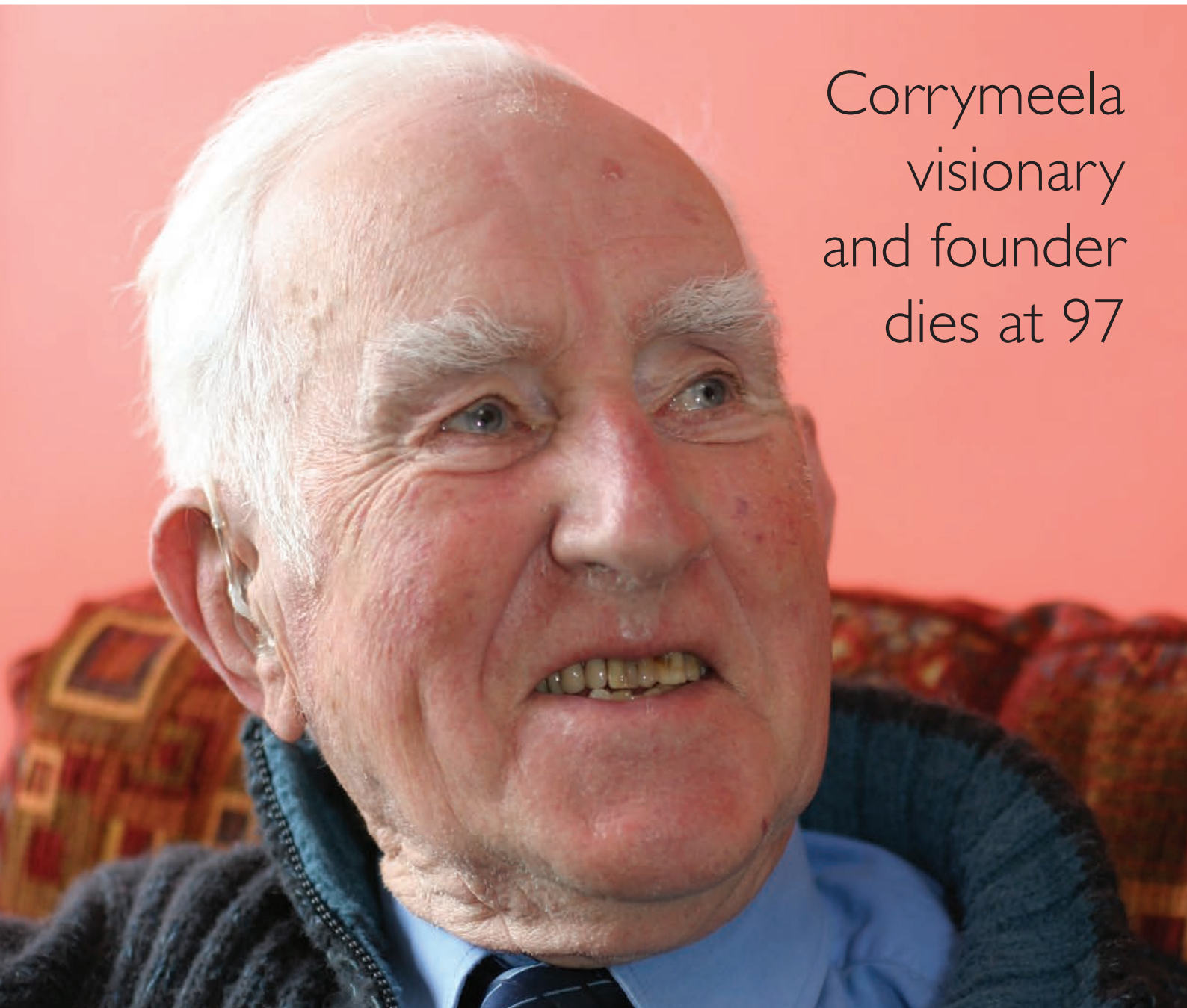




the Corrymeela community

embracing difference • healing divisions • enabling reconciliation



Corrymeela
visionary
and founder
dies at 97



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



Volume 12
No 1
May 2012
corrymeela.org

CORRYMEELA SUMMER SCHOOL

9–12 August 2012

A Mother's Breast and a Roaring River (The Comfort and Challenge of Peace)

A residential summer school

exploring the theology and practice emerging and inspired
by the life and work of the Corrymeela Community.

Beginning on Thursday 9 August at 7.30pm with a meal and finishing
on Sunday 12 August with lunch at 1pm

An opportunity to spend time engaging and experiencing both historical and current aspects
of Corrymeela – a mix of lecture, workshop, reflection, poetry, film, small and large group discussion.
All in the beautiful surroundings of the Antrim coast overlooking Rathlin Island.

Cost

Residential rate: £200

Non – residential rate: £100

For further information and booking, contact Matt Scrimgeour at 028 20 761726
or email mattscrimgeour@corrymeela.org

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EVENTS



August 9 - 12

CORRYMEELA SUMMER SCHOOL

A Mother's Breast & A Roaring River

Residential £200. Non-residential £100 LIMITED PLACES

Exploring the theology and practice emerging and inspired by the life and work of the Corrymeela Community – a mix of lecture, workshop, reflection, poetry, film, small and large group discussion

BALLYCASTLE CENTRE



October 12

MARK UMBREIT FROM USA

Restorative Dialogue – Holistic Approach

Dr. Mark Umbreit is a Professor and the founding Director of the Center for Restorative Justice & Peacemaking at the University of Minnesota, School of Social Work



December 12

MERTON EVENT

Keep an eye on our website for further details www.cormeela.org

BALLYCASTLE BOOKINGS email: mattscrimgeour@corrymeela.org or call 028 20 761 726
Further details of all events available on our website CORRYMEELA.ORG

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

This edition of the magazine comes to you in the wake of Ray Davey's passing. Our thoughts are with his family. The recent Community weekend offered members the opportunity to reflect on stories, memories and lessons learnt from Ray, whose belief in an alternative to violent conflict and whose vision for a shared space for all, became the cornerstone of our work that continues to make an invaluable contribution to a broken society. If you have any memories, stories or photos about the Ray you knew I would love to hear from you. You can send them to communication@corrymeela.org. I hope you get your teeth stuck into this edition - Corrymeela is in a state of flux and the future is uncertain but equipped with courage and wisdom, together we can make choices that will allow Corrymeela to continue to share its learning and practice with communities across the globe. Red Pill (see Susan McEwen's thought provoking article on page 14)

Alyson McElroy-Jones

Corrymeela magazine
Volume 12 Number 1
May 2012

Corrymeela magazine
Corrymeela House
8 Upper Crescent, Belfast
Northern Ireland BT7 INT

Tel: +44 (0) 28 9050 8080
Fax: +44 (0) 28 9050 8070
Email: belfast@corrymeela.org
Web site: www.corrymeela.org

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Corrymeela Belfast

8 Upper Crescent, Belfast
Northern Ireland BT7 INT

Tel: +44 (0) 28 9050 8080

Fax: +44 (0) 28 9050 8070

Email: belfast@corrymeela.org

Web site: www.corrymeela.org

Corrymeela Ballycastle

5 Drumaroan Road, Ballycastle
Northern Ireland BT54 6QU

Tel: +44 (0) 28 2076 2626

Fax: +44 (0) 28 2076 2770

Email: ballycastle@corrymeela.org

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See deeply

THE DAVEY VILLAGE is completed and functioning - an outstanding resource. The discovery of mines below the surface whilst digging foundations revealed the importance of seeing below surface level.

As we head towards the fiftieth anniversary of Corrymeela we can reflect on a deeper history tracing back millions of years.

As we do so, we give thanks for the outstanding natural beauty around us on land and sea.

Thousands of years ago, molten lava flowed into the waters cooling into hexagonal tile-like rock surfaces known today as the Giant's Causeway.

Ships and Boats have sailed on the waters beside the Ballycastle Centre for hundreds of years with people from all around the world. Ireland has a deep history of people coming here from other parts of the world for thousands of years. Thousands have travelled from here to many other parts of the world. Ireland has long been a place of multi-lingual, multi-ethnic, multi-faith, multi-national, history and identity.

We can marvel at a profound history of all there is around us.

The future will have a hollow ring if it is shaped and built only on the basis of what we see around us now. The world cannot be reduced to what we can see above the surface. If we do so, we reduce future possibilities.

The challenge is to look deeper into the roots, the hidden mines, of the issues facing us as we seek to address and resolve them; to engage in calm and

steady contemplation.

Look at the roots.

Explore ancient wisdom.

Ben Okri's latest book, *A Time For New Dreams* (Rider Books), is a timely reminder of the need to meditate and reflect deeply on the challenges of our times, economic inequalities, environmental degradation, exclusivist theologies or philosophies. In these essays Okri reflects on the relationship between the way the world looks and the core values that shape it.

He says that the certainties, beliefs, dreams and social structures of our times are being shaken. We are challenged to re-examine many of the ideas that underpin human societies today. Our old dreams are exhausted. The people of the world are demanding new ways of being and living, new freedoms, new forms of social justice, new understandings of fairness and freedom. It is time for new dreams.

We do want to look at and notice what is around us. It is so easy to fail to notice that which is familiar. Look and see. Give a narrative to what you see. Talk and write about it. Reflect on what you see, drawing on reason, scripture, personal experience and tradition.

Dig deep. Dream well. Discern wisdom and values. Reflect calmly. Take courage, re-imagine the world and re-engage with new insight. Or as liberation theologians say, 'See, judge, act.'

Inderjit Bhogal



Inderjit Bhogal is the Leader of the Corrymeela Community



£800 raised at La Mon Hotel fundraiser

This March, La Mon Hotel generously hosted another of Corrymeela's fun-filled fundraising events.

AS GUESTS CLAPPED RHYTHMICALLY to Queen's big rock number, 'We will rock you,' for the briefest moment, Corrymeela's recent fundraiser resembled a mini-indoor Glastonbury.

It was appropriate and particularly satisfying to have such a large number of musicians with Corrymeela connections providing the basis for this event as live music from 'Banter' and newly formed 'JPSSN' took to the stage.

To date the evening has raised more than £800 for Corrymeela, a welcome contribution towards our invaluable work within our communities.

Our thanks go to Francis



The newly formed 'JPSSN', (Johnston Morrow, Philip Morrow, Sean Pettis, Susan Rock and Naomi Rock).

Brady who volunteered the use of La Mon Hotel. A big thank you also goes to David Reid, John McCartney and Gus Moore who provided the sound and AV. The Ormeau Cell Group were part of the organisation team and Philippa Bole ran a great Tombola. Special thanks also go to Bernie Magill, Miriam and Michael Simon - the event wouldn't have been such a success without them.



'Banter,' l-r: Richard Loudon, Jenny McDowell, Miriam Simon and Roger Courtney

The award winning
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Music and Lyrics by Frank Loesser Book by Jo Swerling and Abe Burrows

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NEWTOWNABBEY

Theatre of the Mill
Newtownabbey
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Proceeds supporting: 
the Corrymeela community
Embracing Difference • Healing Divisions • Enabling Reconciliation

Corrymeela celebrates Shared Learning in Northern Irish Schools with new Forgiveness Education Programme

FOR THE PAST NUMBER OF YEARS, Corrymeela has facilitated a cross-community Forgiveness Education Programme in several Northern Irish schools. Recently, six different Belfast Primary Schools came together for a programme-end celebration and art exhibition with the Corrymeela Community. At each event, students were presented with a Certificate of Achievement, and also discussed what they learned from the programme and explained their exhibited artwork.

The Forgiveness Education Programme is an eight to fifteen week curriculum designed for Primary and Post-Primary classrooms. The programme recognizes that forgiving is not about forgetting what happened. Instead, it is about remembering in a different way so that the pain of the past does not determine the directions you take in your future. The curriculum is teacher delivered and focuses on virtue based education from a developmental perspective. Corrymeela offers the training to teachers in the curriculum delivery. Corrymeela then bring



together cross-community schools for Shared Learning Days to compliment the curriculum. The children and young people are introduced to virtues such as kindness, generosity and caring to help them come to a better understanding of the concept of forgiveness and where it fits within the realms of justice and mercy. The curriculum has been developed by Robert Enright, PhD, an

Educational Psychologist from the University of Wisconsin – Madison, USA. The Forgiveness Education Programme is designed to compliment the Northern Ireland Revised PDMU Curriculum in Primary Schools and the Learning for Life and Work Curriculum in Post-Primary Schools.

Corrymeela will continue to offer the Forgiveness Education Programme to

interested schools in the new school year. If you would like more information about Corrymeela's Forgiveness Education Programme and how to get your school involved, please contact Becki Fulmer at the Corrymeela Community by calling 028.9050.8080 or emailing bfulmer@corrymeela.org

Becki Fulmer

Meeting volunteers from the past

IN FEBRUARY 2012 I had the opportunity to host and encounter a different generation of Corrymeela volunteers. Desney and Roger Cromey brought together a fantastic group of people who were mostly volunteers from the 1960s-80s, many of whom had not been involved in the community in recent decades. The laid back three days were filled with lots of conversations, videos, laughter and of course, plenty of coffee and tea - and an ample supply of Moyra's scones.

One of the first things the group did was to watch original video footage from 1968, which showed the volunteers, several of whom were in the room, working, playing, and joking about. It was wonderful to see that volunteers in the '60s were not so different from the volunteer team this year. We like to work and have loads of fun and fool about a bit too. After a dinner together with current volunteers, the group heard from Inderjit and Paul about Corrymeela's vision and our work as well as asking questions about Corrymeela's hopes for the future. The second day, more relaxed than the first, gave the group the opportunity to take some down-time, visit Ballycastle or just rest on site. That afternoon they joined together for a brief question and answer time with some of the current volunteers. The group then watched Paul's documentary, 'Prods and Pom-Poms' and later watched and discussed the film, 'Of Gods and Men.' The final morning was left free for worship, chatting, and goodbyes.

As a current volunteer, I was very excited to meet and get to know the 'volunteers from the past' who are kind of like heroes to me. Over the last six months that I've been here at Corrymeela, I've heard numerous stories about past volunteers and how hard they worked, how much fun they had, the crazy pranks they did, and what a difference they made, not just here at Corrymeela but in their home communities. It was both an honour and a pleasure to spend time with these people who helped make Corrymeela what it is today. I hope that more people make the effort to bring together similar groups of people.

Emily Grabber

Emily Grabber is a long term volunteer for the Corrymeela Community

The Reverend Andrew Proud, Bishop of Reading



TOWARDS THE END OF LAST YEAR I had the opportunity to meet with Bishop Andrew in the course of my search for a local Patron of the Friends of Corrymeela.

Bishop Andrew became Bishop of Reading in April 2010; he served before that as Area Bishop for the Horn of Africa with an Episcopal area serving Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, Somali Land and Somalia. Those are names which are resonant with human need and Bishop Andrew brings to his work in Reading, a deep understanding of some of that need, together with much experience in the field of peace and reconciliation between the various tribes and people of his former Episcopal area.

With a major grant from the Irish Government, a large training centre was built on the border with South Sudan which opened in March 2011.

This centre offers a library, literacy and health education programmes to all-comers, irrespective of age, gender or religion.

We are delighted that

Bishop Andrew has agreed to accept the invitation to become a Patron of the Friends of Corrymeela in GB. The Bishop is personally committed to issues close to the heart of Corrymeela, namely reconciliation, justice and peace.

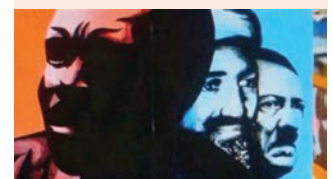
Honor Alleyne

Lady Honor Alleyne is Corrymeela's GB Programme worker



FEW PEOPLE HAVE NOT HEARD THE NAME KONY this year. Joseph Kony is currently the world's number one war criminal and in March this year a video made by Invisible Children Inc was released on YouTube. To date almost 88 million people across the globe have watched this 30 min film that depicts the suffering and inhumane treatment of the children of Uganda by Kony and his army.

The aim of this campaign is to make every household across the world aware of Kony and his atrocities and force not only the American government but governments throughout the six continents to take action and bring Kony to justice. If you would like to learn more about the campaign search KONY 2012 on youtube.com, watch the video and support the work of Invisible Children Inc.





FOUNDER OF THE CORRYMEELA COMMUNITY

Rev Dr Ray Davey, 97, passed away peacefully at his home on 16 April 2012.

Since his passing, The Corrymeela Community has been inundated with messages of remembrance. You can read the tributes to Ray on our Corrymeela Ballycastle Facebook page and the website corrymeela.org

From The Most Revd Alan Harper, OBE, Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland

“The death of Rev Dr Ray Davey at the age of 97 has taken from among us one of the great pioneers of dialogue and peacemaking in Britain and Ireland. The Corrymeela Community, which Ray Davey founded in 1965, has been a constant source of influence and inspiration for all those who sought and continue to seek reconciliation and peace in Northern Ireland.”

Rev Dr Inderjit Bhogal, current Leader of the Community

“Ray has made a huge contribution to the peace process in Northern Ireland. He worked hard to build good relationships across all the differences. He insisted on the centrality of reconciliation. The Corrymeela Community is an instrument of reconciliation. For me, Ray Davey is an icon of this.”

We remember Ray Davey

Alliance Leader David Ford
MLA

“He (Ray) was a huge inspiration to many of us who are working for peace and reconciliation, whether in politics, the church or community organisations. I had the privilege of working with Ray as a staff volunteer in Corrymeela and remain grateful for the opportunity he gave me and the example he set.”

Trace Ní Giolla Éarnáin

“One can only thank Ray Davey for the beauty, the joy and the peace that he brought to each and everyone of us in the serenity that is Corrymeela, a place that I hold close to my heart, your legacy will live on. RIP”

John H. Oehrlein

I think I worshipped this man as much as anyone, but I will not miss him, nor will any other of us, for Ray Davey lives and breathes through all of us everyday. The corporeal Ray is now gone, and I am sad, but the communal Ray is still very much present in everyone who has passed through the Corrymeela volunteer experience and GOT that very important point, Corrymeela begins when you leave. Ray Davey has now left, now he begins. Aloha, Ray.

Lindsey Pike

Today, I am thankful for and celebrating Ray Davey. Such an amazing man who founded a beautiful place of awe and love that has brought so many people together over the years. A place and vision that changed my life.

The Corrymeela Community would like to dedicate a tribute edition of the Corrymeela Magazine to Ray. Please send your memories, stories and pictures to communication@corrymeela.org or post them to Corrymeela House.



Ray's inspiration

BELFAST BORN, RAY founded The Corrymeela Community in 1965 assisted by students from Queens University, Belfast. His experiences as a prisoner of war convinced him that there was an alternative to violent conflict; the cultural and sometimes volatile changes of the 1960's were the final impetus. Ray decided to create a place where people from different cultures and backgrounds could meet together and experience new ways of dealing with 'difference.'

Ray dedicated his life to the reconciliation and peace making of not only Northern Ireland, but bridging cultural divides worldwide.

Ray's legacy

RAY DAVEY'S LEGACY has been to create opportunities for young people to engage with one another in new and meaningful ways.

In recognition of his life's work, Corrymeela will

direct any donations and gifts received in lieu of flowers to the Ray Davey Youth Fund.

Cheques should be made out to: The Corrymeela Community and sent to 8 Upper Crescent, Belfast, BT7

1NT, Northern Ireland. Credit card donations can be taken by phone please call (0)28 9050 8080.

Thank you.

Six months on we checked Long Term Volunteers



The first few months at Corrymeela have been a whirlwind. Everything from

quiet reflection times that comfortably linger into the darkness - to spontaneous UV raves in the Davey Village that leave you gasping for a moment of calm. It is a place of exciting extremes that not only keeps you constantly busy and on your toes, but also magically provides you with time to think and process all that is happening here, and around the world.

Aaron



Volunteering at this strange but wonderful place is as changeable as the coastal weather – exciting with moments of calm reflection, challenging yet rewarding. The hard work is interspersed with buckets of fun, and there are plenty of rainbows to make up for the rain.

Kelsey



ck up with our

It's hard to believe that we are almost halfway through our year; the past months have just flown by! Volunteering here at Corrymeela has been incredible and I have learned so much about myself and the world from working with different groups, other volunteers, and the staff here. Every day is different, so I am constantly learning new things. Living in community is an incredible blessing – where else can you live in one crazy big house with 15 or more other people from all over the world? Corrymeela is special because it allows people to be who they are



and I am very lucky to have a small part in creating that space for guests here while at the same time feeling that same sense of hospitality and openness within the community on site. I am so glad that I am here and I wouldn't trade this experience for anything.

Emily

The trip to Northern Ireland and Corrymeela started seven months ago... Yes, it has already been SEVEN months! When I was coming here I was nervous, I didn't know what was waiting. However, I knew straightaway when I arrived at Corrymeela that this was my new home. Hospitality, in all its forms, meets you as soon as you enter the site. During my time here I have made amazing friendships with people from around the world, I have learned so much about living in a community and about myself. Furthermore, Corrymeela gives you the



opportunity to develop your skills and interests and you have so much fun in the process. This is my home now and I am enjoying every second of it.

Anna





Moving on

“Moving on is so often about moving away from something bad to something good”

WHEN I THINK OF ‘MOVING ON’ I usually think of moving on, or away, from something negative; a broken relationship, a poor business decision, or maybe disappointing exam results. Moving on is so often about moving away from something bad to something good.

As the Face to Face/Faith to Faith (F2F) 2011/2012 group approaches its end in April, it feels like a different kind of moving on. This is moving on from something really good, to something simply different and maybe just as good, if not better. F2F 2011 has seen this group of 18 young people grow together, live in community at camp together, learn together, experience together, cry together and laugh together. Visiting churches, chapels, Islamic centres, synagogues, talking to religious leaders, politicians and ex paramilitaries have been good and shaping experiences in and

of themselves, but now it is time for them to move on, to put their learning and experiences to practical use, to benefit others, helping others overcome their prejudices, their fears, and their mistrusts.

F2F 2011/12 participants will soon move on to become alumni of the programme, making way for the next group of young people. Already, some of them are actively looking for ways to make a difference in their local communities and even internationally. As they do, I look forward to seeing them develop as young leaders, as we seek to support them to be role models and change agents, helping others to move on.

Glenn Harvey

Glenn is Corrymeela’s Face to Face/Faith to Faith Programme Worker

Love, acceptance and belonging at Corrymeela

IT'S EASY TO LOVE CORRYMEELA. It may be the seascape that stretches before your toes as you sit on the edge of a cliff, or the cups of tea at every corner just waiting to be consumed. It could be the friendly greetings and heartfelt goodbyes. Or it could even be the songbirds that have started to fill the air around us.

In my Corrymeela wisdom I've realized there are very few things not to love about this space and how it has embraced my family. I believe part of me realizes it isn't the space I love. I mean, I do love the space. I love the space so much that I breathe it in every morning on long walks. I love it so much that I talk about it constantly with those back home, willing them to try and imagine something so beautiful. In fact, I can't think of a more breathtaking place for Ray Davey to have chosen as a safe space to bring people together. But I think Corrymeela would be just as beautiful without the sea, or the cliff, or the long winding road below us because what I've discovered over the past seven months is that Corrymeela would be beautiful anywhere. As I watch smiling volunteers

greet my only partially well-behaved children with open arms day after day, my heart swells with the love I have brewing inside of me for these people.

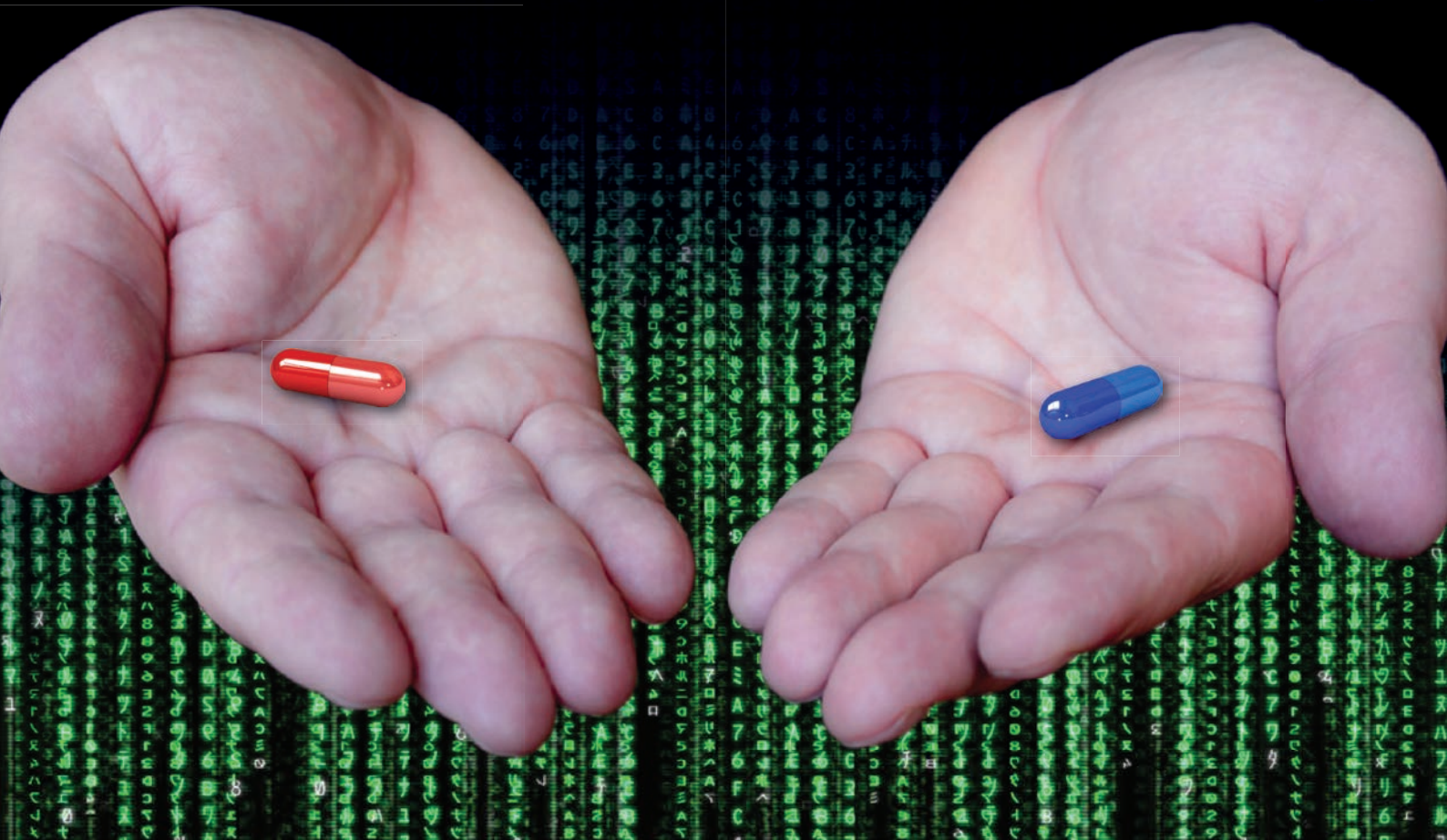
Over the short time since I've been here I have learned more about love, acceptance, and belonging than I have in the last five years of my life. There is something about this place that transforms cups of tea into long beautiful conversations, and meals into informative dinners laced with laughter, stories, and friendship.

There are few things I know for sure. What I do know is that my family belongs at Corrymeela at this moment in our lives. I know that the volunteers and staff that surround us have cocooned us in their love. And I know that on top of this cliff at the edge of the sea I feel infinitely blessed.

Tiffany Wyse-Fisher

Tiffany is one half of Corrymeela's resource couple. She lives on site in Ballycastle with her husband Dustin and their two children Miles and Liam





Corrymeela and Programme

– what does the future hold?

I CAN REMEMBER THE FIRST TIME that I watched the film *The Matrix* and being absolutely blown away by it. The story, the special effects and concept was revolutionary, marking a significant development in the cinematic experience and seven years later, it still feels fresh.

The *Matrix* has become more than just a trilogy of films. It holds an iconic position within popular culture in terms of its style and symbolism. The term red pill and its opposite, blue pill have become a metaphor for the choice between the blissful

ignorance of illusion, blue, and embracing the sometimes painful truth of reality, red.

I am not sure if anyone fully understands *The Matrix* but like the more recent film, *Inception*, it has invited much analysis and scrutiny. One of the elements of *The Matrix* Trilogy that always caused me great consternation however, was trying to work out what they meant when they talked about a programme? In the first film we were introduced to the idea and by the final film in the trilogy it seemed that almost everything was a 'programme';

there was no reality outside of the 'programmes'. It feels therefore slightly surreal for me, now that I find myself in a role that is dominated by the presence of this thing called programme within a place called Corrymeela that at times certainly feels more like The Matrix!

I am tempted to keep with The Matrix metaphor, especially as I quite like the idea of the senior management team dressed in black and riding fast motorbikes, but sadly, metaphors only go so far and my task to develop programme and secure funding is a real challenge and not a virtual one aided by an inflated Hollywood budget.

The challenge that Corrymeela is facing should not be news to anyone. We are living in different times, supposedly post conflict, and as a result there are those that are asking what relevance does Corrymeela, a Christian Peace and Reconciliation organization have, now when we have peace and growing secularity?

What does a hippy centre on a cliff edge on the north coast of a tiny island have to say to today's world?

This is the question that, for me, is the start of my thinking as Development Director. It is not initially about what groups we work with but rather, what do we bring to the table? Can we bring added value to our society by who we are and what we say?

devil we don't. We have something to contribute in creating programmes that enable people to move into change. We have learning that comes from rigorous thinking, real experience and stories that speak of change and the feeling of loss and fear that it can generate.

Corrymeela knows about dealing with difference in ways that are life-giving rather than life-taking. I have read many contemporary theories about dealing with conflict, difference and division and attended seminars and workshops. I am regularly struck by how cutting edge Corrymeela thinking is, while acknowledging that it itself draws on ancient wisdom and Scriptural teaching. The challenge is putting our wealth of knowledge and experience into programmes that we can begin to promote and communicate to a wider audience with confidence.

There is an understandable desire to rush this process and to say that we will work with this group or that, whether that be youth, family or faith based. I hope the Development Director post, along with the newly established Programme and Volunteer Group, gives Corrymeela time to breathe and establish what it is we have that brings added value and then, with confidence, work out how we can creatively develop programmes that our values inhabit.

“So while these are challenging times these are also exciting times and we have some choices to make”



I believe that we have something relevant and quite radical to say. I have, over my many years as a practitioner, witnessed the implicit way Corrymeela impacts people's lives, but it is no longer enough to be merely implicit in our expression of who we are. In order to develop sustainable and innovative programmes, we need to be confident in our voice and our contribution; we need to be explicit in our articulation of what Corrymeela is and its identity.

Society in Northern Ireland, as well as further afield, is facing challenges that are pushing people out of their comfort zones. The level of change that we are experiencing is not in itself new, but the pace of change is immense and change is hard. As humans we cling onto to what we know, even if the only thing we know is conflict. There is much truth in the saying, better the devil we know than the

We face a new landscape in every sense and with this we also face new demands. We need to look at developing strategic partnerships in the delivery of some of our work. We have already learnt from our partnership experiences with the Irish Peace Centres Consortium and the Inclusive neighbourhood Project; and currently three of our programme staff are involved in partnership projects: Facing History, Face to Face / Faith to Faith and the Forgiveness Education Programme. Similarly our primary Schools work is intentionally looking at partnering with other organisations such as CRIS and delivering workshops for projects such as Change Makers.

This is a new way of working, not because Corrymeela does not have a history of working in relationship with others but rather we must move to a place where we are confident in what we bring

to the table and ensure that Corrymeela is recognized for the role that it plays. We need to learn to value ourselves and our identity; isn't that what we tell others?

The programme that we will be presenting as our flagship project over the next year is our volunteering programme. This is a new lens through which our volunteering will be viewed and we are hoping to begin to collect stories from previous volunteers to share how their Corrymeela experience has effected their lives. It is these testimonies that shape the demonstrable long term impact of Corrymeela

that has not only a local but international reach. Our volunteering is not just something that serves the Centre but rather, is a world class programme that equips those that are part of it with skills, experiences and networks that speak directly of dealing with conflict, change and difference in a Christian context. The Corrymeela Community members are in effect our longest longterm volunteers.

So while these are challenging times, they are also exciting times and we have some choices to make. Some of our current structures, particularly around the delivery of our programmes, are no longer sustainable. It is not only the world out there that is experiencing change but the world that is within Corrymeela that is changing and we must be gentle with each other throughout that change.

So, we find ourselves in a Matrix where programmes are the key. I passionately believe that we have something to say; that we can bring added value to the discourse. There is an abundance of creative thinking within this Corrymeela Matrix that we must harness and channel but there are difficult choices to be made if we are to be sustainable. Blue pill or red pill? Do we try and keep going as we are? We are doing great work but is it sustainable? Or do we nurture a new way of doing this thing called programme? Do we take risks? Do we think that Corrymeela can be part of helping people see that there is more to life? This will push us.

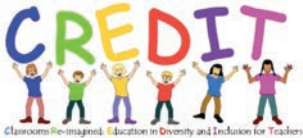
Blue Pill or Red Pill?

Susan McEwen

Susan is Corrymeela's Development Director



Classrooms Re-imagined: Education in Diversity and Inclusion for Teachers (CREDIT)



Education and Community: Panel Discussion at Corrymeela

THE LATEST PHASE of the CREDIT project's professional development courses unfolded with a residential for 14 teachers at Corrymeela's Ballycastle Centre in March. The project, funded by the International Fund for Ireland, offered the teachers the opportunity to engage with a guest panel on the topic of Education and Community. The panelists, representing a wide range of political and community groups were (from left to right above) Gavin Boyd, representing the Rainbow Project; Joe O'Donnell, Strategic Director with the Belfast Interface Project; Inderjit Bhogal, Leader of the Corrymeela Community; Joan Baird, UUP Councillor at Moyle District Council; Conall McDevitt, MLA and the SDLP Party's Education Development spokesperson, sitting on the Education committee.

The panel were challenged by the teachers to outline their vision for education in Northern Ireland, to explore how they could support teachers in schools and to discuss the challenges facing Northern Ireland society in the next 10 years. The feedback from the teachers was very positive, with one teacher said, "I was really encouraged by the



comments of the panellists and their visions for our education system – I hope these become a reality."

The teachers were participants on the five day Extending Skills in CREDIT course, designed for teachers who are currently involved in community engagement issues and wish to further embed good practice in their educational setting. They had already spent two days in February at Stranmillis University College and St Mary's University College and had experienced the 'Divided Belfast' bus tour as well as visiting some of the race and community organisations involved in the South Belfast Partnership. The residential in Corrymeela allowed for further reflection and for plans to be made to enhance and further embed good practice in their own schools. The group came together

recently to celebrate the final day of the programme and presented the progress they had made both personally and professionally throughout the course.

The CREDIT project delivers a number of professional development courses, created by Stranmillis University College, in partnership with St Mary's University College, with funding from the International Fund for Ireland. The courses have been developed for teachers, working in all sectors and phases in Northern Ireland, to enable them to develop skills and confidence when dealing with issues of division, diversity, inclusion and community cohesion in the classroom and on a whole-school basis.



Joan Baird, Conall McDevitt, Clare Martin, CREDIT administrator, and Kevin Holly, teacher participant, enjoy the panel discussion.

Peacemaking & Spirituality:

*Touching the soul
within the energy of
conflict and trauma*

Mark Umbreit



THE JOURNEY of peacemaking and spirituality is about honoring the enormous healing power of story; listening deeply to the woundedness within others and ourselves; acknowledging such woundedness, without judgment, assessment, advice or problem solving; and nurturing the innate strength, wisdom and yearning for peace that is within each of us. The journey is about being ever mindful of the power of unintentional negative consequences if we cannot tame our egos and their endless thirst for recognition and control; learning to tame our minds and their endless thoughts and chatter so that we can be fully present with each other through the turbulence of inter- and intra-personal conflict.

Creating a safe, if not sacred, place for people in painful conflict to tell their story, without interruptions, has been found throughout the ages to be at the core of healing. Personal stories of conflict or trauma touch others as no articulate argument could ever. Arguments and positions keep us in the head. The telling of stories touch our hearts. When I work with victims of severe criminal or political violence seeking mediation and dialogue, much of my “intervention” involves deep compassionate listening and acknowledgement of the stories of trauma for all involved, without judgment or prescription. Daniel Taylor in his book *The Healing Power of Stories* speaks of how stories help us learn to live more responsibly, to understand others in their life context, and to avoid many of the conflicts in life that so quickly hook us.

The journey of peacemaking and spirituality is about being present with conflict in our wholeness, in our body, mind, and spirit. It is about ‘being with’ rather than ‘doing for’ the conflict, allowing our own and other’s woundedness to teach us profound lessons of life in community. Learning to be fully present in our life and work, with no illusions of control, is not easy in Western culture. Yet there exist a number of practices that cultivate such presence. By far the most relevant spiritual practice that we can integrate into our peacemaking and conflict resolution work is mindfulness. John Kabat-Zinn speaks of mindfulness as openhearted moment-to-moment non-judgmental awareness. Kabat Zinn’s book *Wherever You Go, There You Are* provides a practical guide for how to integrate mindfulness practice into one’s personal and professional life. His new book *Coming To Our Senses: Healing Ourselves and the World Through Mindfulness* provides an even richer guide to how mindfulness practice relates to personal and social healing in the global community.

Other practices that can cultivate integrating spirituality into our life work include yoga, Tai Chi,

and Chi Gong, all of which can be accessed quite easily through local course offerings, books, videos, and audio- tapes. Each represents a meditative practice in movement. Each works with our wholeness: body, mind, and spirit. Each cultivates the power of breath, a creator given gift we all have, to promote healing and a compassionate presence with those we are with. After living in China and being taught Chi Gong by Taoist

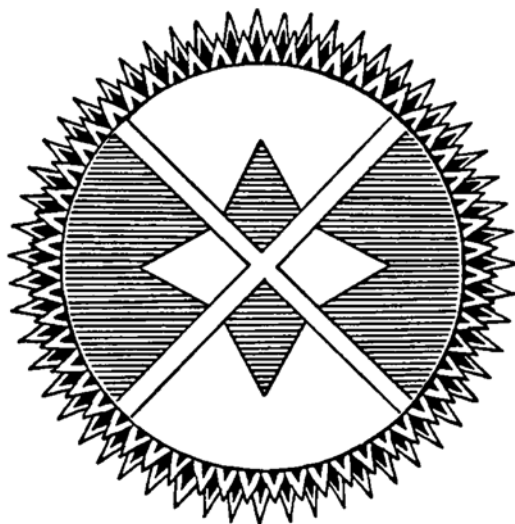
School of Social Work College of Human Ecology www.rjp.umn.edu masters my approach to conflict has profoundly changed. No longer do I focus exclusively on the cognitive and verbal expression of conflict. Instead, I work with the energy of conflict, my own and others. The powerful non-verbal language of our bodies and



spirit are far more potent in both understanding conflict and allowing the path toward healing to be engaged.

The simple act of centering can also be easily integrated into our practice. While centering is part of all the practices already mentioned, it can be used by itself in a quick and practical way by taking a few moments to close the eyes, focus on deeper breathing, imaging a beautiful place in nature or a person who immediately brings you joy, and allowing interruptive thoughts within the mind to simply float away by refocusing on the breath.

Spirituality is a frequently used but often misunderstood concept in Western culture. It tends to be equated with religion, which is confusing to some and disengaging to others. All religions provide an understanding of life, it’s meaning, and it’s relationship to a higher power. Religions have specific beliefs that must be embraced and tend to be highly judgmental and exclusive. While religion



“Spirituality is about the search for ultimate meaning and wholeness in life, despite the pain, suffering, conflict and brokenness present throughout the world.”

has served as a bridge to a deeper experience of spirituality for many, including myself, for others formal religion presents an obstacle to spirituality. For these people, many who have been wounded by formal religions, a different, often non-conventional, spiritual path is chosen. Spirituality, on the other hand, is profoundly non-judgmental and non-separatist, honoring the sacred gift of life and creation. Spirituality is about the search for ultimate meaning and wholeness in life, despite the pain, suffering, conflict and brokenness present throughout the world.

Indigenous cultures have a profound understanding of spirituality and its relationship to peacemaking and healing. For example, the symbol of the Medicine Wheel that is deeply embedded in Native American culture refers to ‘medicine’ as spiritual energy. The Medicine Wheel and its sacred teachings provide powerful guidance to individuals along the path towards mental, physical, emotional and spiritual healing. The sweat lodge and the ritual of smudging through the burning of sage, sweet grass or cedar are additional examples of spiritual practices within Native American culture that foster healing and the calling in of good spirits to live in a good way on the path of peacemaking. Another example is seen in the wisdom of ‘Pa a ka wa ha,’ a core principle of Native Hawaiian healing that requires the healer to close the mouth, be still, and stop talking so much.

The journey of peacemaking and spirituality is best understood through bearing witness to the healing power of story in people’s lives, in many diverse settings. Peacemaking has little to do with problem solving and settlement achievement. Peacemaking goes beyond the presenting issues in conflict, in search of greater empowerment,

meaning, recognition, and healing. Forgiveness and reconciliation are often part of the journey, yet are not to be pushed upon people; they often occur in very authentic spontaneous ways, both explicit in some cases and very subtle in others.

The following case example involves Sarah, a young mother whose father was brutally murdered more than twenty-two years ago, and Jeff, the man in prison for having killed her dad. Extensive in-person preparation of the parties over many months occurred before my co-mediator and I brought them together in a face-to-face dialogue in a prison. The ‘presenting issue’ or perhaps ‘trigger’ was a letter from the department of corrections notifying the victim’s family of the offender’s scheduled appearance before a parole board, since he was now eligible for parole having served so much of his lengthy sentence. Sarah and her family became consumed with intense feelings of vulnerability, anger, and uncertainty. They decided to speak at this hearing and the offender was not approved for release. The following story tells of the courage, strength, and compassion that led to healing for both Sarah and Jeff. This case exemplifies at the deepest level the journey of peacemaking and spirituality. There was no mediator reframing of the participant’s stories in the language of peacemaking and spirituality. Rather, after extensive pre-dialogue preparation through deep listening and gentle guidance, the primary role of the co-mediators was that of bearing witness to the strength, capacity, and compassion of these wounded individuals as they helped each other heal. In more than five hours of the mediated dialogue the two mediators spoke less than twelve minutes combined, yet we both were totally emotionally present, and available to hold the sacred space that emerged.

Sarah contacted me shortly after the parole hearing and expressed her strong inner sense of needing to meet the very man who killed her father so many years ago. Other than her husband, the rest of her family had no interest in following this path. From the very beginning it was clear that she was yearning to find peace within herself and her immediate family. Many months of separate preparation followed with both Sarah and Jeff. During our in-person separate meetings, I was able to understand the life context and needs of Sarah and her husband Rick, as well as Jeff, the offender. In addition to much deep compassionate listening to their stories, I explained how the process works and the fact that there are both benefits and risks in such a dialogue, particularly if people enter the process with unrealistic expectations. I also pointed out that even though many who have chosen a similar path of restorative dialogue have reported the encounter to be



very therapeutic, the actual dialogue is not a form of psychotherapy. Jeff felt tremendous remorse for what he had done and was willing, though scared, to meet with Sarah. For all, this must be an entirely voluntary process. It became increasingly clear in Sarah's own words that she was on an intense spiritual journey to reclaim her soul, her sense of meaning, balance, and wholeness in life.

The mediated dialogue was held in a maximum-security prison. Sarah's husband was present, as well as a support person that Jeff chose. Mediated dialogue refers to a humanistic approach that is very non-directive, honoring the healing power of silence and one's presence. My co-mediator and I practiced mindfulness through centering and breath work both during the preparation and in the dialogue so that our ego's and voices stay out of the way, to allow Sarah and Jeff's strength and wisdom to emerge and flow as it needed to. After very brief opening comments by the mediators, we entered an extended period of silence as Sarah sobbed and tried to find her voice to tell her story. As mediators, we did not intervene to move the process along. Instead, we remained silent. We knew she had the strength and our mindfulness practice allowed us to stay out of the way. Sarah and Jeff told us later that the energy of our presence, the non-verbal language of our spirit, was vital to the process being safe and respectful of their needs and abilities. After nearly four minutes, Sarah found her voice and her story of trauma, loss, and yearning for healing flowed out with strength and clarity. Jeff then offered his story of what happened, how it has affected his life, and the

enormous shame he felt.

They continued to share deeper layers of their stories, interspersed with lingering questions both had. After five hours and shortly before the session ended, following another moment of extended silence, perhaps a minute, Sarah looked directly at Jeff and told him she forgave him for killing her father. She made it clear that this forgiveness was about freeing herself from the pain she has carried with her for more than twenty years. She hoped this forgiveness might help him as well, but Sarah said she could not set her spirit free without forgiving him. Sarah had never indicated in our many months of preparation that forgiveness was an issue she was struggling with, nor did we raise the issue. When she and her husband came to the prison for the dialogue with Jeff, she had no plan whatsoever to offer forgiveness. Yet in the powerful moment of confronting her greatest fear Sarah speaks of how she felt within her soul that 'this is the moment to free myself.' In post-dialogue interviews with Sarah and Jeff they both indicated the enormous affect this encounter had on their lives. Sarah spoke of how meeting Jeff was like going through a fire that burned away her pain and allowed the seeds of healing to take root in her life. She spoke of how before meeting Jeff she carried the pain of her father's death like an ever-present large backpack. After meeting Jeff, the pain is more like a small napsack, still present but very manageable and in no way claiming her life energy and spirit, as before. Jeff reported a sense of release and cleansing, as if his spirit was set free as well.

It would be easy for many to marginalize this

moving story, perceived as a rare occurrence. The reality is that I know of hundreds of similar cases throughout North America and a small but growing number in other parts of the world, including Israel/Palestine, Northern Ireland, and South Africa, many of which I have been personally involved in as a practitioner or researcher.

The journey of peacemaking and spirituality is grounded in practitioners first learning to walk the path themselves, within their personal and professional lives. Finding the still point of power within us is essential, often times through meditation, prayer, meditative movement, or other forms of spiritual practice. This power has nothing to do with control over others. Instead, this power allows us to tame the energy of our mind and ego so that we can be fully present in the most healing capacity with the people we are working with. Power flows from the recognition that it is not about our wisdom or technical expertise, but rather the need to honour the enormous capacity of highly conflicted, and often traumatized, people to find their strength and help each other heal through deep compassionate listening, from speaking and listening from the heart. It is power that recognizes that it is in the energy of our communication, particularly through the non-verbal language of our spirit, that we can offer a sacred place for bearing witness to the healing power of story. The language of our spirit communicates: our authenticity; the congruence between our thoughts, feelings, actions and the higher values we adhere to; our intention; and openness and non-judgmental nature, or lack of. Little children and pets are masters at reading the language of our spirit.

The path of peacemaking and spirituality requires a human connection with the people in conflict whom we are working with, grounded in empathy, support and impartiality. And, it

requires the ability to make no assumptions about the needs of others, so that we as facilitators do not impose our judgments or spiritual needs and practices upon others. Peacemaking with others and within ourselves is about embracing the spiritual wisdom that bridges can in fact be built, no matter how intense the conflict or trauma might be. It's a journey that is ultimately grounded far more in a spirit of humility and compassion than technical expertise and credentials. May we all find the strength to walk this path.

Mark S. Umbreit, Ph.D.

Dr. Mark Umbreit is a Professor and the founding Director of the Center for Restorative Justice & Peacemaking at the University of Minnesota, School of Social Work. He also serves on the faculty of the Center for Spirituality and Healing in the U.of M. Academic Health Centre. Mark is an internationally recognized practitioner and scholar with more than 30 years of experience as a mediator, facilitator, trainer, researcher and author of six books and numerous other publications. As a practitioner, he specializes in facilitating a dialogue between family survivors/victims of severe violence, primarily homicide, and the offender. Mark is actively working with colleagues in Northern Ireland and Israel/Palestine on peacemaking initiatives. Dr. Umbreit is the Boden Chair Visiting Scholar at Marquette University Law School in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Mark Umbreit will be facilitating a conference on: **Restorative Dialogue - Holistic Approach** at Corrymeela's Ballycastle Centre on 12 Oct 2012. To find out more and book your place email: mattscrimgeour@corrymeela.org or call **028 20 761 726**

Further details of all events available on our website CORRYMEELA.ORG



the Corrymeela community

Corrymeela is a living, breathing community
with volunteers from across the globe.

Experience it for yourself with our short, mid
and long term volunteering opportunities.

Belfast 028 9050 8080
Ballycastle 028 2076 2626

corrymeela.org



My first trip to Jerusalem and it seems that every stone has a story.
This is the place where 'X' happened
This is where 'Y' did this
This is a holy place
This is where the world began
This is where the world will end
Grand statements, with every stone given huge significance and scale. Which means that it feels like the small things that make up life can get relegated, and everything poured into a serious melting pot.
And yet I met and laughed with many people, heard their stories and felt a kinship, told my tales and felt a connection.

I came to talk about my land, the north of Ireland, and to offer my experiences of conflict, dialogue and creative ways to build good relations.
I ate well (the salads were enormous)
I walked from the grave of Jesus to his birthplace
I waited in line at checkpoints
I met many people working hard to bring hope to a divided and broken place
We talked and talked and talked... Jerusalem likes to chatter...
And in one session I handed out a stone I had brought from Ireland, a stone held by friends and foes, different tribes.
And I passed it round the room, asking each person to be still and reflect, and to touch the stone that had touched



Every stone
has a story

friend and foe. And the loud room was stilled. And something of the sacred unfolded.
And we all play our part in making new worlds
And we all play our part in ending old worlds
And mostly we make small contributions, but they all add, connect, nurture
And I will never forget my first trip to Jerusalem, a place where every stone tells a story
And the stone that was shared in Jerusalem is now being held in Ireland.

Paul Hutchinson

Paul Hutchinson is the Centre Director at Corrymeela's Ballycastle Centre





My SEED experience at Corrymeela

MY NAME IS YOUNES and I am 19 years old. I grew up in the capital of Morocco, Rabat, one of the country's largest cities with a population reaching two million. I am the oldest in my family and have one brother Moad, 11 and one sister, Imane, 16. I came to Northern Ireland to continue my studying and experience life in a 'peaceful' place. I want to succeed in my life and saw the opportunity to achieve good qualifications through my education here.

I am a full time A-level student in Christian Brother's School and I hope to go to Queen's University when I finish. I am a very active person, I love sports especially swimming and skiing and I play football for NICRAS in my spare time. Last summer the team played in a big tournament of 32 teams and we managed to get through to the final!

I found out about The Corrymeela Community last September from Ivan Cross, Corrymeela's Youth Work Coordinator and was invited by him to join SEED group.

It was a difficult decision for me to get involved with the group, but as I experienced the first weekend in Ballycastle I absolutely loved it. Meeting new people, sharing my own experience and culture and also finding out about other participants backgrounds is fantastic. I have learnt a lot of things from being part of SEED Group, recently we discussed the idea of conflicts that we could come across in our lives between families, friends, siblings and countries... and how we could deal with them. What's even better is that through participation we achieved a CEC level 2 certificate which is equivalent to a GCSE.

Corrymeela has helped me in lots of ways, I am now able to talk in front of people which a great

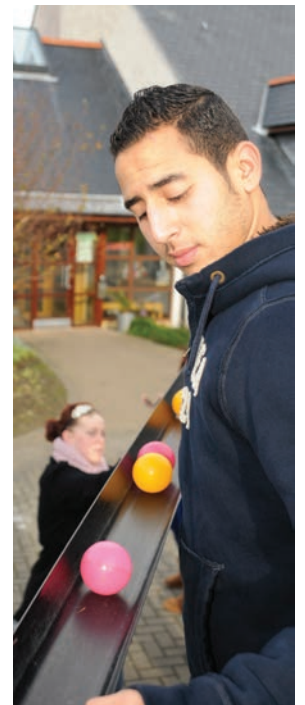
skill to have, I have learnt how to listen to other people and how best to communicate my ideas.

I am an asylum seeker due to some problems back home and I hope I get granted asylum and am able to travel around the world. My first aim is to go to Germany in the summer with Corrymeela's SEED group. I am also planning to carry on my education until I get my PhD in electronic engineering - I have a cousin in Newcastle University who got his doctorate last December - and I am trying to follow his footsteps to achieve my dreams.

I would like to thank The Corrymeela Community for everything that is provided during our residentials and I am really looking forward to our next weekend together.

Younes Talibi

Younes is a participant in SEED Group 2011/12



LIFE – The Greatest Gift



given life, as organ donors. I, like so many others no doubt, gave silent tribute to my own daughter's donors and their families, and remembered the path that led us to this moment.

During our three years living in the Corrymeela Centre, our children had started their time in a local school and nursery and began to sink their roots in Ballycastle – not least, into the local accent. A good place to grow, and David and I moved from one local job to another to make it possible.

Then, one day in November 2007, we noticed Lucia's eyes showed signs of yellow jaundice. The local hospital quickly diagnosed a liver concern and we were transferred to the Royal Hospital for Sick Children, Belfast. Within a couple of days the picture became more serious and we were flown to the Birmingham Children's Hospital. Within a week and a half of spotting the jaundice, Lucia was diagnosed with auto-immune hepatitis and acute liver failure and was on the list for a liver transplant. She was 8 years old.

Somewhere, someone had signed the organ donor register and, at the point of his own death, his generous spirit provided a second chance at life for Lucia. The medical team in Birmingham Children's Hospital held us all as we went through those first intense weeks, and the months of hospital appointments and check-ups that followed.

On the first anniversary of Lucia's transplant, we were back in Birmingham signing a consent form for Lucia to be put on the transplant list again after it became clear the first liver would not survive a combination of rejection and a virus.

SHE WAS A TINY BUNDLE when we brought her to Corrymeela. A few months old, looked on with delight by her three-year-old sister. We were the first Resource couple to arrive with young children so we weren't the only ones who had to get used to having a baby and a young girl attend meetings and workshops. Rice crackers for her big sister and breastfeeding for Lucia – oh, how good as a young mum to be in a welcoming and human working environment!

It was a 'shared care scheme', as the long-term volunteers whisked the girls away for a break in the tension of their hectic programmes or tried to coax Lucia into taking her first steps towards them as we watched on.

Last summer, in Göteborg, Sweden, I watched as Lucia stood on the blocks in the Valhalla Swimming Hall, preparing to take a plunge of a different kind. This was the World Transplant Games with 1,150 athletes from 51 nations.

Sitting in the theatre at the Opening Ceremony, it was profoundly moving to see so many athletes from so many different parts of the world, each the recipient of one or more organ donations, and know that, were it not for their donors and the medical expertise in transplantation, most of them would not be alive.

The president of the Games organising committee, Anders Olsson, began his speech with "You are the Winners!" reminding us that every one of the competitors had already triumphed against heavy odds to win – life! – the greatest prize of all. To illustrate the point he presented a giant cup, on which had been engraved the names of every one of the athletes. "Champions all," he said, "and some of you will also go home with medals."

We shared a moment's silence to remember all those who had died while waiting for a matching organ, and for those others who had died but also



50m Freestyle

This time the liver failure was chronic rather than acute and so the wait began for a matching organ to be found. Lucia's health deteriorated until, a couple of months later, the day Barack Obama was inaugurated as President of the USA, we were called back to the hospital. Again came the long operation, the waiting for fragile signs of recovery, and the weeks of recuperation before returning to Ballycastle.

On each occasion, wrapped around the whole experience has been a deep sense of grace, accompaniment, skill and courage, and sheer human kindness. From surgeons, consultants, nurses and all in the NHS system that made it work so well, to countless family, friends, acquaintances, and others unknown to us and in different countries, each

Extract from Lucia's Diary

"My race came up and I went to my block. Then the three short blasts of the whistle sounded and I stepped onto the marble block and I was suddenly not so scared but really, really excited. Then the one long whistle went and I bent down into position.

Finally the man said "On your marks!" into a speaker and we all leant forward. Now I was scared, but in a good way. Then I heard the buzzer go and we all dived smooth and long into the cold water of the pool. I kept long streamline for about a quarter of the pool and then got my arms and legs going fast. As I came up to the top of the pool I prepared for my tumble turn, took a breath, tucked my head in and curled up my legs and propelled myself forward and hit my feet hard off the wall and got going again. I came in third in my age group and got bronze. Nicole got gold and a girl from Hungary got silver. We all went up to the podium and held up our flags."

drop of goodness has made up the reservoir our family has been able to drink from throughout this experience.

Corrymeela even had a connection in the Birmingham Hospital in Dr Janet McDonagh, a good friend from a Corrymeela family, now working in Birmingham as consultant and lecturer in Paediatric & Adolescent Rheumatology. There was constant support also from dear friends, Inderjit and Kathy Bhogal, now a leading family in the Corrymeela Community.

As part of re-establishing her healthy balance, Lucia was encouraged to continue her sporting activities and to participate in the UK Transplant Games. After a successful round of medal winning in the Games in Bath 2010, she was invited onto the team to represent the UK in Sweden this summer. And so to Göteborg. An exciting experience, four medals and some new friends later, Lucia is back at school again and in training for next year's UK Transplant Games in London, hoping to use some of the Olympic facilities!

But Lucia is also a champion campaigner in the making, with a commitment to raising funds for the Children's Liver Disease Foundation. This support group for children and their families affected by liver disease also educates on the importance of early recognition of possible symptoms, such as yellow jaundice.

Lucia is equally passionate about the importance of the Organ Donor Register. Two people who thought about it have already saved her life. In the UK, about 1000 people will die each year because there are not enough donors. More than two-thirds of the NI population say we agree with the need to become donors and intend to join the register 'sometime' – but less than one-third of us ever do.

The British Transplant Games held in Belfast in August this year have played their part. This fantastic event was a wonderful celebration of health and life for all. The organisers set a target to increase the numbers on the register to 30% of the population of Northern Ireland. The target was reached just before the games began!

In June this year, in Newtownards, the 'New Life Garden,' was opened by Ards Borough Council and dedicated to recognising the gift of life provided by organ donors and their families.

Nevertheless, the generosity of others needs to continue in order to save the lives of those waiting for a transplant across the UK.

Have you spoken with your family and friends about it, and signed up yourself?

<http://www.organdonation.nhs.uk/>

Rachel, David and Lucia Quinney Mee

Our Peace Walls

ON THE MORNING of September 24 2011, as friends and members gathered for Inderjit's Commissioning later that day, we closed the wall of the Croi, meaning 'heart', at Corrymeela. We put 'Road Closed' signs on either side of the wall and young people directed the worshippers to one side or the other and divided worship began. After a few minutes we opened the wall temporarily.

There are 53 official maintained Peace Walls in Belfast. The Institute for Conflict Research has estimated that there may be as many as 35 more unofficial ones, making a total of 88, the last one having been built in 2008. There are more Peace Walls now than there were in 1988. As most of you know, Peace Walls are a nice way of saying what the Minister of Justice David Ford calls, Division Walls or Hatred Walls.

In the Croi on this day, you were directed to sit in certain places because that is still the way our society works; mostly people will only feel safe on one side of the wall or the other. The Peace Walls were built because people on either side are frightened of each other and of violence - they divide people who are Catholics from Protestants, Unionists from Nationalists, Irish from British, or any of the different ways people describe themselves. In north Belfast, the number of reported incidents at the Peace Walls has gone down by a quarter in the last few years. However, hate crime is still very much a part of our society, directed against people who are considered to be different; immigrants, people of different ethnicities, skin colours and sexual orientation. There is also violence from old

political groups against the police, attempts that often also endanger members of the public, with a viable bomb or an attack, on average, every three to six days. The Peace Walls are only one sign that Northern Ireland is still marked by violence and fear.

But I would also like to report to you some changes. At a Peace Wall in Alexandra Park, gates were opened to allow people to go through to the other side, with photos capturing the moment when two school children meet across the gate for the first time, and then photos of some of the people who used it the next day to walk their dogs or wheel their pushchairs, enjoying the park in other ways. There are more walls to be opened too, thanks to the work of community groups and the efforts of the ordinary people who live near these walls.

So, why do we have walls? What can help bring them down?

Recently in north Belfast, I witnessed people who were trying to disrupt a discussion regarding the walls.

Minister of Justice David Ford said, 'We still need structures where people feel secure. But we will not make people feel more secure by building barriers, but by building relationships.'

A Chief Inspector who is the Commander of a large area of north Belfast said, whether the walls brought peace was debatable. He shared that research shows that Peace Walls attract people from outside the area to make trouble near them. But he said, 'Some communities still want to see these (walls) exist.'

Duncan Morrow said, 'Poverty contributes to the walls and the walls contribute to poverty.'

Brendan Clarke, of the north Belfast Interface Network, the sponsor of the event, said, 'The



removal of interface walls and barriers is dependent on communities feeling secure enough that they can come down. It is dependent on those residents living in the closest proximity of the interfaces and should be at the heart of programme for government.’ His organisation has initiated a cross-community project to draw down the walls. The vision for this project, with young people in close proximity to the walls, is to create the conditions to imagine a city without barriers.

Now ten years in Belfast, what I notice is this: the walls started in people’s heads and hearts and the built walls became physical barriers. Then the physical barriers started working in our heads and our hearts until they became normal. Walls for many people, including us, are unquestioned, considered normal instead of scandalous and they remain a symbol of our inability to live together.

A city that is divided against itself 88 times is

not a city at ease with itself. Corrymeela should not be at ease with it either. It is a sign of a society that is rife with violence and the fear of violence.

As we continued in worship, we close the wall again, to remind us of the challenge and the invitation for Corrymeela to renew efforts in the years ahead.

Corrymeela: we live in a divided and violent society in a divided and violent world. The walls are still out there and they are still in here, in our heads and in our hearts. Corrymeela, we have work to do.

...we sang together, and the young people closed the wall and divided the Croi once more.

Rebecca Dudley

Rebecca is Human Rights Training Advisor at Civil Service and is a Corrymeela Member

A word about conflict

FOR NINE YEARS, I had the privilege of working with the fledgling Anglican Church in Ethiopia, serving three distinct tribal groups on the Sudanese border. The small Opo tribe farm the heart of the sparse forest where they live; the Annuak, farm the alluvial plains either side of the great tributary of the Nile that runs through the region and the Nuer, the largest tribe are pastoralists. Conflict over access to land and water is inevitable and these conflicts, deep-seated, with a long history, are often carried over into the life of the church. Often, the conflict was petty, but sometimes, it was deadly serious – literally.

It is a tribute to them that we managed to laugh as well as weep with these friends of ours many times throughout our time there. We spent hours together in long conflict-resolution meetings. In fact, meetings often took several days – and my role was simply to sit and listen, keeping track of every twist and nuance in the dialogue until everyone had their say.

However outrageous someone was being, I knew, because they told me, that my task was to be like the tribal chief – quiet and respectful, keeping what they call a ‘cool heart’ - not being drawn into the conflict myself, but simply listening attentively so that, with a quiet voice, never a raised one, I could sum up by speaking the truth to each side and then sharing the wisdom of my judgement. It all sounds very paternalistic, and it probably is – but

these traditional conflict resolution mechanisms have saved many a dispute from turning into bloodshed.

Here, it is often different. The advent of speedy email communication means that disagreement escalates rapidly into conflict because people feel free to vent their anger and frustration far too quickly to people they may never have met face to face. I am finding that they often don’t even regret it later. What would it take for us, as a culture, to recover the mutual respect, patience and ‘cool heart’ with which our brothers and sisters in Africa resolve conflict today – and which, I am sure, our ancestors did, too? Quite possibly by having more face-to-face meetings. What do you think?



The Right Reverend Andrew Proud

The Right Reverend Andrew Proud is Bishop of Reading and has recently become a Patron of Corrymeela Friends GB

Sanctuary for all

THE INTEGRATION of refugees, asylum seekers and those seeking sanctuary among us is essential in the work of peace and reconciliation.

Corrymeela developed a new and creative programme in partnership with the Northern Ireland Community of Refugees and Asylum Seekers and the Inclusive Neighbourhood Project which specifically aimed to contribute to

the aid of refugees and asylum seekers in Northern Ireland. Sadly, the funding for this work has ended. But the work and aims remain important. I am hopeful that a similar project will emerge soon.

In 2005, before I came to work with Corrymeela, I helped initiate The City of Sanctuary in Sheffield.

This movement has seen remarkable growth. There are now 20 Cities with City of Sanctuary groups.

The objective of the City of Sanctuary movement is to build cultures of welcome and hospitality for those fleeing persecution, and seeking sanctuary.

Sheffield became UK's first City of Sanctuary, a city where more than one hundred organisations, as well as the local council, have committed to working together towards a city of welcome, hospitality and safety that citizens can be proud to live in. This is community cohesion in action.

Sanctuary is an ancient idea. The Hebrew



tradition enshrined sanctuary into legal codes of their society when six Cities of Refuge were established, see Numbers 35:6-34; Joshua 20:1-9; Deuteronomy 4:41-43.

The idea came into Western Europe through its adoption by the Church. In Britain, the first Christian martyr, St Alban, was canonised for giving sanctuary to a foreigner whose life was in danger. In Ireland, sanctuary was a regular part of the service provided by monasteries as long ago as the 5th Century, at Nendrum on the shores of Strangford Lough.

Hospitality is at the heart of Irish and other cultures. We are more truly ourselves, and rooted in our traditions, when we offer hospitality to 'the stranger', and move to a point when we are family, and strangers no more.

The original vision of Corrymeela was to build an open inclusive community where people of all backgrounds would be welcome.

This work is no less urgent and important than it was in 1965 as we seek to grow in peace by doing all we can to end hatred and hostility, to build communities and cultures of welcome and hospitality in which all are welcome, and belong equally.

The Inclusive Neighbourhood Programme has shown us practical ways to move forward. We can achieve more when we work together.

At neighbourhood level, we can all do something in our daily lives to build cultures of welcome and hospitality.

There is a City of Sanctuary working group established in Derry/Londonderry. During Refugee Week, a similar group will be launched in Belfast. The City of Dublin is also working towards this.

Corrymeela will continue to work in partnership with others and sustain its original vision with a contemporary expression in our richly diverse world.

Inderjit Bhogal



St Alban

Authentic Forgiveness



Authentic forgiveness is a gift of awakening, a freeing of one's spirit, a release of long held toxic energy.

Forgiveness is more of a direction than a destination, a way of life grounded in an attitude of humility and compassion.

Authentic forgiveness has little to do with moral obligations or externally imposed values.

Mark Umbreit PhD

Mark is the founding Director of the Centre for Restorative Justice & Peacemaking.

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