

Where are we going?



Corrymeela will donate to Northern Ireland's Carbon Footprint Tree Planting Scheme, to offset the environmental impact of this magazine.

4



8



9



Building on a cliff

Paul Hutchinson

The hard yellow hats
have hustled down the hill.
The troubling rubble has trundled off.
Heavy machinery halted.
The din of drilling has been silenced.
The dividing fence has Jericho-fallen.
The pencil drawings have become
brick steel plastic wood.

Grass seed sown.

The first group
warmly welcomed
and waved a cheery not cheesy goodbye.
The first
moment of silence
has gathered us in thanks.
The new cups
counted.
The en-suites
flushed.
The flip-chart
flipped.

The kitchen has been
used and cleaned,
scrubbed and dubbed
fit to serve
a welcome meal
again again again,

and one particular sunset
warmed a cynical
heart thankful.

Now what?

Now we continue to be...

a healing, loving interface:

across the generations;
across class,
across the classroom;
between the tribes -
in tantrum, talks, touch and torch-song;
between the faiths – in silence, strain, thanks and solace;
between the dead and living -lamenting in black and sharing in gold;
between the high-hedge and the painted kerb;
between the suits and the track-suits;
between the violent and the violent,
(which is all of us);

between the words
in conversations concerning
sex and God and war and shopping, doubt and daring,
rage and bird-song,

and in quietness gazing at Rathlin Island,

watching powerful underflows
pull an orange buoy

into a wash
where the Irish Sea
becomes the vast Atlantic.

The new Davey Village has been welcoming
visitors from June 2011 and will officially
open in Spring 2012. A big thank you to the
International Fund for Ireland for its generous
donation to the capital build



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EDITORIAL

WELCOME TO THE WINTER EDITION of Corrymeela; a substantially shorter magazine but hopefully no less enjoyable for you our reader. We have downsized this time round in order to invest in redeveloping our website; the new and improved version is scheduled to launch early December and we are very excited.

It will capture the vision of Corrymeela, bring you up-to-date news on events and programmes and offer a glimpse of the living, breathing community that is our members, friends and the invaluable volunteers - without whom much of our work would be impossible.

We hope the website will inspire everyone who logs on locally, nationally and internationally to find out more about our vision and work and get involved.

The magazine will be available online in January while longer versions of articles will be free to download immediately. I wish you a peaceful Christmas and blessings and courage for the new year.

Alyson McElroy

Senior Communications Manager
Editor



Department of Foreign Affairs
An Roinn Gnothai Eachtracha

Community Relations Council



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Who are we now?



*Inderjit Bhogal is the
Leader of the
Corrymeela Community*

What is it?
Who are we now?
What do you see?

A place of beauty and bread and breadth.

And a space
A safe space
A restful space, welcoming, hospitable;
A space of restlessness and wrestling
A space you keep returning to
A space that honours real honesty
Questioning
Questioning faith
Questioning church
Proclaiming new patterns of living and loving we see in Jesus; dialogue, engagement and encounter with all people.
Embracing difference and diversity
Healing divisions and hurts
Enabling reconciliation and relationships of mutual respect and trust;
Openness and inclusiveness;
Transformative,
Intense,
In tension,
Intentional Community in Ballycastle
Dispersed Community around the world

Connected
In Communion
In the Croi
Committed
Coherent
Centred in Christ
Reconciled
Invited to live on the boundary
At the cutting edge
At the circumference
Pushing back frontiers
Seeking clarity
What to communicate
How to communicate
What not to communicate.

Share the story.
Ambiguous
Paradoxical
Yet rich and hopeful
Gifted with diversity.

Held
Finding wholeness, in each other, and
In the all seeing
All knowing, healing, hurting, bleeding
Unknown.

What is it?

Where are we now?
Where are we going?
What do you see?
What do you not see?
What do you hear?
Listen with your whole body.

Be alive, live to the full;
Enjoy the fullness of life.

Corrymeela FC league champions



Corrymeela FC pictured after clinching the Premier Division with victory against Greenwell Star at Londonderry Park, Newtownards.

Having competed in the top tier of the Down Area Winter Football League for 10 seasons, Corrymeela Football Club finally made it lucky in season 11, 2010-11 when they clinched the Premier Division title. In the process, Geordie Carson's team became the first side to take the trophy outside the Ards Peninsula.

CORRYMEELA FOOTBALL CLUB WAS FORMED IN 1988 by Peter Shaw and Brian Kingston, who had been involved in voluntary work with The Corrymeela Community. The club offered a Belfast-based contact for young adults interested in the cross-community work of Corrymeela and proved a great way to promote the name and ethos of Corrymeela whilst having fun. Most recently the 2011-12 season opened with another trip to Germany to take part in the 90th Anniversary celebrations of TuS Gries.

The Club draws players from all parts of greater Belfast and beyond but has its roots in east Belfast. Training takes place twice a week at Ashfield High School's 3G facility and home matches are played at Blanchflower Playing Fields. Anyone interested in joining the Club can contact Gerald Morris on 07794969310.

The full article will be available on our new website launching on 12 Dec 2011 www.corrymeela.org

Gerald Morris

Gerald is a friend of Corrymeela

'Yeah Baby' raises £300 for Corrymeela

SHORT TERM VOLUNTEER
Tommy Boyle and his friends raised £300 towards the volunteer team at Corrymeela in this year's Belfast Marathon. Tommy said, "I re-joined Corrymeela's STV team in October 2010 and was reminded what an amazing and special place Corrymeela really is. I just hope this

contribution will in some way help to continue the great work and effort that all the amazing volunteers do, year in and year out. Without the volunteers, Corrymeela would struggle to exist and I feel very proud to be a part of this.

Tommy Boyle
Short Term Volunteer September 2011

Legacies

WE REMEMBER Vera Jane Annett, Ivan and Dorothy Wheeler Charitable Trust, Doris McClenaghan, Susan Montgomery, Margaret Ritchie, Kathleen Wigham and hope it brings comfort to their families to know their legacy gift will be put to good use.

Gifts in memoriam

WE REMEMBER Christina Faith Carter, Elizabeth Ekin, Nancy Larkin, Gertrude Hough, David Stevens, Elizabeth Sidwell, Helen Jacobsen, Joan Mary Goodchild, J Cowan and JM Hunter and their families.



Become our Friend: www.facebook.com/CorryCommunity



Somewhere or Nowhere

THERE WAS ONCE A MAN going Somewhere. He had been travelling there for some time, on his journey he carried with him his most treasured possessions: openness; compassion; hospitality and hope.

Along the way he shared the journey with many companions. All were strangers to him when they first met and yet quickly their random encounters created the possibilities of relationship that transcends encounter.

His determination to reach his destination meant he did not share his possessions with his roadside companions. One particular stranger was concerned about whether the man actually knew the directions to his destination. She was keen to help the sojourner and so pressed him about the names of other landmarks in the vicinity of Somewhere.

The man resisted her attempts to help him saying, "I'll know it when I get there! Somewhere is a place where openness; compassion; hospitality and hope belong." The young woman paused before replying, "But such as these belong everywhere?"

Somewhere is nowhere but now?

Matt Scrimgeour

Matt Scrimgeour is Programme Coordinator for the Corrymeela Community



Introducing...

JENNY JOHNSTON was awarded a one year internship through the Rank Foundation's Time to Shine youth programme and will be working with Corrymeela as part of the Communications Team until next summer. You can contact her at communication@corrymeela.org

She said, "I recently graduated with a Foundation Degree in Events Management and currently live in Belfast. I have always been involved in cross community projects so Corrymeela feels like a good fit for me. I am looking forward to my year here and am delighted to also be part of this year's Seed Group with Maeve McLaughlin and Ivan Cross.

I would especially like to thank The Rank Foundation for giving me the opportunity to work at Corrymeela.

Friends weekend

NEXT YEAR'S FRIENDS WEEKEND will take place on

**25-27 May
2012**

at the Ballycastle Centre

Commissioning of the new Leader of the Corrymeela Community

DR REV INDERJIT BHOGAL was officially commissioned as Leader of the Corrymeela Community. Over 200 guests and members came together to join the celebration in September

Left to right: David Mark, Doreen Lawrence, Kamala Lakhdar, Dr Rev Inderjit Bhogal, Gillian Kingston, David Ford and Shoshana Appleton.



Come and talk to us

VOLUNTEERING...when you hear that word, what springs to mind?

Let me give two contrasting but complimentary descriptions of volunteering at Corrymeela.

Kelly, 32, is from Cameroon. He loves football (Man United), basketball, dancing and fashion. He has decided to become part of our one year volunteer programme and is part of a team of 12, five from NI and the rest from Finland, Sweden, England, Germany and the US.

During his year as an LTV Kelly will be a key part of the work and life of Corrymeela; he will work with groups, play silly games, have serious conversations, cook, clean, take calls at reception and live in community.

This one year programme is more than just a help for the work of Corrymeela, it provides unique training and opportunities to grow in personal awareness, awareness of others and teaches new skills, models about peace and reconciliation and offers many extraordinary encounters with people of all ages, origins and temperaments. In this programme the local meets the global, every day. We learn, mourn and celebrate together, staff, volunteers, community members, participants.

Working alongside Kelly, we also have many local people who volunteer on a regular basis as befits their timetable and our needs.

Volunteering for peace:

At reception, being the first and most important point of contact,
making the food that feeds the work,
cleaning the space that holds the happenings,
contributing to discussions/facilitation with groups,
sorting the files that capture the stories.

And when asked about their time at Corrymeela, participants almost always mention

how it was the volunteers that made their time here special. The volunteers are mentioned by name – Erin, John, Stevie, Ray.... the list goes on.

So if you are thinking
I don't have anything to offer but I'd like to get involved

come and talk to us

Or if you are thinking
I don't have much time on my hands

come and talk to us

Or if you are saying
I want to volunteer for a longer period of time (anything from 3 months to a year),

come and talk to us

If you are saying
I want to make a difference in this world

come and talk to us

Most peace work is not carried out in epic moments by heroes, but rather by ordinary people willing to do their bit in their way.

So, wherever you are in the world - be it Brazil, Ballycastle, Cameroon or Coleraine - if you want to make a difference in this broken, beautiful, hard and holy world,

come and talk to us

Paul Hutchinson
Centre Director

For further information on volunteering contact Aileen at volunteering@corrymeela.org or phone 028 20 762626

How do I thank an entire community for 10,000 acts of kindness?

“The sailors quickly snagged the stacking dolls and saved the day”

MY FAMILY MOVED FROM TEXAS to Ballycastle last year, just in time for the Ould Lammas Fair, to begin a year of voluntary service at Corrymeela. It is safe to say we were excited, but nervous. Any fears we had about such a significant move were quickly put to rest in the face of a warm welcome and what has now been a full year of kindness and care.

Over the course of the year, we have come to realize that the people of Ballycastle are among the most hospitable and friendly in the world. As

the recipients of so much good will, I have been reminded of the motto of Belfast:

“Pro tanto quid retribuamus” which means “How can I repay the Lord for all his goodness to me?” Ps 116 v 12

Perhaps we can start that repayment with a simple thank you.

We have long ago lost track of the countless acts of kindheartedness that have been extended to us. However, as an example, let me retell one recent story of care.

As we began packing for our return to Texas this month, we decided we would take one last opportunity to visit Rathlin Island and see the Puffins. We had a marvelous day by the cliffs, awestruck by the hundreds of thousands of birds. Afterwards, we stopped at the small visitor’s center, and my son was taken by a toy in the form of Russian stacking dolls that were painted with the birds on Rathlin Island.

We then headed down to the harbour to catch the ferry home, when my son slipped and lost hold of his new toy. He watched, horrified, as it plunged over the side and into the water. My first thought was that this was going to be the sad end of what had been a great day, when suddenly the ferry staff leapt into action. The sailors quickly snagged the stacking dolls, and saved the day.

This was just one of many small acts of kindness this year, but to my crying five-year-old, clutching his new toy, it was a moment of kindness that he greatly appreciated. And so do I.

Thank you.

Andy Hill

Former PA to Centre Director at Corrymeela

Andrew and Mary Lynne Hill, and their son A.J., have returned to Texas. However, like the Puffins on Rathlin Island, they promise to return.



Meet the volunteers

Dustin, Tiffany, Miles and Liam Wyse Fisher

Resource Family – USA

WE ARE FROM PEORIA, ILLINOIS and Dustin and I both grew up on farms. We were both art instructors in our past lives, Dustin was a graphic design professor at a local university and I taught art and photography at high school level. We applied to work at Corrymeela because we are passionate about peace-building and are excited to live in a community that works towards that. There are many things we would like to get from the coming year, strengthening our faith, growing together as a family, exposing our children to other cultures and environments, meeting and growing close to people within the Corrymeela community, gaining friendships that we feel will last a lifetime... and a sweet Irish accent.



Matt Fuller Programme Assistant - USA

I GREW UP IN SPRINGFIELD, Virginia, and when the Pentagon was attacked on September 11th, 2001 (less than nine miles from my house), I wanted to learn why this had happened, so I began to take a strong interest in international affairs. I am 25 now, and have since earned a Bachelor's Degree in International Relations and a Masters in Ethics, Peace and Global Affairs. I chose Corrymeela because it gave me the chance to work on an issue that I am really passionate about. When I was in high school, I met someone who had actually worked on the Good Friday Peace Agreement with George Mitchell's staff. That conversation changed a lot of my preconceived notions about the Troubles and showed me how valuable the work of conflict resolution professionals is. When I got my degree, I was asked where I wanted to go, and I said I wanted to go to Northern Ireland, not just because I felt like I could do good work, but because I felt like I could learn a great deal. I hope to spend the year learning in Ballycastle and giving back as much as I get.

Meet the volunteers

Emily Graber

USA

My name is Emily Graber. I am 22 years old and live in Pennsylvania. I studied Peace, Justice, and Conflict Studies, and English at Goshen College in Goshen, Indiana, where I received my B.A. in May. I am the daughter of two Mennonite pastors and grew up in Canada and the United States. I first heard about Corrymeela when my sister, Crystal, volunteered there, and then again during college. After learning more about Northern Ireland and reconciliation in school, I wanted to work with a programme committed to reconciliation and peace-building, which is why I am excited about learning and working with Corrymeela.

Clarence Kelly

Cameroon

Hi, my name is Kelly. I am 32 and from Cameroon. I speak French and English and am a qualified teacher with a degree in English

and Education which I received at uni in Nairobi, Kenya. I also coach basketball and football in my free time. Coming to Corrymeela, for me, is another chance to relive that experience, to meet new people, experience new cultures and above all, to share generously.

Kelsey Thompson Briggs

USA

My name is Kelsey Thompson-Briggs. I am 23 years old and was born and raised in Sacramento, California. I attended the University of California at Berkeley, graduating with a BA in Peace and Conflict Studies. I applied to Corrymeela because I am interested in exploring a living breathing reconciliation initiative and get some hands on experience.

Stevie Friel

Northern Ireland

Hi, my name is Stevie Friel. I am 23 years old and from a small village called Articlave, situated

about two miles from Castlerock in Northern Ireland. I applied to Corrymeela to help better my future career. I enjoy playing golf and dislike people who do not recycle as I am a keen recycler. A good old joke makes me laugh.

Fergal Ross

Northern Ireland

My name is Fergal. I am 21 years old and I'm from Co. Armagh, Northern Ireland. I come from a small family and a small village. I've been studying philosophy at university for the past couple of years and I do quite a bit of part-time youth work in local communities. I've also been short-term volunteering at Corrymeela for more than three years. It never gets boring and the groups that visit interest me a lot. I would like everyone to know that I will be keeping a tally of how many cups of tea and coffee that I make in my year as a long-term volunteer, and next August there will be a prize

for the person who makes the closest guess!

Nathan Shivers

Northern Ireland

Hello, I'm Nathan, but my friends call me, Shiv. I am 20, soon to be 21 and from Belfast. Last year I participated in Seed Group (a Corrymeela Young Adult Programme) and I just loved the place, the people, the atmosphere, the whole ethos behind it. I decided to so some short-term volunteering at the centre for a couple of weekends and it was from this experience that I realised I wanted to become a Long-term Volunteer.

Desi Smyth

Northern Ireland

Hi, my name is Desmond Smyth and I am 21 years old. I live in the New Lodge area of Belfast. I was in Corrymeela for a residential as part of a Springboard course and fell in love with the place, wanting to explore it more. I am also training to do youth work and



thought Corrymeela would be the perfect place for me. I am a very active person and love people and finding out about them and their life stories, so that's one of the reasons I applied for Corrymeela. I am also really looking forward to getting more involved in the Christian aspect of the Corrymeela Community as I would love to learn more about this.

Aaron Gordon

Northern Ireland

Hello! My name is Aaron Gordon. I am 20 years old and from north Belfast. After finishing my A levels at Belfast Royal Academy, I lived in inner Mongolia where I taught English and I've also cycled solo around Scandinavia! I applied to Corrymeela to give something back to the land I've grown up in and also hopefully initiate change in the aspects of our society that need it most. I'm very excited to meet loads of people from all walks of life, and hear the stories they have to tell.

Lindsay Nelson

United Kingdom

Hi, I'm Lindsay. I'm 18 years old and live near Newcastle in the north east of England. I have just finished my A levels and

after my year at Corrymeela I hope to go to university to study anatomy and physiology and ultimately work for the World Health Organisation. I have been dancing since the age of three, and it is still a huge passion of mine - I hope that during my year at Corrymeela, I could use dance as another method of fulfilling the community's aims for all ages. Having visited Corrymeela since I was small, I have known for a long time that I wanted to be an LTV. As cheesy as it sounds, even putting a smile on someone's face, be it a visitor or another volunteer, would let me know that I'm making an impact!

Anna Larsson

Sweden

My name is Anna Larsson and I'm 19 years old. Curious, caring and stubborn - those are some qualities that would describe me. Sweden is my motherland but my home cities are many. During my childhood, I moved around a lot due to my parents getting new jobs. It was difficult at the time but, in the long run, moving around has made me the person I am today. I like seeing new environments and meeting people. For many years I've been interested in global matters and

after finishing school, I flew to Ethiopia to volunteer at a home for disabled children. Living in Africa for four months truly made me re-evaluate a lot of things. At home I've been working at an old people's home. Conflicts can be big or small and everyone in the world is concerned in some way. That's one of the reasons why I think what Corrymeela does is so important and I want to learn more.

Michael Wester-Ebbinghaus

Germany

Hey, my name is Michael Wester-Ebbinghaus and I am from Germany. This summer I finished school obtaining the Abitur, which is the German university entrance diploma. I live in Verl which is a small town of 25,000 people and my father is a farmer. I decided to do this volunteering year because, after 13 years of school, I want to get to know a new country and when I visited Corrymeela in June, I was immediately enthusiastic about it. As it is a Christian community, I want to learn more about my faith and me.

Tytti Matsinen

Finland

I am Tytti Matsinen, a 24-year-old student from Finland. I studied Theology and Industrial Engineering and Management as my majors and Development Studies and Sustainable Production as my minors and dream of an equal world that is fair and sustainable to all. I'm enthusiastic and passionate about global poverty, debt, peace and the environment and active in NGOs working with these issues. I am visually impaired, so if I don't talk to you, come say 'hi' - I'd love to have a chat! I was in Corrymeela for five weeks as a summer volunteer and am hoping the year will be an inspiring experience of sharing my knowledge and learning lots of new things.



Nothing like a dream

To organise a four-day summer school takes a lot of time, energy and commitment and this is what it took to make it happen...

THIS SUMMER Corrymeela Ballycastle hosted the Irish Peace Centres' (IPC) Summer School. The IPC project is delivered by a consortium of peace-building organisations who seek to cultivate and sustain positive relationships at a local level across the region and across traditional sectarian and new social divides. To find out more about the project go to www.irishpeacecentres.org

A steering group was set up with representatives of each organisation: Co-operation Ireland, Glencree and Corrymeela, and we gathered our hopes, passions, differences and skills, in order to create a summer school that we could be proud of.

The aim of the summer school was to create a temporary learning community, so that all present could engage with each other in a meaningful and non-hierarchical way. We wanted to show what IPC has been about, to demonstrate the range of work, techniques, personal styles and resources. This was a big ask, IPC is rich in skill, experience and diversity. Knowing what to leave out became as important as what we eventually included. The steering group wanted a balanced participant list with a mix of IPC staff, facilitators and participants and also

other interested parties: academics, funders, policy-makers. We were massively over-subscribed. And after the summer school was over, it became clear that we had more practitioners than participants in attendance – which shaped how engagement unfolded.

Mornings began with an offering of yoga, breakfast and Corrymeela worship.

Mornings continued with everyone gathering in the marquee to have an input from a speaker, and, time-permitting, a dialogue about that input. We were asked, "How can we live well with the dead?". We were asked, "How can our brokenness be a gift to the world? We were asked to consider, "Who was/is not at the table of decision-making?" We were asked to consider, "Are we at the far side of revenge?" (quoting a line from Heaney). Then a range of workshops running in parallel were offered, some one-off tasters, others five course meals that extended the length of the summer school.

Evenings were spent hearing poetry, songs and guest speakers.

Evenings were spent talking to friends, strangers, people we agreed and argued with.

"Mornings began with an offering of yoga, breakfast and worship."





The location at Corrymeela, overlooking the sea and Rathlin Island, offered a range of formal and informal spaces for conversation to roll on into the wee small hours - and it sometimes did.

Films were also shown each evening; where people could blink quietly in the darkness at moving images projected large.

Some evenings were spent reeling from the day's proceedings, a single phrase burrowing into the soul and senses, wrestling with contradiction, personal discomfort and glimpses of hope.

One evening we gathered together to cautiously, passionately talk and listen from the heart. And we chose to do this - not as epic heroes, but as people wanting to learn, people hurt, people encouraged, people tender together.

And every day, the artist collective known as ThinkBucket, nudged us with creativity, encouraged us to play, challenged us to imagine and mirrored our various journeys.

And every day between 10am and 5pm, volunteers spoke of the dead, reading from the book 'Lost Lives' - a necessary reminder of those who had died as a result of the Northern Ireland Troubles. There were many tears and cracked voices in the process of bearing witness to the lost and to those that remain and a reminder that most peace work happens behind the scenes, away from the microphones and photo-opportunities, away from workshops and summer schools.

On the final day I asked attendees to consider three personal questions:

An important moment?

Improvements?

What next?

One of my important moments was on the first day, the Monday. The first session together was ending, and I had asked everyone to write down a dream they had for Northern Ireland. It's a risky thing to share your dreams, they are easily and often shot down. But people scribbled on their own white A4 sheet of paper. For some it was one word or a short phrase. For others long sentences filled their page. To conclude, I asked them to turn their page

of dreams into a paper plane. There were quite a few quizzical looks, but most folded and shaped their page into something that hopefully would fly.

Then, as the music rose from the PA, I gave the instruction – after the count of three, throw your dreams into the air, toward the stage, toward me.

ONE! (music getting louder)

TWO! (excitement mounting)

THREE!

THROWWWWWWWW!!!

And the marquee filled with moving dreams.

Paper planes took their first flight to the sound of laughter, whoops and wows.

And as the writer Victor Hugo once said,

There is nothing like a dream to create the future.

Paul Hutchinson

Paul is Centre Director of the Corrymeela Ballycastle Centre



Summertime and the living is easy

PART OF CORRYMEELA'S WORK has been about dealing with the on-going issue of sectarianism and how it impacts very directly with young people within Belfast Interface areas.

This summer a week long programme at Corrymeela's Ballycastle Centre brought together teenagers from Ballysillan and Ardoyne; two particularly volatile interface areas, directly impacted by the marching season on the week of the 12 July.

To prepare for the week-long 'diversionary' programme, so both groups could feel safe when meeting up, we held individual weekend residential for each group. This time allowed them to explore both the positive and negative issues they have encountered within their own communities. These residential were invaluable in making the summer week less daunting and removing the notion of 'threat' from both groups.

The summer residential was an activity focused programme, with the young people working in mixed teams to encourage cross community engagement. This proved so successful that during the week many young people expressed the desire to engage in structured group work to explore the

issues that keep them separated and divided in the 'real' world. Though very difficult for some, it was wonderful that they were brave enough to want to do it.

During a personal chat with one of the leaders, one young man aged 15 from the Ardoyne area, thanked him for the opportunity to be away from his community during the twelfth week because it meant he didn't have to be involved in the riots. When questioned about why he would choose to go to the riots he said, "If I don't go down to the riots it looks like I have no guts."

For me this indicated the crucial nature of Corrymeela's work, in enabling young people to make choices about how they live and explore issues affecting them within their community. More importantly, it provides an opportunity for young people to see the issues that divide are far outweighed by the things they have in common as young people and world citizens.

Ivan Cross

Ivan is Youth Programme Coordinator at Corrymeela

"If I don't go down to the riots it looks like I have no guts"





Heroes of Peace: building relationships in the community

15 local children aged between nine and eleven attended the Heroes of Peace summer week in Ballycastle this August. Below is Programme School's Coordinator, Nicola McKeown's account of that residential experience.

"MY HERO IS MY GRANDAD who volunteers with the local RNLI," said one participant, "My hero is my mum," stated another and so it went on around the group.

... This summer I learnt to never underestimate or assume what children are thinking.

Building relationships in the community was the overarching theme for the week-long residential. Using drama, art and ICT* the workshops, shaped by the children themselves, focused on exploring heroes and looking at peace in our communities. Though nervous about the self-programming aspect of the week having spent time with them I was confident they would flourish with a little nurturing and encouragement.

The children heard stories of heroes across the world, from Corrymeela's founder Rev Dr Ray Davey to Nelson Mandela and other public figures. They were encouraged to bring along their own special memory of someone who has been, or is, a hero to them, then each of them shared the story with the group and added it to the peace wall that had been created for the week.

I expected traditional, clichéd responses to the

hero question anticipating names of footballers, pop stars, or reality-TV celebrities to top the children's lists. The reality challenged my preconceptions as they shared stories of family and individuals within their communities who meant so much to them.

I commented to one participant named Benedict that he could use his new skills at home adding his were better than mine; he replied, "I know... but you don't understand, it is more than just planning a presentation, here I have been accepted for who I am and you have encouraged me to use my skills to teach others."

A final celebration took place on the last evening in the Croi, Corrymeela's place of worship, and it was a great opportunity to introduce the children's parents and families to Corrymeela. A group of nervous but confident children took to the stage and performed songs, sketches, hero presentations and puppets. Everyone enjoyed themselves and both parents and children asked, "So you will be running this again next year?"

*Information, Communication Technology



Corrymeela Christmas Cards ...

SEND seasons greetings and support Corrymeela this Christmas with our range of Corrymeela cards. There are four designs to choose from and all cards come in packs of 10 complete with envelopes. To order yours just email Bernie Magill at Corrymeela House email: belfast@corrymeela.org or call 028 90508080. **A pack of 10 is £3.50***



... and Calendars

Corrymeela 2012 Calendars are also available. These are flip over calendars – one suitable for a desk and the other suitable for hanging on a wall. **Desk Calendars are £5.00*** **Wall Calendars are £7.00***

* Please note prices are exclusive of postage and packaging

