



# THE IRISH AMERICAN PARTNERSHIP

Supporting Education in Ireland, North and South

# ACTIVITY REPORT

# 2015

Spring



## From the desk of the Executive Director

Thanks to your generous support, this has been a monumental year for the Partnership. We sent \$701,000 to Ireland, directly benefiting 97 schools and hundreds of students. Your contributions funded direct grants to primary schools, science teacher training programs, university access scholarships, and employment learning programs across the North and South, providing vital services for students in a period of severe budget cuts to education.

Since June 2014, we have made substantial progress in our mission to empower the next generation through the support of educational initiatives. Some highlights include:

- Travel grants for **31 schools** to attend the RDS Primary Science Fair
- **\$208,650** towards **community programs**, which provide an education outside the classroom
- **\$40,000** towards **University Access Scholarships**, easing the burden of a college education for disadvantaged students

I can tell you that there is no one more appreciative of these grants than the rural school teachers and students, who regard these checks not only as a means to upgrade their literacy materials or science supplies, but as an affirmation of their hard work and dedication. As the Chairman of Nagle Rice National School in County Kerry wrote: "It is certainly empowering and encouraging to the young and not so young when we're the beneficiaries of such support from people who have left our shores."

Thanks for all you do,  
Mary Sugrue McAleer

## PRIMARY FAIR INSPIRES PASSION FOR SCIENCE

For the students at **Scoil Naomh Fionan** in Nohaval village, Cork, an early wake-up was a small price to pay for the chance to participate in the RDS Primary Science Fair in Dublin. Bleary eyed, the class met at the train station at 4:30am, eager to present their project on biodynamic gardening. The students examined whether biodynamic or random gardening produces "better, bigger, and nicer" plants.

Biodynamic gardening incorporates astrology into sowing and planting. As the students wrote, "Biodynamic Gardening is where you plan plants according to the moon. For

example carrots might grow better on a full moon or beetroot might grow better on a half-moon on a Saturday." The entire class had a time to remember at the Fair and was appreciative of the Partnership grant for making it possible.

"We loved every minute of our day."- Holly, Muireann, Shane, Des, and Eoin of Carrakennedy National School

**Carrakennedy National School** Principal Aideen Paul said "We left our school at 5:15am and returned at 9:45pm-exhausted after a fun filled day! We were delighted to meet with Mr. Kevin O'Malley-the American Ambassador to Ireland at the Primary Science Fair. He told us about his ancestors who were originally from our hometown of **Westport!**" Holly, Muireann, Shane, Des, and

### DONATIONS ALWAYS WELCOME

While this is not a fundraising document, the Partnership welcomes support from any donor who wishes to participate. Donors may select a specific school, village, town, or county as a recipient of their gift.

## THE IRISH AMERICAN PARTNERSHIP

The Irish American Partnership works to empower the next generation of Irish leaders by supporting educational initiatives through direct grants to primary schools, science teacher training, university access scholarships, and employment learning programs. The Partnership provides forums for visiting leaders from Ireland to speak in the U.S., connecting Irish-Americans with their heritage and promoting economic development through tourism, trade, and mutual exchange.

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

John P. Murray, *Chairman*  
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Eoin of Carrakennedy said "we loved every minute of our day." For them, the highlights of the fair included meeting Ambassador O'Malley and the chance to see Titan the Robot.

For the past two years, the Irish American Partnership has supported the Royal Dublin Society's Primary Science Fair, held in Dublin each year.

The RDS Primary Science Fair provides a forum for young students to investigate a scientific inquiry and present their conclusions in an exciting, non-competitive environment. The Fair instills a passion for science at a young age and aims to develop teachers' confidence in the science curriculum. However, many of the small schools do not have the funds to send their entire class the long way to Dublin. The Partnership provided travel grants of \$450 to 31 schools, subsidizing or completely covering their travel expenses.

The RDS Primary Science Fair aims to develop students' scientific skills and curiosity. It is a venue for students to develop numeracy and literacy skills, exchange ideas, and for teachers to gain a professional network of contacts to

share best practices. Students are encouraged to design a project, investigate a question, and analyze their results. The Fair is not a competition; rather, it is a team presentation to gain feedback from peers and teachers outside of their own school. It is run concurrently with the BT Young Scientist Fair, sparking an interest in science and presenting a clear path to future

opportunities in the field. Many of the primary students will go on to participate in BT Young Scientist due to their early exposure to the excitement surrounding the Fair.

The 120 schools participating in the Fair represent 25 counties in Ireland, North and South, coming as far as Tyrone, Cork, Mayo and Wexford. This year, the fair was oversubscribed by 130%, with half of the schools being first-time entrants.



Carrakennedy National School, Co. Mayo with U.S. Ambassador to Ireland Kevin O'Malley at the RDS Primary Science Fair



Students from Ballyvaughan National School, Co. Clare display their trophy at the RDS Primary Science Fair





### PARTNERSHIP DONATES \$30,000 TO THE NI HUMAN RIGHTS FUND

This year, the Partnership was proud to donate the proceeds of the Nollaig na mBan and St. Patrick's Day breakfast celebrations to the Community Foundation for Northern Ireland's new initiative, the Northern Ireland Human Rights Fund. The \$30,000 grant will be matched by Atlantic Philanthropies, doubling its impact. Unlike other campaigns, this fundraising drive will completely be spent down in ten years, giving civil society the resources needed to enact substantive change.

The Community Foundation has been driving social change in local communities for 30 years through successful grant-making and fund development, encouraging peace and equality, and promoting community development to alleviate poverty among the most disadvantaged. Their new initiative, the Northern Ireland Human Rights Fund, is an effort to:

1. Embed a culture of rights throughout Northern Ireland
2. Build a fair and just society based on the principles of equality and respect
3. Consolidate the peace process by delivering the commitments on human rights and civic participation made in the Belfast/ Good Friday Agreement

The Community Foundation and The Atlantic Philanthropies have committed a combined £4 million to the Fund already, and Atlantic has vowed to match additional contributions to the Community Foundation up to £3 million.



### SUPPORTING THE RESTORATION OF KYLEMORE ABBEY

When the Benedictine nuns of Kylemore Abbey closed the doors to their world-renowned boarding school in 2010, they were left to decide the very future of the Abbey. While the prospect of reinventing the nature of the institution may sound intimidating to most, the sisters embraced it as an opportunity to share their monastic hospitality with the community. These shrewd businesswomen created a long-term plan for maintenance and renovation of the property, ensuring it will be a space for tourism, education, and rejuvenation for decades to come.

They opened the Abbey to tourists, allowing visitors to hike the 1,000 acre estate, wander the beautiful Victorian walled gardens, and revel in the architecture of the Gothic Church for a small admission fee. While the sisters raise some revenue from their enterprises on the property, they also rely on an international fundraising campaign to make their restoration project possible.

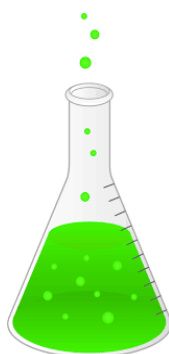
Over the past year, the Partnership has given \$45,000 to Kylemore Abbey and facilitated another \$127,000 in contributions. The Partnership is proud to partner with the inspirational Benedictine nuns of Kylemore Abbey and looks forward to seeing the property restored to its former glory.

## 2014 by the Numbers



**86.8%** **\$701,000**  
OF REVENUE  
WAS SPENT ON  
PROGRAM COSTS  
went to Ireland

Over **97**  
Irish schools  
benefited from a  
Partnership grant



**\$33,000**  
were spent on  
science teacher  
training programs

**31** schools  
received travel grants  
to attend the RDS  
Primary Science Fair



# PARTNERSHIP GRANTS

JUNE 2014-APRIL 2015

## COUNTY ROSCOMMON

\$1,000	Castlereia
	Scoil Naisiunta Mhuire Lourdes
\$1,000	Castlereia
	Tibohine National School
\$1,000	Castlereia
	Fairymount National School
\$1,000	Castlereia
	Scoil Naisiunta Lios a Cuill M
\$1,000	Castlereia
	Ballangare National School

## COUNTY LEITRIM

\$1,000	Carrick-on-Shannon
	Fatima National School
\$1,000	Carrigallen
	Drumeela National School
\$1,000	Carrigallen
	Carrigallen National School
\$1,000	Carrick-on-Shannon
	Scoil Naisiunta Naomh Padriag

## COUNTY LONGFORD

\$3,500	Longford
	St. Mel's College

## COUNTY SLIGO

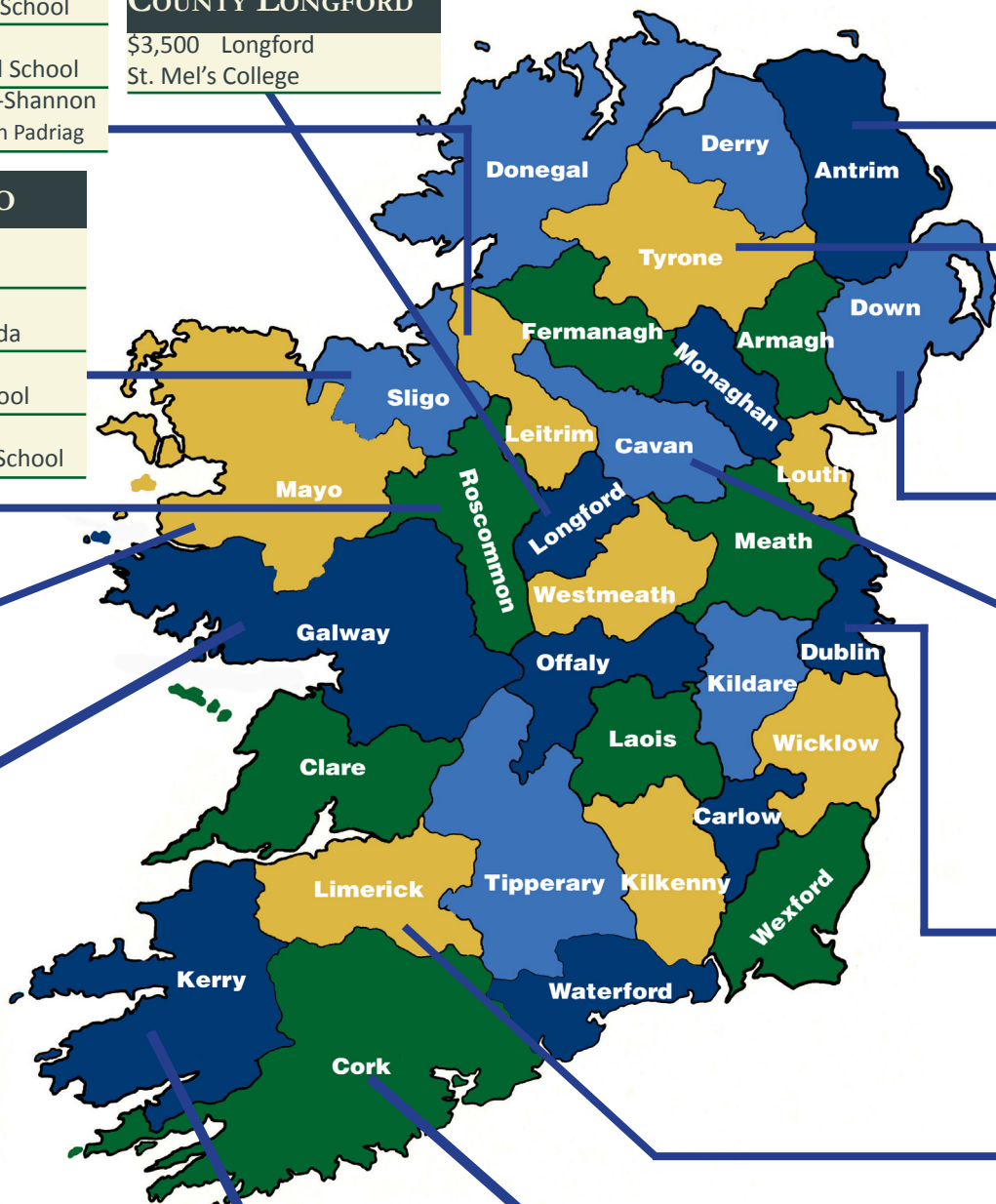
\$1,000	Ballymote
	Scoil Croi Naofa
\$1,000	Ballymote
	Scoil Naisiunta Cul Fada
\$1,000	Ballymote
	Killaville National School
\$1,000	Culleens
	St. Joseph's National School

## COUNTY MAYO

\$500	Shrule
	St. Joseph's National School
\$500	Castlebar
	Breaffy National School
\$500	Claremorris
	St. John's National School

## COUNTY GALWAY

\$4,500	Aran Islands
	Aran Islands GAA
\$750	Aran Islands
	Scoil Naisiunta Caomhain
\$750	Aran Islands
	Scoil Naisiunta Eoin Pol II
\$750	Aran Islands
	Scoil Naisiunta Inis Meadhoin
\$750	Aran Islands
	Scoil Naisiunta Ronain
\$25,000	Connemara
	Kylemore Abbey



## Science Teacher Training

COUNTY MAYO	{ \$12,000 AWARDED }
Bekan National School	Claremorris
Culleens National School	Meelick
Culmore National School	Swinford
Killasser National School	Swinford
Barnacogue National School	Swinford
Kinaffe National School	Swinford
Carrowmore National School	Swinford
The Neale National School	Ballinrobe
Ballycushion National School	Shrule

COUNTY KILKENNY	{ \$11,000 AWARDED }
Scoil Mhuire	Mullinhone
Skeoughvosteen National School	Skeoughvosteen
Lisnafunchion National School	Castlecomer
St. Kiernan's National School	Johnstown
St. Nicolas National School	Windgap
Clonoulty National School	Cashel

## COUNTY KERRY

\$500	Castlegregory
	Castlegregory Mixed National School
\$500	Tarbert
	Tarbert National School
\$500	Tralee
	Ballymacelligott 1 National School

## COUNTY CORK

\$2,000	Inchigeela
	Inchigeela National School
\$2,000	Drinagh
	Derryclough National School
\$2,000	Fermoy
	Kilmagner National School
\$2,000	Mallow
	Mallow Development Project
\$500	Kanturk
	Convent School of Mercy
\$2,000	Banteer
	Banteer National School
\$1,000	Glantane
	Glantane National School



## COUNTY ANTRIM

\$5,000	<i>Belfast</i>
Avoniel Primary School	
\$5,000	<i>Belfast</i>
St. Louise's Comprehensive College	
\$10,000	<i>Belfast</i>
Ulster University	
\$30,000	<i>Belfast</i>
Community Foundation for NI	

## COUNTY TYRONE

\$5000	<i>Omagh</i>
Ulster American Folk Park	
\$500	<i>Carrickmore</i>
St. Columbkille's Primary School	

## COUNTY DOWN

\$10,000	<i>Portadown</i>
Portadown Integrated Primary	

## COUNTY CAVAN

\$500	<i>Crosserlough</i>
St. Mary's National School	

## COUNTY DUBLIN

\$5,000	<i>Dublin City</i>
Dublin City University	
\$23,000	<i>Dublin City</i>
St. Patrick's College	
\$10,000	<i>Dublin City</i>
Trinity College	
\$10,000	<i>Dublin City</i>
Fasttrack to IT	

## COUNTY LIMERICK

\$500	<i>Limerick City</i>
St. Nessian's Secondary School	
\$2,500	<i>Limerick City</i>
Scoil Chriost Ri	
\$2,500	<i>Limerick City</i>
John F. Kennedy Memorial School	
\$10,000	<i>Limerick City</i>
Mary Immaculate College	
\$1,000	<i>Newcastle West</i>
Monagea National School	

## Additional Educational Funding

Shannon School of Hotel Management	\$10,000
<i>Shannon, Co. Clare</i>	
Kylemore Education Center	\$93,770
<i>Connemara, Co. Galway</i>	
University College Dublin	\$4,500
<i>Dublin, Co. Dublin</i>	
Smurfit Business School	\$42,500
<i>Dublin, Co. Dublin</i>	
Integrated Education Fund	\$20,000
<i>Belfast, Co. Antrim</i>	

## Community Group Funding

174 Trust, <i>Co. Antrim</i>	\$1,000
Best of Ireland Gala, <i>Co. Dublin</i>	\$10,000
Eiru Trust, <i>Co. Cork</i>	\$125,000
Irish American Arts & Music Foundation, <i>Co. Dublin</i>	\$17,500
The National Concert Hall, <i>Co. Dublin</i>	\$25,000
Kenmare Hospital, <i>Co. Kerry</i>	\$10,000
Carnegie Arts Center, <i>Co. Kerry</i>	\$5,000
Scotch Irish Trust, <i>Co. Tyrone</i>	\$150
The Pushkin Trust, <i>Co. Tyrone</i>	\$15,000

## RDS Science Fair Travel Grants

{ \$450 per grant }

Barefield National School	<i>Barefield, Co. Clare</i>
S. N. Eoin Baiste	<i>Ballyvaughan, Co. Clare</i>
St. Mochulla's National School	<i>Tulla, Co. Clare</i>
Balytdaniel National School	<i>Newtwopothouse, Co. Cork</i>
Barryroe National School	<i>Lislevane, Bandon, Co. Cork</i>
Derryclough National School	<i>Drinagh, Dunmanway, Co. Cork</i>
Darrara National School	<i>Cruary, Clonakilty, Co. Cork</i>
Killavuleen National School	<i>Killavulleen, Mallow, Co. Cork</i>
Midleton Educate Together	<i>Midleton, Co. Cork</i>
Our Lady of Mercy National School	<i>Bantry, Co. Cork</i>
Ovens National School	<i>Ovens, Co. Cork</i>
PALS Afterschool	<i>Ballinglann, Glanmire, Co. Cork</i>
Scoil Bhríde	<i>Midleton, Co. Cork</i>
Scoil Mhuire Lourdes	<i>Carrigaline, Co. Cork</i>
Scoil Naomh Fionan	<i>Rennies, Nohocal, Belgooly, Co. Cork</i>
St. Enda's National School	<i>Kilnadure, Co. Cork</i>
St. John the Baptist National School	<i>Midleton, Co. Cork</i>
St. John's Girls National School	<i>Carrigaline, Co. Cork</i>
Summercove National School	<i>Kinsale, Co. Cork</i>
Brierhill National School	<i>Ballybrit, Co. Galway</i>
Corrandulla National School	<i>Corrandulla, Co. Galway</i>
Scoil Eanna	<i>Bullaun, Loughrea, Co. Galway</i>
Scoil Iosaif Naofa	<i>Oranmore, Co. Galway</i>
Scoil na Maighdine Muire Gan Smal	<i>Camus, Connemara, Co. Galway</i>
St. Oliver Plunkett National School	<i>Keilkerrin, Ballinsloe, Co. Galway</i>
Firies National School	<i>Firies, Co. Kerry</i>
Moyderwell Mercy Primary School	<i>Moyderwell, Tralee, Co. Kerry</i>
Nagle Rice National School	<i>Milltown, Co. Kerry</i>
Scoil Mhuire	<i>Brosna, Tralee, Co. Kerry</i>
Carrakennedy National School	<i>Liscarney, Westport, Co. Mayo</i>
Stokane, National School	<i>Enniscrone, Co. Sligo</i>



## University Access Scholarships Help Even the Playing Field for Low Income Students

Spotlight on Ulster University Access

When Bradley Lynch was diagnosed with dyslexia at age 7, his childhood teachers did not expect academic achievement to be in his future. Fueled by their doubt, young Bradley delved into his school work with passion, putting in the extra time required to ensure his work was mistake-free. While he had to struggle with learning to read and write more than his peers, he knew that determination and perseverance would get him out of the low-income area he grew up in and make a better life for his family. This work ethic carried him into secondary school, where he achieved good GCSE's and gained top marks in his school in 2 of his 3 A-Levels. Now, he is studying Architecture at Ulster University and hopes that his career will be able to improve the financial situation of his family.

“With such a busy schedule, the scholarship means that approaching exams and deadlines I can cut back on my part-time job hours to allow me to achieve the best I can. Having worked hard to secure my place at University, I want to make sure I get the most out of this experience and excel, rather than simply scrape through. This scholarship is life-changing...I feel very humbled by the compassion of those that support the Fund.”

-Bradley Lynch

During the Partnership's Leadership Mission in August, the Board presented a \$10,000 check to Ulster University for their Opening Up Opportunities to Learning Fund. The fund is committed to bringing down the barriers which prevent people from disadvantaged backgrounds from reaching their full potential. The Partnership grant enabled the University to triple the support provided through this Fund.

This year, the Partnership grant funded four Gateway Scholarships and two Broadening Horizons Travel Bursaries at Ulster University. Gateway Scholarships are aimed at adults with limited financial resources who want to return to school as well as students from low income families looking to attend university. A scholarship of £1000 per year is awarded to help ease the financial burden, and students can be either part or full time. Broadening Horizons Travel Bursaries support field trips, overseas placements, or research outside Northern Ireland for students who could not otherwise afford them. These experiences are especially important to masters and doctoral candidates who use the grants to conduct research and attend professional conferences.

Another recipient of a Partnership-funded university access grant is Breege McDonald. Breege is a single mother looking to make a better future for her and her children. A survivor of childhood abuse, Breege has always been passionate about pursuing a career in social work, but had to prioritize her family's livelihood over her education. Now, she is working part-time and is studying Professional Development in Counseling. She hopes that her degree will

allow her to research adolescent mental health, council children and adolescents, and teach. The Gateway scholarship helps pay for travel costs and university fees.

Bradley and Breege's stories are just two examples of the barriers individuals face in their quest to further their education. Their struggles and triumphs should serve as an inspiration to their fellow classmates, diversifying Ulster University and fostering campus dialogue on social inequities. Ulster University does not lower admission standards for an applicant, but it does seek to even the playing field by distributing very modest grants for those from disadvantaged backgrounds. The Partnership believes that a quality university education should be accessible to all students, regardless of their socioeconomic situation. This drives our University Access Scholarship program, which supports students at **Dublin City University, Trinity College, and University of Limerick** in addition to **Ulster University**. Ireland's strength lies in the innovation, confidence, and intellect of its future leaders, and if Bradley and Breege are any indication, we can see a bright road ahead!

“As a single mother who works part-time, the Scholarship which I have been awarded has been a godsend to my financial situation...This will allow me to concentrate on my studies without the stress and distractions which a tighter financial situation would have on my ability to focus on the successful completion of my course.”

-Breege McDonald





# SPOTLIGHT ON: DERRYCLOUGH NATIONAL SCHOOL

## RAINY DAY FUN

The story of too many Irish schools is the same: government cuts to educational funding have forced them to increase class sizes, cut teachers, eliminate resource hours, and struggle to maintain a high quality of education under difficult circumstances. However, the teachers, principals, and assistants at these small, rural schools are not giving up. They are using innovative solutions to stretch every cent, and bringing the community together to build support.

Derryclough National School in West Cork is one such school. Principal Teresa Holland and teacher Suzanne Murphy are working tirelessly to ensure that the quality of education does not slide when government grants no longer cover vital expenses. When Partnership President Joe Leary heard about their efforts to fundraise through parents and community members and Principal Holland's long hours serving both as a teacher and the school's principal, he knew that Derryclough was a prime candidate for a direct grant from the Partnership.

The Partnership has now given two grants to this picturesque school, giving Principal Holland room to breathe and the ability to implement some of her ideas. With the funds, she purchased a weather station to bring science to life and replenished the school library. She also repainted a school mural and bought a basket swing, a favorite activity for the students during recess. Many of the students sent handwritten letters and cards, expressing their gratitude for the new equipment.



Weather Station



Derryclough students enjoy their new swing

Additionally, Derryclough was one of 31 schools that received a Partnership travel grant for the RDS Primary Science Fair, allowing 8 students to take one parent each all the way to Dublin for the Fair, where they presented their project on "how do wind turbines turn wind into electricity?"

Here at the Partnership, we cannot wait to see what the future has in store for the incredible students and teachers at Derryclough!



Above: "Biggies" help "smallies" learn to read

Below: Derryclough students pose with Partnership Board member Liam Connellan at the RDS Science Fair



## Nollaig na mBan



L-R: Northern Ireland Bureau Director Norman Houston, Breakfast Committee Chair Monique Choiniere Miller, Esq., Ambassador Melanne Verveer, Dr. Avila Kilmurray, Ambassador Anne Anderson, and Mary Sugrue McAleer

Over 70 Irish American Partnership supporters braved the first snow of the season to hear **Ambassador Melanne Verveer** and **Dr. Avila Kilmurray** speak on the role of women in Northern Ireland and beyond during the third annual Nollaig na mBan breakfast celebration, held at the University Club of Washington, D.C. on January 6th, 2015.

Nollaig na mBan, or Women's Christmas, is held each year in January to celebrate women's leadership within the family and community. The Partnership commemorates this tradition with a breakfast highlighting female leaders and the impact they have worldwide.



General P.X. Kelley USMC (Ret.), Ambassador Anne Anderson, and Frank O'Brien

## ST. PATRICK'S DAY BREAKFAST CELEBRATIONS



Executive Director Mary Sugrue McAleer, Alderman Ed Burke, Mayor Rahm Emanuel, and Partnership Board member Mike Clune

## CHICAGO

350 Partnership supporters attended the Chicago St. Patrick's Day Breakfast Celebration, featuring remarks by **Irish Minister for Diaspora Affairs Jimmy Deenihan TD, Professor Monica McWilliams, Alderman Ed Burke, Mayor Rahm Emanuel, Senator Dick Durbin, and Governor Bruce Rauner.**

Thank you to our breakfast sponsors:  
Edward T. Joyce & Associates,  
Clune Construction Company,  
Flood Brothers, and  
Tourism Ireland



L-R: Tánaiste Joan Burton, Joe Leary, Avila Kilmurray, Mary Sugrue McAleer, and Mayor Marty Walsh

## BOSTON

Nearly 300 people gathered at the Boston Harbor Hotel on March 17th to celebrate the holiday and hear speeches from **Mayor Marty Walsh, Dr. Avila Kilmurray, and Tánaiste Joan Burton TD.**

Thank you to our breakfast sponsors:  
VPNE Parking Solutions,  
Ironshore, Tourism Ireland, and  
Arbella Insurance Foundation

## FIT LAUNCHES ASSOCIATE PROFESSIONAL PROGRAM

The Partnership has been supporting Peter Davitt, founder and CEO of FIT, since his early days as an employee at the Ballymun Job Center. In Ballymun, a depressed area of Dublin, he watched as the very positions that job centers were designed to place people in—work as bricklayers, construction workers, and other laborer positions—were disappearing as Ireland transitioned to a service-based economy. With his background in job placement, he endeavored to create a job center for the 21st century; this idea became Fast Track to Information Technology (FIT).



## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Tuesday, May 26:** Private Roundtable with Minister Jan O'Sullivan, **Boston Harbor Hotel**

**Monday, June 1:** Chicago Golf Tournament, **Beverly County Club**

**Monday, June 8:** Newport Country Club, **Newport County Club**

**Monday June 22:** Albany Golf Tournament, **Schuyler Meadows Club**

**September 14-17:** Irish Invitational Golf Tournament, **Dublin, Ireland**



IT industry leaders at the Program launch

This February, FIT launched a new initiative, the Associate Professional Program. This program is targeted to young school-leavers seeking additional education and eventual employment in the IT industry. It is a two-year commitment broken down into three phases. The first phase is six months of classroom learning at college, the second is a year of three days working and two days in the classroom, and the third is six months of four days working and a day in the classroom. This gives students real world experience and allows them to earn an income while studying in their field. It is funded by private and public sponsorship, and has support from Microsoft, IBM, Accenture, and many other tech companies in Ireland.

The goal is to place 200 individuals in jobs after the two year pilot program. This type of innovative solution that puts disenfranchised youth in meaningful careers is a step forward in Irish economic recovery, and the Partnership is pleased to continue to support FIT's cutting-edge work.