

*Focusing on***NORTHERN IRELAND****Rowandale Integrated Primary School**

When Rowandale Integrated Primary School in County Down was not able to get government funding for an additional teacher, The Irish American Partnership and the Integrated Education Fund stepped in to provide a grant to offset the teacher's salary, relieving them from the financial burden until they could appeal for government funding.

read more on page 2

174 Trust Brings Communities Together in Belfast

Since it was founded in 1983, the 174 Trust has been working with locals to identify and remedy local problems in North Belfast. It has made tremendous progress by offering innovative programming and services to those who need them most.

read more on page 3

Pushkin Trust Brings Art to Schools

The Pushkin Trust brings creative writing, poetry, arts, music, and dance to schools, protecting Irish culture and enhancing the quality of arts education. They also host summer camps and cross-community events where multiple classes explore nature and the arts together.

read more on page 3

Shared Histories, Shared Future: Building Communities NI

Building Communities Northern Ireland is working to bring low-income youth of both communities together to learn about the famine and combat hunger today. The students have an opportunity to meet with key policymakers at Stormont about hunger relief at home and abroad and finish the program by completing a joint project that addresses hunger today.

read more on page 4



A student at Rowandale Integrated Primary School in Co. Down, a Partnership direct grant recipient

Helping Low-Income Students Achieve in Belfast

Last year, thanks to your generous support, the Partnership was able to send \$15,000 to St. Kieran's and Elmgrove Primary Schools in Belfast. St. Kieran's and Elmgrove both had over 70% of students receiving free school meals and many students with special educational needs. Thus, the money could not have been more appreciated. St. Kieran's was able to fully fund their accelerated reading program and their bug club, an early intervention reading program, while Elmgrove used the grant to purchase iPads for their classrooms and to increase the school counselor's hours, as many students benefit from counseling services.

This year, we hope to impact the lives of the cumulative 1,530 students who attend Holy Cross Boys' Primary School, Glenwood Primary School, and Malone Integrated School. The teachers and principals at these three schools do amazing work helping each student meet their potential, even in the face of budget cuts and limited resources. The teachers go out of their way to ensure that students have a robust range of opportunities such as coding club, career week, and business studies. However, many students are still falling behind in key competencies such as literacy, numeracy, and science, which the schools do not always have the funds to address. Additional funding would go a long way in helping all 1,530 students succeed.

Please consider a donation in support of the Partnership's work in Ireland, North and South. Donors may select a specific school, village, town, or county as a recipient of their gift.

Exploring Shared Histories Through the Famine

The Partnership believes that an enduring peace will only take hold in Northern Ireland with the help of sustained cross-community efforts. Thus, over the past 28 years, the Partnership has invested heavily in community development organizations working towards peace and reconciliation in the North. One of the beneficiaries this year was Building Communities, which received a \$5,000 grant towards youth cross-community programming.

Building Communities has endeavored to take on a bold new project surrounding the narrative of the Famine. The Famine has been traditionally viewed as an exclusively Catholic tragedy and thus the study of it has become sectarian in nature. Building Communities seeks to challenge this one-sided ownership of the narrative and tell a new story about both the Catholic and Protestant victims of the Famine in Northern Ireland.

Building Communities brings groups of Protestant and Catholic young people together to explore the history of the Famine and learn about hunger today. Through interactive seminars, they learn research and presentation skills. Later, they visit key historical sites and meet with government officials to discuss policies seeking to alleviate modern hunger. The students then team up to complete a project addressing hunger today, working together across sectarian divides to address a looming problem both at home and abroad.



Partnership Grant Funds Extra Teacher at Rowandale Integrated Primary School

Rowandale Integrated Primary School in Moira, County Down first opened its door to students in 2007. Since then, it has grown exponentially, with enrollment increasing from 0 to 300 students in less than a decade. As the only integrated school in the area, Rowandale was frequently oversubscribed, forcing parents to place their students into controlled or maintained schools despite their preference for integrated education.

In 2014, parent demand was so great that Rowandale appealed to the Board of Education for an additional Year 1 class, which would increase Year 1 intake to 57 students. This proposal was approved by the Minister for Education for the 2015 school year, but the school was not granted additional funding to staff and outfit the additional class.

The Irish American Partnership, in conjunction with the Integrated Education Fund, was able to provide a grant towards the additional teacher's salary, allowing them to accommodate this substantial boost in enrollment and supporting parental school choice in Northern Ireland. As the principal of Rowandale said:

“We have had to furnish a class and provide all the necessary resources for teaching this year out of our own budget so the support for our teaching costs from the Irish American Partnership and the Integrated Education Fund has proved vital at this stage of the development of the school.”

**-Frances Hughes
Principal
Rowandale Integrated Primary School**

Above: a teacher at Rowandale Integrated Primary School helps a student with a numeracy exercise

Left: Rowandale students showcase the new friendship bench, where pupils can sit and meet new friends when they feel left out



Building Cross-Community Relationships with 174 Trust

Cross-Community organizations such as the 174 Trust in Belfast do tremendous work in bringing people of different backgrounds together to work towards common goals. 174 Trust is a non-denominational Christian social justice organization working within Belfast to promote peace and reconciliation. It manages a preschool, provides after school care for children, runs a youth group for people with disabilities, and offers various activities that bring together youth of different backgrounds. The Partnership was pleased to give 174 Trust a grant of \$5,000 towards their cross-community youth work.

Since most students in Northern Ireland attend a school consistent with their family's religion and live in segregated neighborhoods, they may never get the chance to meet someone of a different religion if not for cross-community programs like those provided by the 174 Trust.

Recently, the 174 Trust hosted a workshop for teens from the North and South to discuss Irish identity at the Duncairn Cultural Arts Centre in Belfast. Here, students of all different races, religions, and socioeconomic backgrounds teamed up to discuss what their Irish identity meant to them and how all of their experiences can weave together into one common identity. The teens took this lofty task in stride, making word clouds to encapsulate different elements of Irish identity and presenting them with the group. By the end of the day, they not only explored and challenged their own notions of Irish identity, but made some new friends as well!



Teens from the North and South of Ireland work in small groups to discuss Irish identity through a program put on by the 174 Trust in Belfast

Want to learn more about the Partnership's work for Ireland?

Visit our website at www.irishap.org



Like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/irishamericanpartnership

Follow us on Twitter @irshaporg



Knockloughrim Primary School in Northern Ireland does a dance workshop with Pushkin

Keeping Arts and Culture Alive: The Pushkin Trust

The Pushkin Trust is a County Tyrone based arts organization committed to keeping the arts alive in Irish schools. Pushkin staff works with primary and secondary schools in Northern Ireland to promote creative writing, art, music, and dance.

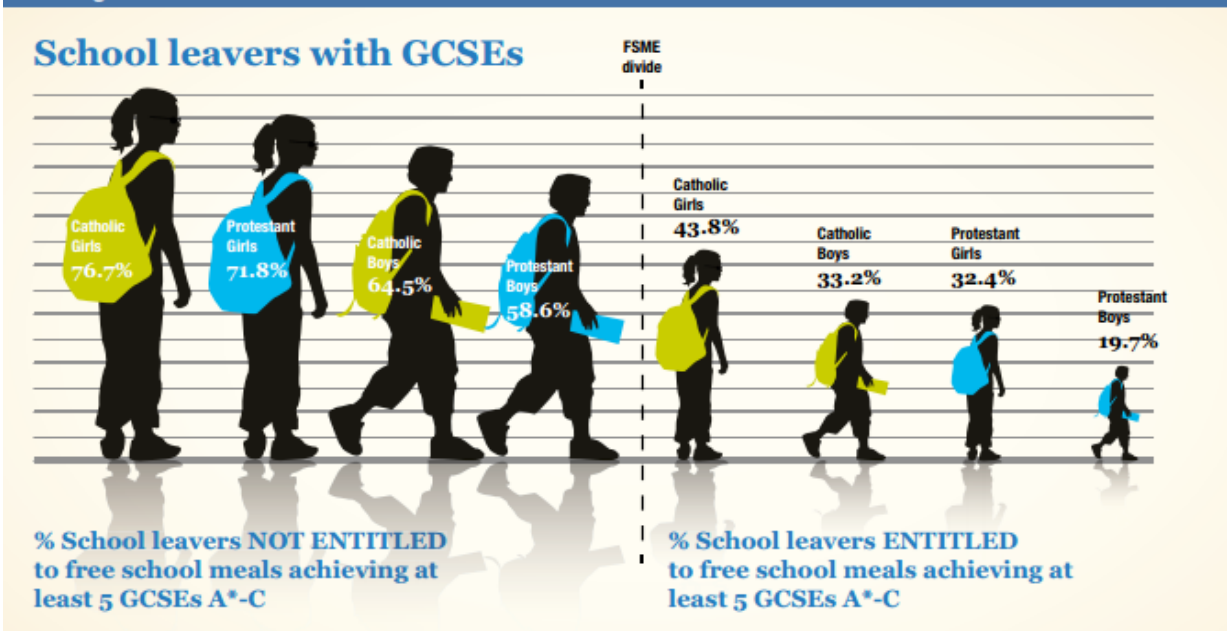
The Pushkin Trust uses a variety of methods to keep the creative arts thriving in schools. Pushkin sends facilitators out to the schools to lead the children in story-writing, poetry, dance, or art workshops, hosts a summer camp in Omagh, and brings students of different communities together to participate in workshops at the beautiful Baronscourt Estate in Co. Tyrone. The Partnership has been a long-time supporter of the Pushkin Trust, giving them \$15,000 a year for the last five years and instilling the love for art in thousands of schoolchildren.



Bringing History to Life at the Ulster American Folk Park

The Ulster American Folk Park is an open air museum located in Omagh, Co. Tyrone that the Partnership annually supports through a designated endowed fund.

At the Ulster American Folk Park, visitors are taken back in time to experience life in 18th and 19th century Ulster. The museum puts on educational programs for school groups that examine mass emigration from Ulster to America and give students a valuable glimpse into Northern Ireland's past.



Paul Nolan, "Northern Ireland Peace Monitoring Report," March 2014, page 97.

The Educational Attainment Gap in Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland today, socioeconomic status, religion, and gender too often determine future success. We are working to even the playing field by collaborating with schools to give all students the tools they need to live productive, meaningful lives. While not every student aspires to attend third level, we want to realize a future where poverty or religion do not impede students from attending university or pursuing certain careers.

As displayed on the school leavers graph, the pass rate for Graduate Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) exams greatly differs based on income, religion, and gender. These exams are designed to measure competency in key subjects like literacy, numeracy, science, and humanities. Even those not seeking to go on to third level education need these skills to thrive in day to day life.

The Irish American Partnership's Mission

The Irish American Partnership works to empower the next generation in Ireland, North & South through:

- ◆ Direct Grants to Primary Schools
- ◆ Support for Science Education
- ◆ Science Teacher Training
- ◆ RDS Primary Science Fairs
- ◆ University Access Scholarships
- ◆ Employment Learning Programs
- ◆ Grants to Community Development Initiatives

The Partnership also provides forums for visiting leaders from Ireland to speak in the U.S., connecting Irish-Americans with their heritage and promoting economic development through tourism, trade, and mutual exchange.



Students from Scoil Barra Naofain in Co Cork with their new library, funded with a Partnership grant