

**Fundraiser / Pasta Dinner – Save the Date! Oct. 26**

We are trying a new type of fundraiser this fall. Please save the date!! **Sunday, Oct. 26, 12:00 noon —5:00 pm at Rick's Prime Rib, 898 Buffalo Road in Rochester.**

Tickets are \$8 each, or maximum of \$35 per family. Please visit our website for advance tickets: <http://www.irishchildrensprogram.com>

The proceeds will assist us with the cost of airfare for each Belfast child we bring to Rochester for the summer. Hope to see you there!!



**A Word from President of ICP Board, Belfast**



My journey with the Irish Children's Program began in 2002. As a 13yr old girl, it was the opportunity of a lifetime. Back then, there was no such thing as Facebook, Twitter or Wifi. All of the ICP information I received was reliant on the program's representatives in my school, Saint Joseph's College in Belfast.

I found Rochester, New York on the map and waited to hear from my American family by mail. When the letter arrived, I was so excited to finally 'meet' my Host Family. I didn't realize at that time I was making friends for life. Inside the letter were pictures of the Prince family who would host me, letters from their extended family and most importantly an email address.

That night, I waited patiently for the dial up internet to connect me to my new family. Ten years later, the program is still providing opportunities for both our families. We've continued our relationship with the Princes like extended family who live too far away, but have become holiday host families to each

other, traveling back and forth between Belfast and the USA.

As chair of the Belfast board, I have re-connected with the Belfast kids I came to America with ten years ago. I also managed to recruit them to join the Belfast ICP board. They have happily come alongside me to help with fundraisers, recruiting new children and managing the paper work which goes on behind all the fun.

My journey has gone full circle, from the apprehensive child from Belfast embarking on an adventure, to experiencing the program from the other side. It has truly deepened my admiration for all those who volunteer, especially in the USA, to provide children with such love and fun for an entire summer.

I just can't thank the ICP enough for all the opportunities they've provided. It gives me so much pleasure to tell the Belfast kids of the fun they'll have and watch their faces light up. I'm sure my face lights up as well as I reflect on my own time in the program and imagine the adventures, fun and memories they will make.

**Dominique Stitt**, current President of the ICP Board in Belfast, Northern Ireland.

**"Peace Through Understanding"**

**Special points of interest:**

- > Belfast ICP President's Letter— Dominique Stitt
- > Pasta Dinner
- > Messages from Belfast Chaperone, a Host Family, and Youth Board

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## Belfast Board & friends



**Standing (L-R):** Pamela Whyte, Darren Whyte, Richard Stones, Dominique Stitt\*, Kevin Black\*, Clare Mercer\* (2014 chaperone), Brian McLoughlin, Daniel Higgins\*, Leah Goodall\*, David Robinson. **Seated:** Angela Zale (Rochester Board member and 2014 chaperone), Sharon Kiernan, Daniel Donnelly\*, Michelle Cassidy\*. **Missing board members:** Mary Hughes\*, Neil Poland\*, & Jenny Stewart\*.

\* = Belfast Board Member

## Summer Chaperone from Belfast for 2014: Clare Mercer

As I write this on the plane journey home, while the children are sleeping, I enjoy the quiet time to reflect on the past five weeks... and what a blast I have had.

I'm looking around and I see 8 very different kids than the ones I brought to America with me. They have all grown and changed in so many ways. They are tanned for a start, and some are taller. But the changes I see are not always physical. Their personalities have developed through their experiences and time here, they have gained confidence and most importantly they have made wonderful friendships.

I feel very privileged to be part of the ICP and also to have been the chaperone this year. It's been a different experience than 12 years ago when I came over through the program as a child. But it has been just as much fun and definitely so rewarding. It has been wonderful to catch up with old friends and make new ones, catch up with my American "family" and see the sights. One of my favorites was screaming until my throat hurts on all the rides at Sea Breeze. Some things never change!!

None of this would be possible without the continued hard work of both the Rochester and Belfast ICP boards.

Of course, the program would not exist at all without the Rochester area host families who open their homes and hearts to us all. I want to thank everyone for this.

I would especially like to thank my host families, Bob and Marianne, Sue and Jim, and Gina and Stephen who all treated me so well, looked after me when I had a "wee tumble" and thoroughly spoilt me during my time at their homes.

It has been a truly wonderful experience and I hope to see you all again. I also hope this program continues to make a difference in children's lives for years to come.

**Clare Mercer,**  
Belfast Board



DONATIONS CAN BE MAILED TO  
ADDRESS ON LAST PAGE OR  
ONLINE AT OUR  
WEBSITE: [http://  
www.irishchildrensprogram.com](http://www.irishchildrensprogram.com)

Rochester Irish Children's  
Program



**SUMMER FUN 2014**



## One Host Family's Experience – the Hanna Family

This summer we had the pleasure of hosting two Belfast children in our home. One was Protestant and the other Catholic. Throughout the five weeks, we gained much insight to the continued segregation of the religions and life that still exists throughout Belfast.

The girls had very different outlooks of their home in Belfast. Keeping in mind that they lived within walking distance from each other - in a city the size of Rochester - they had never heard of each other's schools. Too many times to count, they would disagree over what culture and life was like back in Belfast. From innocuous things like whether or not Fluff was available to more deeply personal things like identity. Our Protestant girl would say that she was from the UK. Our Catholic girl would label herself as Irish. Both of their families would claim they were not at all political which leads us to believe there are inherent differences in their life experiences.

The summer brought these very different girls together in a safe environment for them to see that they could get along even though their belief system was different. While both come from

small families with large gaps in ages between siblings, they came into a family with six children aged 4 to 14. They had to share their space and bathrooms with each other.

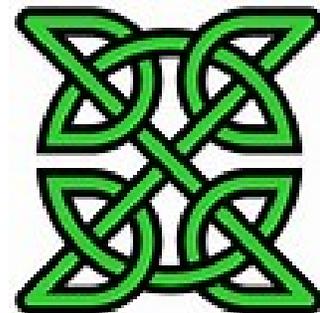
Almost immediately they became sisters in this crazy family. They had to pitch in to help with the day to day chores. The girls learned to take turns with all 10 of us to shower and to save the precious hot water for the next one. They helped watch over the younger kids at various public events we went to. They bickered with each other like sisters about who was sitting where in the car and talked with each other into the wee hours of the night about school and friends and dreams. Lauren and Abbi did it all together without the thought that one was from another part of Belfast than the other or came from a different religious background. They were just girls enjoying their holiday and enjoying each other.

I'm not sure what they will take back with them to Belfast but I know for the 5 weeks they were here in America, they were able to be girls from Belfast, experiencing an opportunity of a lifetime, but more importantly, they were friends.

**Tom & Karis Hanna**



**Tom & Karis Hanna with their children: Thomas, Lauren (Belfast), Abbi (Belfast), Ciara, Elizabeth, Daniel, Mary Sarah, and (in front) Liadan.**



**INTERESTED IN HOSTING NEXT SUMMER? VISIT OUR WEBSITE AND CLICK ON THE EMAIL LINK ON OUR MAIN PAGE.**  
<http://www.irishchildrensprogram.com>

## Messages from Youth Board

"My family has hosted Belfast children through the ICP for 3 summers. It's been a wonderful experience for me and my family. Never did I think I would become best friends with someone from Northern Ireland.

It's great to be able to learn what's going on in Northern Ireland in the present moment. This year, although we didn't host, I was able to stay involved as a member of the ICP Youth Board. I was involved with planning the activities and was able to get to know the kids and make new friends. We went to the movies, tie-dyed t-shirts, went fishing and two of my new Belfast friends visited the horse farm where I work.

Overall, the ICP creates strong bonds between families here and families an ocean away. I am so grateful to be part of the ICP both as a prior host child, and now as a member of the Youth Board."

**Amy Condoluci**



Jenna & Amy Condoluci

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These past summers have really changed my life. Because of ICP, I have made so many new life-long friends and so many memories. At first when my parents asked me about the program, I wasn't really up for it but I am so glad that we did it! It's pretty cool to think one of my best friends lives in Ireland! The first year Eireann left I was pretty upset but the next year when she came back, we picked up right where we left off. From the day she got here to the day she left we were inseparable. Being a part of this program was so much fun. I really hope to have Eireann come back or even go over to Ireland someday.

**Victoria Donahue**

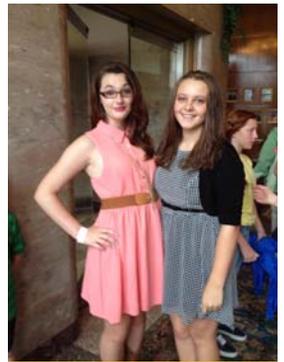


Victoria & Eireann

My mom said, "Valerie, how would you feel about having a girl from Northern Ireland come stay with us for the summer...?"

Of course I couldn't say no. I'm always up to trying new things. My mom then asked if I would like to be part of the Irish Children's Program. At the beginning of 2013, we started fundraising to bring the kids from Belfast NI here. We sold carnations at the mall, which was pretty fun even though I was too shy to ask people if they wanted flowers. We walked in the parade. That was super fun because I used to go and watch it, but this time I got to walk in it.

The match up meeting rolled around and I was very nervous. I was nervous to see who they were going to match my family and I up with. I was super nervous in general. It felt like a lifetime until they called our name to tell us who we got. Finally they called our name and they told us we got Tiernagh.



Valerie & Tiernagh

It was about 11 at night when Tiernagh and the others arrived. I was exhausted, because the night before I got very little sleep because I was so excited. They put the Belfast kids behind a wall so we couldn't see them. Then they called our names to meet them.

When our name was called, Tiernagh and I walked closer and closer towards each other and we hugged. That night was probably the best night because it was the night I finally got to meet her.

Anyways I wrote all that because the summers I spent with Tiernagh were the best summers I ever had. We made so many memories and a lot of new friends. I was super nervous at first but once she got here it was like we were really good friends. And when she came back this year it was like she never left. We picked up right where we left off.

Nothing can prepare you for how much fun you'll have while they are here. I was afraid I would end up hating it but to be honest I really enjoyed it. The Irish Children's Program has helped me become less shy around people. It helped me come out of my shell, and it gave me a summer that I'll never forget.

**Valerie Lane**

Visit us on the Web: <http://www.irishchildrensprogram.com>  
and on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/irishchildrensprogram>



**IRISH CHILDREN'S  
PROGRAM**  
*of Rochester*

E-mail:  
[president@irishchildrensprogram.com](mailto:president@irishchildrensprogram.com)

**SAVE THE DATE!  
SUNDAY, OCT. 26—12—5PM  
PASTA DINNER  
RICK'S PRIME RIB, 898 BUFFALO ROAD  
VISIT OUR WEBSITE (ABOVE) FOR ADVANCE TICKETS**



**ICP Rochester Board Members**—Seated: Gary Roscoe, Gina Michener, Bob Tucker. Middle Row: Cindy Storace, Elaine Hart, Kathy Salvati, Kathy Danzinger, Suzanne Donahue, Paul Donahue. Back Row: Kathy Mashewske, Angela Zale, Jeff Danzinger, Sue Flanagan, Dave Mashewske, Stephanie Cassidy. Missing: Tim Cassidy and Tom Hanna

**DONATIONS CAN BE  
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ONLINE AT OUR  
WEBSITE**

Irish Children's Program of Rochester  
PO Box 22983  
Rochester, NY 14692

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