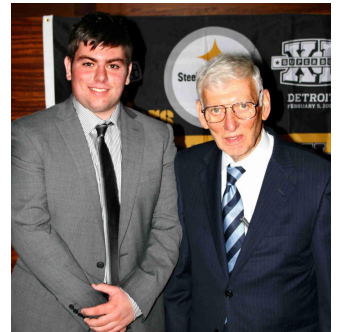
The Ireland Institute was involved in various visits of Ireland-based organizations to Pittsburgh over the last several months.

Kevin Whelan, (Chief Executive) and Douglas King (Development Advisor) from Irish Autism Action along with their US advisor Frank Costello held various meetings with local autism service providers. The group was in Pittsburgh to explore various centers of excellence in the research, diagnosis, treatment, and advocacy of autism spectrum disorders. Pittsburgh is recognized internationally for its many services and facilities dedicated to people with autism and the families that support them. The IIP facilitated meetings with University of Pittsburgh Center of Excellence for Autistic Research (CEFAR), The Children's Institute, The Watson Institute, The FISA Foundation, Autism Speaks, and the Advisory Board on Autism & Related Disorders (ABOARD) among others.

Brian Doran, Chief Executive, and Arnold Hatch, Chairman of the Board of Governors, Southern Regional College (Northern Ireland) visited us in October and had meetings with University of Pittsburgh Chancellor Mark Nordenberg, Duquesne University President Charles Dougherty, Pittsburgh Steelers President Art Rooney II and Heinz North America's Human Resources Senior Manager, Darcie Zeliesko. The purpose of their meetings was to thank the various local partners in the fellowship and to discuss the future of the prestigious Rooney Fellow Program.

2009 Rooney Fellow – Martin McGrath

Martin McGrath, 19, from Banbridge, Co. Down is our 2009/2010 Rooney Fellow. A student at Southern Regional College (formerly Newry & Kilkeel Institute For Further & Higher Education), he is in Pittsburgh for both Fall and Spring terms and is studying at Duquesne University. While at the Steelers, on his current internship, Martin (pictured right with Mr. Rooney) is working with the Marketing Department on many of the events that they hold during the season. He is also assisting with corporate hospitality on game days. In January, he will begin his experience at Heinz North America. Martin is our 17th Rooney Fellow.



J1 Summer Work Travel Program – Continues to flourish

This summer marked the 2nd year of our J1 Summer Work Travel program. We welcomed five students to Pittsburgh. Abbi Dolan (Co. Mayo) & Aoife Fanning (Co. Galway) are studying in Trinity College, Dublin. They worked in the Claddagh Irish Pub in Southside. Joining them were Shane Moriarty (Co. Kerry) and Donagh O'Connell (Co. Cork), students from Cork Institute of Technology. Our 5th student Lorna Campbell (Co. Donegal) secured a placement with Brunner Advertising

The J-1 Summer Work Travel Visa is issued for 4 months during students' summer holidays. The purpose of the Pittsburgh-based program is to provide Irish and Northern Irish post-secondary students, enrolled in and actively pursuing a degree or a full-time course of study at an accredited educational institution, an opportunity to live and work in Pittsburgh for a period up to four months during their summer vacation and travel within the United States. If you know of anyone that might be interested, have them log-on to our website www.iiofpitt.org for more information.

Wider Horizons 2009

Our final group of the year, from the Monaghan and Portadown Partnership arrived in September. Participants on this program hailed from Co. Armagh, Co. Down, Co. Louth, and Co. Monaghan. The focus of their program was Office Administration. Placements reflecting participants' specific administration interests, included ranged from Mind Over Media, Pittsburgh Tissue Engineering Institute, Nursefinders, Spectra Contract Flooring, Carnegie Museums, and various City and County governmental offices. While on their program, participants visited Washington DC, Niagara Falls and some even had an opportunity to visit New York with their Host Families! A big thank you to our partners Tickets for Kids (www.ticketsforkids.org) for the many donations they made towards our groups.



Northern Ireland Forum: Where We Are, and Where We're Going

The Ireland Institute of Pittsburgh, in association with the University of Pittsburgh's Center for International Study & Congressman Tim Murphy held a Forum on the Northern Ireland Conflict: Where We Are, and Where We're Going. Celebrating 20 years of service, the IIP reflected on the progress & problems that face Northern Ireland. Congressman Murphy was joined by two extraordinary women leaders from both sides of the political divide: Dawn Purvis, Leader, Progressive Unionist Party and Rita O'Hare, US Representative to Sinn Fein. The panel discussed: "The Troubles", the segregated communities of Northern Ireland & the border counties of the Republic, efforts of cross-community outreach, the 1998 Good Friday Agreement, the role of paramilitaries, the current situation, and the way forward. Dr. Tony Novosel, Professor of Irish History, University of Pittsburgh facilitated the discussion.



Pictured: Jim Lamb, Anthony Silberfeld, (NI Consulate) Larry Brophy (IAUC), Dawn Puvis, Tony Novosel, Alberta Sbragia (Pitt EU Center), Hon. Tim Murphy

Tommy Sands in Concert

Legendary Irish Singer-songwriter-Peace Activist, Tommy Sands, played a very special concert on Sunday September 27th at the Harp & Fiddle. The concert in aid of the Ireland Institute of Pittsburgh featured some of Tommy's most memorable songs. The gathered crowd were treated to a great night's entertainment as Tommy recounted, in story and song, his experiences growing up and living through "The Troubles". Born in Northern Ireland, Tommy Sands' first steps were amidst chaos. Very early on, it became clear that music was his vehicle for creating harmony. As part of the acclaimed Sands Family, one of the most important traditional groups in the early years of the folk revival, Tommy traveled everywhere from Carnegie Hall to Moscow's Olympic Stadium in an effort to add beauty to the world, and to point out where it still needs improvement.



Tommy continues to walk the troubled roads, bringing his template of possibility to areas of political and social unrest with his words and music. He has become the Bard of Peace. The IIP thanks Tommy Sands for donating his time and talent.

2010: Looking Ahead

Pittsburgh Dungannon Partnership on Trade and Sustainability: In 2010 twelve student engineers from South West College (SWC), Dungannon campus will participate in a yearlong internship program with Pittsburgh companies practicing sustainable technology and alternative energy. Specific internships in Wind Technology, Waste Energy, and Energy Storage will provide students with invaluable experience for new jobs at home as Northern Ireland embarks on its own regional sustainability policy. In conjunction with this program, companies and other organizations in Dungannon and Pittsburgh will be encouraged to develop partnerships, trade, investment and other business of mutual interest.



University of Limerick and the Manchester Craftsmens Guild (MCG): The Ireland Institute of Pittsburgh is supporting a project to replicate the stellar work of Pittsburgh's Bill Strickland and MCG in the city of Limerick. Ireland's most beleaguered city, with unmanageable rates of crime, school dropouts, poverty, and social deprivation, has prompted the Irish Government and the University of Limerick to import and manage innovations in alternative education, the arts, and community development. MCG represents a great resource for the people of Limerick. Coordinators hope to establish a center there over the next two years.

Thank You

We would like to express our gratitude to the many host families, placements and volunteers that helped us throughout the year. If you are interested in assisting us in our 2010 programming, please contact us. We expect to host three groups of young people on our Wider Horizons program and will need host families and placements willing to open their hearts and doors to our young people.

And a special thanks to our friends at Global Pittsburgh for promoting our program among its excellent network. We encourage our hosts, and others interested in becoming host families to consider joining GP and we invite all readers to attend their 50th anniversary party on Monday, December 21st. For more information on Global Pittsburgh call Gail Shrott at 412-392-4513.

Irish Language On-Line – a perfect Christmas Gift

We have just launched a new on-line Irish Language program. The program, which is available to purchase through our website (www.iiofpitt.org) for \$99, will provide students with a basic introductory guide to the Irish Language. It is fully interactive & features recorded video of an Irish teacher, vocabulary, quizzes & more. Purchasing the program will also entitle users to attend classes held at our offices with a qualified Irish teacher offering additional support. More information, call us at 412-394-3900.



An Irish Christmas

The IIP invites you to spend an evening with us as we present a night of Irish Song and Story with a special Christmas theme featuring the music of Guaranteed Irish & Hooley along with a few surprises. The event will be on Wednesday, 9th December, 6-9pm at the Harp & Fiddle, 2329 Penn Avenue, Strip District, Pittsburgh, PA 15222. There is a \$10 Donation at the door to benefit the IIP. Come and spend an evening of fun in support of our work.



Help support the work of the Ireland Institute

The Ireland Institute relies on its donor and volunteer network to continue its mission of mutual reconciliation and economic development. Your generosity is kindly appreciated. The Ireland Institute is available to accept donations through the United Way. Please remember our code for the United Way Campaign of Southwestern Pennsylvania: **4534**. We are also listed as a non-Profit under the Combined Federal Campaign. Our number is: **12438**. A third option is to donate through the local Federal campaign. This number is: **9016**. If you prefer, a tax-deductible donation can also be made directly to the Ireland Institute of Pittsburgh. The IIP also appreciates in-kind donations of furniture, housewares, event tickets etc. that we can then distribute to our participants. For info/questions about how you can donate, contact us at 412-394-3900.

Don't Forget to Sign-Up for the *Common Ground*, sign up to Facebook and Twitter

Don't forget to sign up to our free monthly e-newsletter, the *Common Ground*, by emailing us at info@iiofpitt.org. Sign up to 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*. Our website is www.iiofpitt.org.

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