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Correspondence From Various Organizations re: the Northern Ireland Peace Process:
[Children's Friendship Project for Northern Ireland] [loose]

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Larry

7/13

Here is a copy of
the information on
the Northern Ireland
group of young people
that want to meet the
President.

You can speak
directly to Sharon Harroun
or call me. Answer 5-13

SHARON HARROUN



Children's Friendship Project for Northern Ireland
Director

Center for Cooperation and Conflict Management
Development

12403 Macao Court • Herndon, Virginia 20171
Tel: 703-860-9417 • Fax: 703-860-9417 or 703-925-4004

THE CHALLENGE

- Would you and your family be interested in taking part in this cross-community programme?
- Are you over 15 and under 18 years of age?
- Can you guarantee your personal commitment to the aim of the project?
- Can you and your family afford the costs involved?
- Would you maintain friendship with a teenager of a different religion?
- Would you be willing to spend a six-week residential in America with a teenager of a different religion?
- Can you guarantee that you will participate in all the activities arranged in connection with this project?



Keep in mind our motto "*Promoting Understanding Through Interaction.*" If you feel that you and your family can play a role in promoting reconciliation, peace and harmony in Northern Ireland, it's up to you to do something now!

If you can answer "Yes, without a doubt", to all of the above questions then please write to the coordinator for your area telling how you would help to bridge the differences in our community.

Please remember places are limited, so filing an application does not guarantee your participation. The earlier your application is received, the greater your chance of being able to participate.

ELIGIBILITY

Teenagers applying to participate must be over 15 and under 18 years of age, and must reside within the six counties that make up Northern Ireland.



All social and economic backgrounds are equally considered. Participants are selected according to their geographic proximity, interests, and hobbies. This aids friendship prior to, and after their U.S. experience.




Children's Friendship
Project for Northern Ireland, Inc.

CONTACTS IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Coordinator for County Antrim:

Marian Scullion

Telephone: 012666-55440

Coordinator for County Londonderry/Derry:

Fiona McFarlane

Telephone: 015047-41536

Coordinator for County Tyrone:

Deirdre Timoney

Telephone: 016622-44035

Coordinator for All Others:

Lilah Graham (Head Coordinator)

Telephone: 013653-24966

Northern Ireland Administrator:

Alice Mimnagh

Telephone: 013656-31851

For more information, visit our World Wide
Website at:

<http://www.cfpni.org>



Once strangers, now friends forever....


Children's Friendship
Project for Northern Ireland,
Inc.

"Promoting Understanding Through Interaction"

The Children's Friendship Project for Northern Ireland, Inc. (CFPNI) is an all-voluntary, cross-community programme. CFPNI seeks reconciliation, through interaction and friendship between Catholic and Protestant teenagers in Northern Ireland.

HOW THE PROGRAMME WORKS



Boys and girls are selected by CFPNI coordinators and paired with another teenager of a different religion. Each pair of teenagers and their families will be introduced and encouraged to establish and maintain friendships here in Northern Ireland. Participants **MUST** initiate friendship immediately, once notified of whom their partner in the programme will be. This friendship **MUST** be maintained, and is of vital importance for realising the full potential of the programme. Teens are required to participate in programme activities, to introduce their families to one another, and to bring their friends together. It is essential that all participants are fully committed to these aims.

In the summer, as many pairs of teenagers as possible will be placed with host families in the United States of America for a six week residential period. These American families are extensively screened by our network of coordinators, clergy and social services in the U.S.A. The aim of this six-week residential is to promote *friendship and understanding through interaction*. This is aided and reinforced by the teenagers staying in a country where many differing cultures and religions live together in peace.

From experience, it has been found that the young people who participate in our programme, almost always learn that they have many more similarities in their lives, which bring them together, than the few minor differences, which too often keep them apart here. Programme activities are conducted in Northern Ireland both before and after the summer residential.

HOST FAMILIES

Host families come from all areas of the U.S.A. and they vary economically, religiously and culturally. Host family eligibility is based upon the following three criteria:

- A political and religiously neutral home.
- A safe home with daylong adult supervision.
- A bedroom for the teens to share.



Host families are requested to treat the teenagers as family members, not as tourists who need to be constantly entertained. Teenagers will take part in normal family activities within insurance guidelines.

It is not a requirement for host families to have children of their own, although most do. Single individuals who meet the criteria set out above may also host.



SELECTION PROCEDURES

The first step in the application process is an initial letter submitted by each teenager to a project coordinator. This letter should outline each teenager's individual interest in participating in a cross-community programme.



On receipt of an appropriate initial letter, each teenager will be sent an application form. Once the form has been returned, the local coordinator will arrange a visit with each applicant and his or her family. Commitment to cross-community activity and feasibility of participation will be assessed during this informal visit.

The teens and their families **MUST** agree at this stage to participate in all activities arranged by the Children's Friendship Project before and after going to the U.S.A.

COST

The Children's Friendship Project is a charitable organisation. American hosts and some organisations provide money to cover the air fare and other visit costs, for the teen participants. The host families generally raise this money through usual charitable means. Some families use personal savings.

Each teenager selected to participate in the programme, and ultimately the American residential, is required to make a personal/family contribution of £150. This contribution goes towards medical insurance, administration, follow up activities etc., and the continuation of the programme.

Each teenager must raise a further £100 for the Children's Friendship Project. This money can be raised by selling 100 tickets for the Project's raffle, which is held in June of each year. The money can also be raised by any other legal means like car boot sales, car washes, cake sales, sponsored walks, etc. The money raised aids the international work of the project.



Each teenager will require spending money for the six week American residential. Participants are only allowed to take a maximum of £200, exchanged for dollars. This rule must be strictly adhered to to give monetary equality to all participants. This money is only "pocket money" with which to purchase gifts for family members, or any individual extras (e.g., sweets, soft drinks), not for normal living expenses, which are covered by the American hosts.



**Children's Friendship
Project for Northern Ireland, Inc.**
"Promoting Understanding Through Interaction"

May 7, 1998

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Carmen Suro-Bredie
5509 Park Street
Chevy Chase, MD 20815

Dear Carmen,

Thank you for offering to help arrange a brief visit with President Clinton for our Children's Friendship Project teenagers. As promised a brief overview, President Clinton's letter and a few of PR pieces. The Northern Ireland "Reunion" piece included in the packet is an annual event and is held every October in Dungannon, NI.

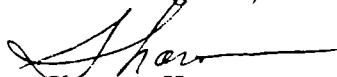
What is not included is information on the leadership and diversity summer program in Washington for our teens, and details on the numerous follow-up programs and events in Northern Ireland after they return home. I copied the fax sent to me by one Coordinator outlining some of the activities for the teens in County Fermanagh, N.I. I know each of our coordinators have a very strong pre and post(to the US) teen program. All our CFPNI teens are participating in a cross-community business venture through the education board called the Young Enterprise. Thus there is a mix of social, leadership & team building activities and educational experiences for the youth after their six weeks in the United States. Every event is always a cross-community activity.

Very briefly, I have a four part program planned for our 46 teens hosted by Washington DC families. I've included: a six hour team building program, a two day diversity seminar and group community service experience, and a healing and forgiveness encounter focusing on the US-Vietnam experience at the Vietnam Memorial. This program will be led by Tom Dunne, former Vietnam Vet & US Navy Seal, an expert in conflict management, and who recently headed the Peace Tree Project in Vietnam. He will be teamed with former US Consul General to Belfast, Bob Meyers who was assigned to Vietnam by the State Dept. during the war.

Our pairs of Protestant and Catholic teenagers will be here July 3 (evening) through August 13.

I look forward to talking to you soon.

Warm regards,


Sharon Harroun
Director, CFPNI
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Herndon, VA 20171
703-860-9417

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CFPNI is an all-volunteer, 501(c)(3), not-for-profit corporation (EIN 58-1723640)

CHILDREN'S FRIENDSHIP PROJECT FOR NORTHERN IRELAND, INC.

"Promoting Understanding Through Interaction"

Sharon Harroun – 703/860-9417

PROJECT SUMMARY

The Children's Friendship Project for Northern Ireland, Inc. (CFPNI) was established in 1987 as a peace and friendship building program that focuses on preventing violence by building understanding and promoting interaction among people in the Catholic and Protestant cultures in that country. In a simple effort to break the cycle of fear and mistrust among their people, CFPNI selects and pairs Protestant and Catholic teens from Northern Ireland to spend six weeks during the summer in American homes, where they can become friends in a neutral environment and focus on their commonalities, rather than their differences.

The teenagers who participate in the CFPNI program are 15-18 years of age and come from all six counties of Northern Ireland and all socioeconomic backgrounds. The Northern Ireland Coordinators interview and screen all applicants and select them based on personal references and written essays. The selected participants are paired according to their geographic proximity, so they may continue their friendships after they return from their visit in the United States. They and their families agree to participate in pre- and post-cross-cultural activities.

The program's focus on preparing a new generation of leaders to find cross-cultural solutions for living harmoniously is crucial for a generation that has only known 17 months of relative peace. To reach such goals, CFPNI must increase the number of teenagers that it brings to the U.S. each summer. Such an effort requires finding more host families to open their homes and hearts to these young people and, at the same time, finding additional funding to cover the cost of the teens' airfare. CFPNI is an all-volunteer, non-profit 501(c)(3) organization.

PROVEN RESULTS

As a direct result of the CFPNI program, people in Northern Ireland have held town meetings to attempt to bridge the differences. Attitudes of teenagers have changed. Many teens have become such good friends that they meet regularly in a neutral part of their town and include their mix of Catholic and Protestant friends in their social gatherings. Their parents have also become friends. The teens who visited in the U.S. last year have even made a contribution to CFPNI that we will apply toward the airfare for next summer's teens. They also care, and feel that the experience of six weeks in the U.S. should be given to all Northern Ireland teenagers to create a peace-seeking generation.

HOW YOU CAN PARTICIPATE

There are at least three different ways in which you can participate in CFPNI. First, if you are able to provide a single bedroom for a pair of teens from Northern Ireland to share for six weeks in a safe neutral home and can provide daylong adult supervision we need you as host families. Second, you can will help us overcome our biggest limiting factor by making a financial contribution to help pay for the transportation costs of the teens for their six weeks here. And third, you can let other potential participants know about this all-volunteer peace effort. Please consider the difference that you can make.

For more information about CFPNI, visit our Website at: <http://www.cfpni.org>

The authors would like to thank the anonymous referees for their helpful and constructive comments. All remaining errors are the responsibility of the authors.

Let us now assume that $\liminf_{n \rightarrow \infty} \frac{1}{n} \log \frac{1}{\mathbb{P}_n(\mathcal{A}_n)} > 0$. Then, by the subadditivity of $\mathbb{P}_n(\mathcal{A}_n)$ for all n , it follows that $\mathbb{P}_n(\mathcal{A}_n) \leq c^n$ for some $c < 1$. Therefore, $\mathbb{P}_n(\mathcal{A}_n)$ decays exponentially fast along with n .

[illegible]

Most of these young leaders, however, were not at the 1994 National Conference that opened the meeting.

We are happy to have a discussion of the book by Prof. F. J. Beckwith in the April

Week-end 15-16-17 • May, Convikas with or without Belono Gleditsia in flower.

Civic Reception, Townhall Luncheon: Both May 98 for all participating teenagers. 28

28th June pre-departure meeting – all 110 officers as from 8 held to be held to 100 minutes
 06/11/05

25th September family night at entertainment – Fort Lodge Hotel Gamskullen for all 1st steps
10.00

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And finally, our third job: it probably isn't a surprise that we know

All the best roads is to back and forth

1968

The above are a list of pre & post activities for CFPNI techs. This is only one Coordinators activities. We have 5 Coordinators and 10 assistant coordinators throughout Northern Ireland.

British and Irish Embassies

*Welcome Children's Friendship
Project Teens and Host Families*



Washington DC — CFPNI teens present the Belleek Peace Plates to Lady Kerr, wife of the British Ambassador to US, and Irish Ambassador Dermot Gallagher



CFPNI youth and host families at the
British Embassy Reception



Ambassador Gallagher with CFPNI youth
and Coordinator Lilah Graham

Irish friends carry message of hope

By AMY SIEGEL
News Chronicle

THOUSAND OAKS — In their native Northern Ireland, Michelle Breen and Clodagh McKenna keep their three-year friendship close to home because their lives could depend on it.

However, this summer in a safer land, in Thousand Oaks, the 17-year-old girls' closeness has been cause for celebration, and reflection.

Michelle is a Protestant. Clodagh is a Catholic.

At home, associating with someone of the other religion is taboo. Threats, even death follow.

In Northern Ireland, where Catholic-Protestant violence is a way of life, the girls have experienced bombings, terrorism, snipings, shootings and rioting that has killed several thousand people during the years of civil and religious unrest that flared in 1969.

The girls, born in 1974, have never lived in peace.

The two will return home Friday after spending the past five weeks at the home of Cindy Flannery in the Westlake Village portion of Thousand Oaks. The girls' visit was sponsored by the Children's Friendship Project for Northern Ireland, a non-profit group that pairs Protestant and Catholic teens between 14 and 17 with host American families.

They bring with them haunt-



Clodagh McKenna, 17, left, of County Tyrone, Northern Ireland, and Michelle Breen, 17, of County Fermanagh, Northern Ireland, express their closeness Monday at their host parent's

ing memories.

Michelle's uncle, a policeman, was killed by terrorists associated with the Irish Republican Army a few years ago while he was crossing the border between Northern Ireland

and the Republic of Ireland.

Michelle lives in a predominantly Catholic rural area where she is a minority, but she has friends of both religions.

"I see who I want. I don't care about anyone else," she said.

home in Thousand Oaks. McKenna, who is Catholic, and Breen, who is Protestant, are part of a program to bring Northern Irish Catholics and Protestants together.

Violence first touched Michelle when she was a baby. The family was kidnapped by four men who commandeered their car from the family garage. The

See GIRLS, Page A-

DAVID HARTUNG/News Chronicle

Girls

From Page A-1

men left Michelle and her mother on an isolated hill but forced Michelle's father to drive his car — with the terrorists' bomb in it — to a police barracks seven miles away, Michelle said.

When her father arrived, he parked the car and ran, screaming for everyone who would listen to "get out," Michelle said. Many people fled the building and moments later, the car exploded. No one was hurt.

Where Michelle now lives, a rural area about 30 miles from Clodagh, explosions at a police station behind her family farm rock her home and often break windows, she said.

Clodagh lives in a segregated rural area populated by Catholics like herself. She has no Protestant friends but for Michelle, although Clodagh said her friends are more liberal and accepting of Protestants. She lives near an English Army base that is constantly bombed. Soldiers comb the area near her home in a daily search on bombs, Clodagh said.

Both girls said they talk on the phone weekly at home and see each other during holidays.

Through the Children's Friendship Project and each other, the girls said they have learned that people are people, and religion should not be a basis of discrimination. They spread the message to friends and relatives but cannot publicly speak of the lessons they've learned for fear of harm or threats.

"We're just trying to give them hope," Flannery said.

The girls and their unique friendship inspired Thousand Oaks resident Catherine Beven,

43, a Northern Ireland native who left for the United States 13 years ago and moved to Thousand Oaks three years ago. Beven's mother, two sisters and 17 nieces and nephews still live in Northern Ireland.

Beven, who is Catholic and once was threatened with death for going to a dance with a Protestant boy, hosted a barbecue for the girls on Sunday night. With tears in her eyes Monday at City Hall, where the girls went for a visit, Beven said the girls' unique tolerance of others is a sign of hope for future peace in their embattled homeland.

Said Beven, "One human being at a time can change things."

The girls first met three years ago on a project-sponsored summer trip to Baltimore, Md. The program allows Northern Ireland youths of different religions, who remain friends for three years after the first visit, to come a second time to the United States, said Flannery, the group's coordinator for California.

The Children's Friendship Project, while not emphasizing politics, urges teens to take home a message of peace and learn that the religious "enemy" is just another teen-ager like themselves. The host families teach tolerance and show that a life free from segregation, daily violence and hatred is possible.

While staying here, the girls have visited Universal Studios, Magic Mountain, Beverly Hills, Rosarita Beach in Mexico, Zuma Beach and a host of Southern California tourist spots. On Monday, they received a pin of the city from Mayor Frank Schillo.

A Disneyland trip is planned today.

COGS

ROTARY INTERNATIONAL IN GREAT BRITAIN & IRELAND DISTRICT 1160 MAGAZINE

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Show Rotary Cares



Children's Friendship Project for Northern Ireland (CFPNI)

(Promoting Understanding Through Interaction)

"For Evil To Succeed It Is Only Necessary For Good People To Do Nothing"

This major USA "Peace Project" has similar objectives and methods as the Rotary Ireland district 1160 TABU (Towards A Better Understanding) Project as both take Students of different religious background from Ireland to the USA to live in family homes and learn and practice mutual respect and understanding.

District Governor Joe Flood and his wife Marie attended as special guests on the 10th Annual Family Reunion of the Children's Friendship Project in Dungannon on Saturday the 25 October 1997. Past President Robin Smyth of Coleraine Rotary Club and Brian Byers (Chairmen Rotary "TABU") were also present.

The new President of CFPNI Warren Muir and its Board Member and fellow Rotarian Mrs. Sharon Harroun warmly greeted D G. Joe, Marie and the local rotarians as they enjoyed lunch and musical program produced by the over 1000 teenagers who participated in the Friendship Program last summer across the U.S.A.

The talented students performed a variety of acts, including line dancing, choral numbers and musical

solos by versatile musicians and vocalists. Over 400 young people, their families, American host parents and invited guests attended this far sighted cross community event.

Begun in 1987 by a group of American and Northern Ireland citizens who were interested in building peace and understanding between Catholic and Protestant communities, CFPNI screens and pairs teenagers from two cultures, from the same area of Northern Ireland for a six week stay with a family in the United States. They and their families meet prior to coming to the States and participate in a number of meetings so that they can begin to know each other before embarking on their joint trip abroad. Over the course of the summer there young adults strive to cultivate understanding of their differences and develop a friendship which carried over to their lives back home. Several follow-up activities throughout the year are arranged by each Regional CFPNI co-ordinator in order to maintain and enrich there burgeoning friendships.

At this year's reunion, the Coleraine Rotary Clubs Past President Robin Smyth presented the CFPNI with a generous cheque for £1,000 for transport costs and follow-up activities in Northern Ireland "in the fall

and winter" for the teenagers. The Coleraine Rotary Club is a Twin Club with Sharon Harroun's Rotary Club of Virginia, and together they funded 4 students from the Coleraine area last summer. In addition, there is a total of 9 Rotary Clubs in Northern Virginia District 7610 who participate in CFPNI by providing transportation, costs, hosting activities, as well as being Host Families.

Lillian O'Connell who is a professional photographer from the US and with family connection from the South West of Ireland accompanied Sharon Harroun during their 10 day visit to Northern Ireland and they met several community groups and received a presentation from the Director of the proposed Ulster University Springvale Campus. "A new Campus For the New Millennium". Lillian also produced the above details on the excellent work being done by CFPNI.

If any Rotarians wish to learn more about CFPNI and/or TABU please do not hesitate to contact Brian Byers of the Rotary Club of Belfast.

Senator Bob Dole and 1995 delegation of Teens
from Children's Friendship Project for Northern Ireland



To The Children's Friendship Project
for Northern Ireland.

All The Best,

Ed Kennedy



Congressman Kennedy met with Northern Irish Teens
staying with MD and VA host families



The Cranberries (Irish Band) made time to meet with CFPNI teens before their August 9 performance at the NISSAN PAVILION

Community service earns its own rewards, and more

By **BARA MILON**
The Connection

The Children's Friendship Project for Northern Ireland received \$1,400 to sponsor two Irish teens, one Catholic and one Protestant, to meet together in McLean.

Rotary sponsored picnic at
St Aiden's Episcopal Church
in Mount Vernon



ANDREW FAREWELL/The Connection

FRIENDSHIP: Sharon Harroun from Children's Friendship Project for Northern Ireland receives a check from Rotarian Dale Mullane.

The Observer

August 22, 1997

Rotary Clubs Bring Irish Youth to U.S.

Rotary Clubs of Herndon, Virginia, and Coleraine, Northern Ireland formed a Partnership for Friendship and Peace to finance four teenagers who participated in the annual exchange of the Children's Friendship Project for Northern Ireland.

The six-week program pairs a Protestant and a Catholic teenager and brings them to live together with an American host family to promote understanding and friendship between the two cultures.

After the American experience, nu-

merous follow-up activities are organized in Northern Ireland to maintain friendships between the young people and their families.

Two Herndon Rotarians, Sharon Harroun and Joel Compton and their families, each hosted a pair of teenagers, who came from Lisbellaw, Enniskillen, Coleraine and Dungiven, Northern Ireland.



Children's Friendship Project 1996 Reunion



Despite a terrorist bombing October 7, 400 Catholics and Protestants attended the October 12 CFPNI Annual Reunion Party in Dungannon, Northern Ireland.



CFPNI teenagers provided entertainment.



A salute to the American host families.



Presentation of a \$35,000 fundraising check. 1996 CFPNI teens sold raffle tickets to help pay for 1997 CFPNI teen's airmiles to America.



CFPNI Board of Directors and Honored Guests:
Standing – John Chadsey, Alice Minnagh, George DeMass, Fiona McFarlane, Jack Barrett, Roxanne Landis, Marian Scullion, Warren Muir, Sharon Harroun; *Seated* – Kathleen Stephens (US Consul General), Lilah Graham, Peggy Barrett, Vincent Curry (Chairman, Dungannon Council), Gay Berkery (Rotary Governor – Ireland)

METRO



Lisa Campbell, 17, right, a Protestant girl from County Fermanagh, dances with Lorraine Corrigan, 16, who is Catholic, at a farewell party for the Northern Irish teenagers.

BY CAROL GUZDY—THE WASHINGTON POST

Young Northern Irish Eyes Are Smilin'

By Debbi Wilgoren
Washington Post Staff Writer

In the basement of the Springfield town house where Aileen O'Kane and Hester McIvor lived this summer, twin beds form a tight L.

The 17-year-olds from Northern Ireland slept head to foot, sharing compact discs and a television tuned to the American talk shows that both find hysterically funny. It was the closely knit life of two sisters, with no room for the religious and political conflagrations that burn through their communities on the other side of the Atlantic.

Only eight miles separate the girls' homes outside the Northern Ireland town of Dungannon. They frequent the same disco, and Aileen plays violin in the orchestra at Hester's school. But because Aileen is Catholic and Hester is Protestant, their lives until this summer were eerily distinct.

The religious groups have been at odds for centuries, but the modern-day struggle intensified 75 years ago, when the predominantly Catholic Republic of Ireland was declared independent from Great Britain. That left Northern Ireland, which today is about 60 percent Protestant, under control of the Union Jack.

Both Aileen and Hester know people who have been killed in the terrorist bombings that have surged since 1969. A fragile peace has resulted from a year-old cease-fire between the Catholic Irish Republican Army, which seeks to unify Northern Ireland with the republic, and Protestant militias. But clear divisions remain, fueled by generations of hate.

Aileen understands, for example, that wearing her Catholic school uniform to the Protestant neighborhood where her violin teacher lives could expose her to taunts, beatings or worse. Hester

See IRISH, B5, Col 1

Northern Ireland Teens Find Friendship

IRISH, From B1

knows better than to relate her experiences this summer to a Protestant family back home that has lost two sons to the violence.

Even the nascent "cross-community" student groups in which both girls have participated fall short of true coexistence. "You go with 10 or 20 people from your own school," Aileen explained, "and you kind of stick to who you know."

The opposite is true in the Children's Friendship Project for Northern Ireland, an eight-year-old program that brought 80 teenagers, including Aileen and Hester, to live in the United States this summer. The youngsters are scheduled to leave for home today.

It is the only one of 26 U.S. programs for Northern Irish youngsters that places Catholics and Protestants together, said founder Peggy Barrett, a Catholic Irish immigrant who lives in Manheim, Pa.

The premise is simple. Send the teenagers to live as roommates with an American family for a summer of outings and activities, introduce them and their parents to

each other in Northern Ireland before and after the trip, and build friendships to erase the mistrust created by years of civil war.

More than half of the teenagers in this summer's group stayed with families in Virginia and Maryland. Back home, nearly 500 are on a waiting list for next year. Hosts have been recruited largely through churches, although volunteers of any background are welcome.

"They have fun. They laugh. They giggle," said Sharon Harroun, the project's fund-raising chairwoman and a host parent since 1991. "Once you have kids who are bonded like this, there is no going back."

This summer and last, Harroun opened her home in Herndon to Lisa Campbell, 17, and Catriona Shannon, 16. The girls spent the intervening year building bridges between their friends and families in County Fermanagh. Catriona, who is Catholic, chats on the school bus with Protestant girls who attend Lisa's school. The girls go out together, and their mothers have grown close.

When Harroun visited Northern

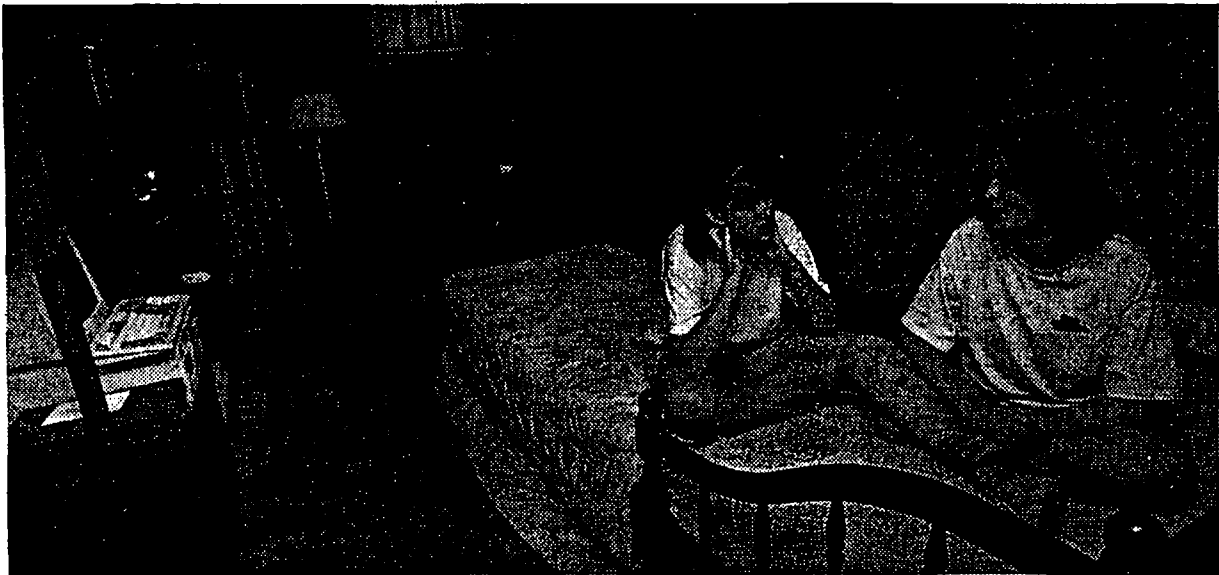
Ireland last fall, both families went out for dinner. It was the Campbells' first trip to a restaurant in the Shannons' Catholic village.

"I was not expecting a long evening, I was expecting a cordial evening," said Harroun, who became involved in the project through Dranesville United Methodist Church. The families lingered for four hours, laughing and comparing notes.

Spending last summer with Lisa, Catriona was surprised to learn that, although Protestants don't revere the Virgin Mary the way Catholics do, the religions share some practices, such as saying the Lord's Prayer. And they have discovered other things in common.

The girls figured out that they rode the same school bus to primary school but never met, because Protestants sat in back and Catholics clustered up front.

Lisa's friend lost an arm several years ago when the bus she was riding was bombed by the IRA. Catriona's buddy was aboard the same bus and was so scared that she stayed home from school for weeks.



BY CAROL GUZY—THE WASHINGTON POST

Aileen O'Kane, left, and Hester McIvor relax in the basement room in Springfield that they called home this summer.

"As the summer goes on, you just realize," Catriona said, pausing as Lisa jumped in to finish her sentence. "The same," Lisa said. "Everybody's the same."

The girls now laugh at the negative stereotypes each formed about the other's religion as they were growing up. But they refused to repeat the slurs, for fear of perpetuating them. They envision a future in which their children will grow up together, perhaps attending the in-

tegrated school that opened two years ago.

At a farewell party for the Northern Virginia group at a Herndon restaurant Tuesday night, their goal seemed easily achievable. Laughing teenagers huddled around the pool table and on the dance floor, their respective religions invisible.

Side by side, they learned country line dances, whirled to a jig and sang "American Pie." Two roommates wore matching earrings

they'd bought that day. A host mother confided that a Catholic boy had accepted a Protestant girl's invitation to stay with her family.

Tomorrow night, the group plans to reunite at an integrated nightclub in Enniskillen. A week later, they'll go to a club that is reputed to be hostile to Catholics.

The youngsters are confident that there won't be any problems, because they will be together.

THE

FAIRFAX

Journal

The daily newspaper of Fairfax County, Virginia

Monday, August 4, 1997

Irish teens help build peace

Religions find a common ground

By HALLIE PICKHARDT
Journal staff writer

Just last week, before the Irish Republican Army agreed to a cease-fire, there was rioting in Ursula McCloskey's Catholic neighborhood in Dungiven, Northern Ireland.

But Ursula luckily wasn't there.

For the past three weeks, the 16-year-old has been living in Reston and sharing a room with Lynn O'Rourke, 17, a Protestant from Coteraine, Northern Ireland.

Ursula and Lynn are part of a group of 48 Protestant and Catholic teens from Northern Ireland who have come to Virginia as part of a peace-building effort called the Children's Friendship Project for Northern Ireland, established in 1987.

"We have come to understand that we're mostly the same," Ursula said.

Since the first cease-fire agreement ended in February 1996, Northern Ireland has been embroiled in a battle between pro-British Protestants who make up about two-thirds of the nation and pro-Irish Catholics who make up the other third.

The friendship project matches Catholic and Protestant teen-agers from nearby neighborhoods in Northern Ireland and brings them to the United States, away from the fighting, to live in the same household for six weeks. In light of the newest cease-fire, however, program directors hope the teen-agers will return to a more peaceful Northern Ireland.

"This generation really needs to be able to communicate and relate to move the nation forward," Sharon Harroun, a program director and



Brig Caba/Journal

From left, Ursula McCloskey, Victoria Monaghan, Emma Follis and Lynn O'Rourke are four of the 48 teen-agers visiting from Northern Ireland as part of a peace-building effort.

host, said. "This program provides the interaction that's rarely possible in Northern Ireland. It's more the separateness and the lack of understanding that create the tension."

During their stay in Virginia, all 52 teen-agers participate in group activities so they can get to know one another. After a few pool parties and picnics, Harroun said, it's impossible to tell who is Catholic and who is Protestant because everyone hangs out together.

Although religion and politics aren't discussed on the trip, unless the teen-agers bring it up themselves, many have taken each other to their churches for Sunday services.

"We had to tell each other what to do," Vicki Monaghan, 16, a Catholic from Enniskillen, Northern Ireland, said.

Her roommate, Emma Follis, 16, a Protestant from Lisbellaw, Northern Ireland, has lived in an all-Protestant neighborhood her entire life. She joined the project because she wanted to meet other people her age who are Catholic and learn more about their culture.

"Our schools are Protestant or Catholic so it's kind of hard for us to mix," she said. "I have some friends, and their parents won't even let them mix with Catholics."

Before Emma could be accepted in to the program, however, she and her parents had to agree that this trip is just the start of her friendship with Vicki.

When they return to Ireland the program stipulates the two girls must spend time together, but Emma and Vicki plan to take that rule a step farther by hanging out with each other's friends as well.

"It's a good chance to understand other religions and get to mix," Vicki said. "I don't think our parents go that chance when they were younger."



Children's Friendship Project for Northern Ireland, Inc.

Promoting Understanding Through Interaction



*Strangers yesterday...friends today.
Not for an hour or a day, but hopefully forever.*

*T*he Children's Friendship Project for Northern Ireland, Inc. (CFPNI) is a peace and friendship building program that fosters understanding and promotes interaction between the Catholic and Protestant teenagers of Northern Ireland. In an effort to break the cycle of fear and mistrust, teens who show leadership potential, are selected and paired in cross-cultural teams. These youth spend six weeks during the summer together in American homes. In this neutral environment they become friends and focus on what they have in common, rather than their differences. To help build and sustain these friendships, CFPNI sponsors numerous gatherings in Northern Ireland, both before and after the summer experience. These scheduled events also help broaden cross-cultural contacts with other teens in the program, family members, and friends. **CFPNI is an all volunteer, non-profit 501(c)(3) organization.**

For More Information Call: **Sharon Harroun 1-703-860-9417 or 1-800-786-8788**
Fax: **1-703-438-8204**

<http://www.cfpni.org/>

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

October 21, 1996

Dear Mrs. Barrett:

I would like to express my appreciation for the efforts that the Children's Friendship Project for Northern Ireland has made to further peace and understanding in Northern Ireland. By furthering friendships between Protestant and Catholic teens from communities throughout Northern Ireland, CFPNI is helping to address one of the most crucial aspects of the division between their communities. As you well know, healing these divisions is essential for a lasting solution to the conflict in Northern Ireland.

By agreeing to step across community divides, the young men and women who participate in CFPNI's exchange program demonstrate that the mistrust that separates their two communities can be overcome. I am proud of the American host families who act as catalysts in developing these friendships. I commend both the Northern Irish participants and their American hosts for their dedication to peace.

Like you, I believe that we can overcome the recent setbacks in the Northern Ireland peace process and move toward the lasting peace the people of Northern Ireland so clearly desire. My Administration remains committed to supporting all who are committed to this goal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Bill Clinton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

Mrs. Peggy Barrett
National President
Children's Friendship Project for Northern Ireland, Inc.
1538 N. Penryn Road
Manheim, Pennsylvania 17545