

2025

THE
DAILY
INTERN

PROJECT CHILDREN INTERN BOOKLET



A Letter From Our Chairman



After another remarkable year, I am delighted to share an update on the 2025 Project Children Intern Program and to celebrate a very special milestone, as Project Children celebrated its 50th year. Since its founding in 1975, Project Children has opened doors for young people from Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, fostering both peace building and professional growth.

This year, we were honored to host 13 interns in the United States, offering students the opportunity to develop practical skills in their academic fields including law, business, marketing, education, and hospitality across the US. Their enthusiasm, perseverance, and personal growth were truly exceptional, reaffirming the enduring value of our mission.

These achievements would not have been possible without the dedication of our coordinators, host families, benefactors, and volunteers. Special thanks to Monica Culbert, Paul Lecky, Pat Mulcahy, Ellen Lynch, and Brian Fahy in Ireland, and Al DeBenedictis, Tom Kinirons, Pat Costello, and Anthony Massey in the United States for their tireless efforts in delivering a meaningful and seamless program.

Our host families were pivotal, welcoming interns into their homes and workplaces, offering not only accommodation but a genuine sense of belonging. We are also deeply grateful to our donors, whose generosity sustains this initiative. Special thanks to the Michael J. Miller Memorial Fund, and to those who continue to support us through charitable golf outings organized by Gerry Robinson's Irish Open, Pat Costello, Betty Walsh of the Walsh Foundation, and the Denis & Heidi Mulcahy Foundation.

This year was particularly memorable as we celebrated Project Children's 50th year with exciting events in Monaghan, Ireland, from October 7–11 that saw the opening of the Project Children Stories Exhibition at the Monaghan Peace Campus. The week long celebrations featured a full color guard parade by An Garda Síochána and the NYPD Emerald Society Pipe and Drums, and culminating in the 50th Anniversary Gala on the final night. It was wonderful to be joined by so many past Project Children interns, celebrating the continuing legacy and transformative impact of Project Children. We encourage all past participants, volunteers, and supporters to visit the exhibition in Co. Monaghan and see their work preserved for future generations.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to strengthening and expanding the Project Children Intern Program, enabling even more young people to enhance their skills, broaden their horizons, and contribute to a more peaceful and promising future.

Thank you all for your steadfast support and we look forward to another outstanding year in 2026.

Warm Regards,
Denis Mulcahy | Project Children Chairman |

Katie McKenna

Waterstone Inn,
Greenwood Lake, NY



Hi, my name is Katie McKenna, and I'm a third-year student teacher at St. Mary's University College. I first heard about the Project Children program through a family friend who had volunteered with the program in Belfast. I was instantly excited to apply and was thrilled to be selected for a seven-week internship at the Waterstone Inn in Greenwood Lake, New York, an area I'd never heard of before.

Before the trip, I learned I'd be staying with the Mulcahy family and sharing the experience with another girl named Michelle, who I hadn't met. We connected immediately at the airport, and what started as small talk on the plane quickly became the beginning of a lasting friendship. Neither of us could have imagined just how incredible the summer ahead would be.

From the moment we arrived, the Mulcahy family welcomed us with open arms, treating us like one of their own especially Maureen and Séana who we lived with. The inn's setting—peaceful, scenic, and full of charm quickly felt like home. Christine, who manages the B&B, outlined our roles: we would help with waitressing, cooking, and general upkeep. Her warmth and positivity made us feel at ease from the start.

The internship at the Waterstone Inn was hands-on and enriching. I learned practical skills such as making beds to a high standard, assisting in the kitchen, and serving guests. But more importantly, I learned the value of hard work, teamwork, and hospitality. Each task contributed to a deeper understanding of how a family-run business operates, and how kindness and professionalism go hand in hand.

Christine and the Mulcahy family were incredible mentors, offering guidance and encouragement every step of the way. Their generosity extended beyond the inn; they often took us to local sights and gave us a real feel for life in Greenwood Lake. On our days off, Michelle and I took trips into New York City which was also an amazing experience. I want to extend a heartfelt thank you to Denis's children—Denis, Maureen, Seanie, and Tara for their kindness, time, and effort throughout our stay. It was truly an honour to spend the summer with such an incredible family.

One particularly moving moment during the internship was watching *How to Defuse a Bomb*, a documentary about Denis Mulcahy and the founding of Project Children. As someone from Belfast, the story deeply resonated with me and reinforced just how meaningful this programme continues to be.

Another highlight was attending a Yankees game, an unforgettable day made possible by Seanie Mulcahy and Mark Zukerman from WFAN.

To everyone at the Waterstone Inn, especially Christine, Maureen, Seána, Miriam, and Denis—thank you for making this internship so special. I'm incredibly grateful to Project Children for this opportunity including Paul Lecky and Monica Culbert. My time in Greenwood Lake wasn't just an internship, it was a life-changing experience.

And to Denis, the kindest man I have ever met. Thank you for teaching me that no matter what life throws at you, everything will be "all good" when you're surrounded by good people.

Michelle O'Brien

Waterstone Inn

Greenwood Lake, NY



The past seven weeks have been some of the most memorable and rewarding. Our journey began when we landed at Newark Airport, where we met Denis Mulcahy along with several host families. After saying goodbye to the other interns, we made our way to Greenwood Lake, a truly picturesque town in the lower Hudson Valley. From the very first tour of the Waterstone Inn, with its beautiful views over the lake, I knew we were about to begin an amazing summer.

Upon arrival, we met Christine, whose energy and kindness made her not only our mentor but also our big sister for the summer. Together with my fellow intern Katie, I began working at the Waterstone Inn. Our mornings started with preparing and serving breakfast to guests, which gave us the chance to meet people from all over the country and share stories with them. After breakfast, we would help Christine and with cleaning rooms and getting the Inn ready for new arrivals. In the afternoons, we assisted with guest check-ins and whatever else needed to be done. Having never worked in hospitality before, it was a steep but exciting learning curve.

Through this work, I developed skills in customer service, teamwork, and time management.

I learned the importance of attention to detail and of creating a welcoming atmosphere for every guest who came through the door. I also really enjoyed working with Maureen, who always went above and beyond to make guests feel cared for, and who also made sure Katie and I got to experience American life, including our first visits to Target and Walmart.

Of course, our experience went far beyond work. We were incredibly fortunate to have opportunities to explore American culture. Attending a Yankees game and sitting right behind home plate was a once-in-a-lifetime experience and my first real taste of American sport. We also went to a Zach Bryan concert at MetLife Stadium, and on the Fourth of July we spent the evening out on the lake, watching fireworks light up the sky. These moments gave us memories we will carry forever.

A real highlight, however, was attending a screening of *How to Defuse a Bomb: The Project Children Story*. Watching this documentary gave me a much deeper appreciation for Denis and the scale of what he has accomplished over the years. Seeing the impact that the program has had on thousands of lives was incredibly inspiring.

We also had the chance to visit New York City on our days off, exploring landmarks such as

the Museum of Modern Art, Central Park, and the 9/11 Memorial. Each visit gave us a deeper sense of the culture and history of the city, and it was a privilege to experience it firsthand.

Looking back, this summer has taught me so much—not only about hospitality and hard work, but also about generosity and community. None of it would have been possible without the people who welcomed us so warmly.

I would like to sincerely thank Denis for making this program possible, Christine for her guidance and friendship, Maureen for her tireless energy and kindness, and the wider Mulcahy family

- Miriam, Seanie, and Denis Jr.—for treating us like part of their family.

This internship has given me both lifelong memories and valuable lessons that will stay with me for years to come. I leave Greenwood Lake deeply grateful for the people I met, the skills I learned, and the chance to be part of something so meaningful.

Ciarraí Culbert

Aisling Irish Community Center
Yonkers, NY



The Project Children internship has given me the best experience I could have asked for. My placement was in the Aisling Irish community center, on the heart of McLean Avenue in Woodlawn – which I can now call a home away from home. Both Neala and I were warmly welcomed into the Galvin's home from the get-go – Kathy and Seamus, and their daughter Fiona, have been nothing but generous to us, taking us out to dinner and shopping, and always being there for a chat – we especially loved our nights sitting out the back garden for dinner or a sing-song.

In the Aisling Center we have had so many different experiences, from running our Celtic summer camp, to helping with our senior lunches – we have really enjoyed being given the lead on a project to collect all of our seniors recipes and stories to start to create an Aisling center cookbook, to remember all those recipes and stories from Ireland that the community of Woodlawn have taken with them. I especially loved being able to teach the kids about the Irish language, and the GAA, both of which are huge parts of my life, and it was a joy to be able to share them.

We also got to teach some traditional music and perform at our last senior lunch for everyone. Every week we completed meal deliveries for the homebound seniors of our community. We also went on a homeless meal delivery with Joe Cremin in Manhattan, both of which were so enlightening and rewarding.

When off work, we got to see some magnificent sights – whether it was a hike in Minnewaska state park thanks to Breda McCaroll, or to seeing Katie Taylor emerge victorious from her fight in Madison Square Gardens. We have explored just about every borough of NYC and beyond, being lucky enough to get to visit the Waterstone Inn at Greenwood Lake thanks to Denis Mulcahy and Catherine Flood. These experiences are some of my most fond memories from the programme.

The Project Children internship is something I have always aspired to as my grandmother, Monica Culbert, was an instrumental coordinator of Project Children during the troubles and still today.

I have grown up watching the project's incredible impact on communities, and I am only grateful that I could play a small part in what she started and the legacy she has created for my family. This internship gives us a chance to give back to all those who have played a part in project children. A special thanks to all those in the Aisling center – Aneesa, Stephanie, Patrick, Anthony and so many more who went out of their way to give us an incredible summer – from giving us subway advice to bringing us treats at lunchtime – we really appreciate your kindness. Finally, I wish to thank all of Project Children for an unforgettable summer, especially the Mulcahy Family for their never-ending generosity, the Galvin's and McCaroll's, Paul Lecky and my grandmother Monica Culbert. Go raibh míle maith agaibh, Ciarraí.

Maria Flood

Aisling Irish Community Center
Yonkers, NY



In early Spring 2025 I witnessed the Project Children story captured in the “How to Defuse a Bomb” documentary, while completing my Occupational Therapy studies in Ulster University.

Through my care and compassion for young children and disadvantaged population of Northern Ireland, I was inspired to be a Project Children Intern. After concluding my academic program several days before travelling to the United States, I felt ready to apply my experience and skills in creativity, organization and communication. On the plane from Dublin to New York, I was apprehensive as to what my role as an intern would be. I had to transition from the role of a student therapist for a Community Mental Health psychosis team based in Belfast to an Intern in the Aisling Irish Community Center.

Once the plane left Irish soil my summer experience in New York began to unfold. My first few days in the Aisling Irish Center on McLean Avenue was incredible and home sickness was not a thing as I soon came to know the flocks of Irish people in the area. Myself, Neala and Ciarrai hit the ground running with our Celtic Irish Summer Camp, sharing the Irish culture with the younger generation. Each morning, we spoke as Gaeilge and read Irish folk stories. Our arts and craft activities were based on Ireland, one of my favorites being making a hurley stick out of cardboard, letting them design it and use it for a mini hurling final. As the two GAA All Ireland Finals took place at home, we taught them Irish songs, words, and landmarks such as Croke Park. The children done Ceile dancing and Irish dancing to music played by Neala and Ciarrai. Each afternoon in the Center we got to socialize with the Elderly. You could see the sparkle in their eyes meeting us and telling stories of their immigration to America 60 years ago.

We collected recipes of a traditional Irish cookbook, allowing us to interview each elderly person about their dish and their upbringing in Ireland. I would like to thank all those at the Aisling Center for their kindness – Sandra, Kennedy and so many more. The volunteers Patrick, Anthony and Joe really shaped our experience of the disadvantaged areas of New York. They amazed me by delivering hot meals to homebound elderly people, feeding the Homeless in Manhattan and making simple gestures of kindness at every opportunity.

I valued being a Project Children Intern prior to leaving Irish soil, by experiencing in program in full, I am leaving as an honored Intern. I am grateful to the Aisling Irish Community Center for opening a field of opportunity. Much of what the Center does and provides to the Irish community is unnoticed but impactful to those in need. In my own reflection, I see their work, mission and values similar to the Project Children program established 50 years ago. I would like to thank the Mulcahy family for the Internship and special recognition to Denis. As you are conferred for an Honorary Degree from Ulster University this Autumn and celebrate the 50 Year Anniversary locally to my home address, I wish you and your family well remarking the occasion. I would like to thank Catherine Flood and Linda Croston from Croston Flood, I appreciate how you both have facilitated sharing the Project Children Story documentary.

Neala Cahir

Aisling Irish Community Center
Yonkers, NY



Taking part in the Project Children Internship has been a truly unforgettable experience. Initially I felt quite nervous about coming to America and was unsure about what was in store for the prospective weeks, but as soon as Joe greeted me at the airport, I knew I was in for an amazing summer.

The view of the Manhattan skyline from the airport is one that will be engraved in my mind for a very long time, it definitely exceeded all expectations! We were based in the Aisling Irish Community Center, and it was here that we led the Celtic Summer Camps daily. This was such a rewarding experience, getting to share snippets of Irish culture with the local kids. I especially enjoyed playing guitar and piano in the camp as we taught the campers some Irish favorites like 'The Rattlin' Bog' and 'Molly Malone' and danced away to An dreolín.

I looked forward every week to the Tuesday senior lunches where we had the opportunity to chat with the locals, most of which had taken the brave decision to leave Ireland in their early 20s to start a new life in New York. I loved going on the meal deliveries in the local area and delivering food to the homeless in Manhattan with the volunteers. Anthony and Patrick became our very own tour guides, each week giving us recommendations of the best places to visit in the city, mapping out journeys so we didn't get lost and bringing us local delicacies to enjoy at work. Some of these included Brooklyn Bridge, Staten Island and the 9/11 memorial museum. I couldn't have asked for a better host family; Kathy, Seamus and Fiona Galvin made us feel so welcome, I loved spending time with them especially eating dinner in the garden and having a sing-song with the guitar, we had great craic together. It really was a home away from home. One of the highlights of my trip was travelling up to Greenwood Lake for the day. It was amazing to see Project Children's birthplace and I could only imagine the excitement of the children viewing the beautiful mountains and wide-stretching water for the first time. The Mulchay family warmly welcomed us, and we had so much fun on paddle boards, jet-ski's and going for ice-cream with the other interns. It was a beautiful haven from the bustling city.

I really loved staying in the Woodlawn area. McLean Avenue was a lively hotspot for Irish-Americans from its Irish coffee shops to its numerous bars, it really lived up to its title of Ireland's 33rd county!

Finally, a sincere thank you to Denis Mulcahy and his family for providing me with the opportunity of a lifetime. Also, to Sandra, Stephanie, Kennedy, Aneesa, Emilia and all the volunteers at the Aisling Center for their support and kindness.

I would like to thank Galvin's for their hospitality, Paul Lecky and Monica Culbert for their hard work to get us over and everyone else involved in Project Children. This summer is one that I will cherish forever, I have made enough memories to last a lifetime, and I am sincerely grateful to Project Children for this internship.

Erin Culbert

Emerald Isle Immigration Center
Bronx, NY/Queens, NY



My experience with Project Children started long before I ever touched down in Newark airport. I've grown up hearing stories about the incredible work of Project Children through my grandmother Monica Culbert. I couldn't wait to experience it myself. I believe I have had one of the best experiences of my life this summer. This coming from someone who was a bit apprehensive of the length of time away from home, I dare say I'm a bit of a homebird, I haven't seen the time go by and I cannot see myself leaving here.

What made this more special was that my cousin Ciarrai was also an intern this year. Coming out this year would make us the third generation of our family to be a part of the program, as our fathers were project children during the 80's. I'll always laugh when I think of the Project Children movie showing in the Bank of Ireland building, when Denis Mulchay said that our grandmother sent her two boys over to America when they were only 9 years old without a care in the world, but while me and Ciarrai have been here (both of us in our 20s), she has been ringing him nearly everyday to check on us.

Breda and John were my host family during my stay here, and I'll honestly find it hard to leave them. They are two of the funniest people I've met. I had great adventures with them; like hiking to Samm's Point, exploring the Untermyer Gardens conservatory, and visiting probably every supermarket within a 50 mile radius of Breda and John's house (as requested by me and Ciarrai). We have shared many meals together, all with an ice cream at the end. I have attended Breda's bootcamp class where I felt like I had never properly exercised until those classes. We watched many All-Ireland semi-finals and finals together, however we do not speak of the hurling final as they are both originally from Cork. They have given me an amazing experience in New York and they really made me feel like their wee adopted daughter.

My internship was in Emerald Isle Immigration Center. I gained a great deal of knowledge interning at the EIIC. During a time of such significant political tensions and change, shadowing the people who work in the eye of the storm was invaluable to understanding America. I worked between both the EIIC's Bronx and Queens office, as my role was both administrative and technological to play to my

skill set. This meant I got to work with both Immigration and Social Services, the EIIC's two departments. I attended many meetings with the Coalition of Irish Immigration Centers to discuss J1 summer / grad visa holders around the states. I have met many new people from all over the world, some who are prominent within the Irish-American Community, because of this internship. I have also made some lifelong friends who I can't wait to see again.

I made amazing memories during this internship. I adventured to Washington DC, Nashville, Las Vegas and all 5 boroughs in New York City, and most importantly Greenwood Lake. I visited MAC Cosmetic's Headquarters in Manhattan. I got to jet ski in Greenwood lake and I lost my prescription sunglasses because I fell off and cartwheeled across the water, whoops. Then 48 hours later I lost my prescription glasses in the ocean at Long Beach because I thought a shark touched me (it was in fact my glasses touching my leg as they floated off) and I was legally blind for 4 more days . Additionally my passport travelled back to Ireland with family, while I was still here in New York, for its own adventure until it was promptly shipped back. And lastly I rescued an injured pigeon and travelled an hour on subways to bring it to a sanctuary in a printer paper box. I have had a VERY eventful summer, and it honestly was the best.

This was an opportunity of a lifetime and I want to thank everyone who made it possible; everyone at Project Children, especially Denis Mulchay, Breda and John for welcoming me into your home as your own, Paul Lecky and Tara Mulchay.

And of course my grandmother Monica who helped me through every step of this adventure and honestly made it possible. Thank you everyone.

Cassie Connelly

The Irish Pub Atlantic City
Atlantic City, NJ



When I received the opportunity to take part in the Project Children internship programme, I had no idea just how impactful and unforgettable the experience would be. I was placed in Atlantic City, New Jersey, where I worked in a historic Irish Pub & Inn that dates all the way back to the Prohibition era. Being part of such an iconic location made the experience even more special. Throughout the summer, I worked as a server, a receptionist at the Inn, and in the gift shop as a hostess. Each role gave me valuable experience in customer service, hospitality, and teamwork. I learned to communicate effectively, work efficiently under pressure, and adapt to new challenges, all skills that will benefit me greatly in my future career.

Beyond the practical experience, I met so many amazing people from all walks of life that included locals, tourists, and coworkers.

Everyone had a story, and I loved getting to be a small part of theirs during their visit to the “Pub”. Working in such a lively and dynamic city was a lot of fun, and being so close to the beach was an added bonus. There was something really surreal and exciting about spending my summer in a place people travel from all over the world to visit.

Living with the Essl family, Sharon, Bob, Jen, and their beloved dog Faye, has been one of the most meaningful and memorable parts of my Project Children experience. From the very beginning, they made me feel like part of the family. Nothing was ever too much to ask of them, and their kindness, warmth, and generosity never went unnoticed. They opened up their home to me with such ease and genuine care, and I feel so incredibly lucky to have spent my summer with them.

Every day in their home felt like something out of a movie from relaxing swims in the back pool, to movie nights projected onto a screen outside, to summer barbecues and chats around the kitchen table. They made sure I was always included, not just in their home, but in their wider circle too. They introduced me to their family, friends, and neighbours, which gave me the chance to meet people my own age, and form friendships that made my time in the U.S. even more enjoyable. It meant so much to be welcomed into their community and get to know the people they care about.

The Essl’s also brought me on countless adventures and outings, ensuring I got to experience as much of New Jersey and the surrounding area as possible.

The adventures began with an up-close view on the beach of the 4th of July fireworks! We visited beautiful local shore towns learning their history, walked the boardwalks, spent time at the beach, and even explored the vibrant city of Philadelphia, which was one of the highlights of my summer. Each of these trips helped me see and understand more of American culture and way of life, and I’m so grateful they took the time to show me around and create those memories with me.

One of the most thoughtful moments of the summer was how they celebrated my birthday, taking me to Dairy Queen where I had the chance to decorate my own cake, something so simple yet so personal and fun.

Sharon also took the time to teach me more about the history of Project Children and its lasting impact. Watching the “How to Defuse a Bomb” documentary together gave me a deeper appreciation of the programme’s origins and purpose and reminded me how fortunate I am to be part of its legacy.

Looking back, I feel an overwhelming sense of gratitude for everything the Essl’s have done for me. Their support, hospitality, and generosity have left a lasting impression on me, and I truly feel like I’ve become part of their family. I will carry the memories of this summer and their incredible kindness with me for the rest of my life.

As a law student, a highlight of my summer was the opportunity to spend a day at a local law firm. I was able to speak with several attorneys and gain an insightful understanding of the American legal system, which was both fascinating and inspiring. It gave me a broader perspective on my future career path and the ways legal systems can differ across countries.

One of the most touching parts of my summer was spending a day volunteering at the Ronald McDonald House in Philadelphia. Here, I helped prepare and serve meals to the families of children undergoing hospital treatment. It was a powerful experience that left a lasting impression on me, highlighting the strength of families in difficult times and the value of small acts of kindness.

And to round out my time here, I will be spending my last 4 days with Jen at her NYC apartment and touring the Big Apple! This experience has been nothing short of life changing. I'm returning home with new skills, lifelong friendships, and incredible memories, and I will always be thankful to Project Children for making it all possible.

Lewis Robinson

Callinan and Smith LLP
Ramsey, NJ



This summer I had the honour of staying at the home of Matt and Michelle Smith in Honesdale, Pennsylvania for seven weeks, alongside their dog Zoe (my favourite member of their mini zoo),

cats Rascals and Moira, birds Sammy and Mango, and lastly their rabbit Tabitha. Despite being a small town, Honesdale had real charm—from cosy cafes and independent restaurants to beautiful scenery and concerts in the park. There was even an Irish pub I visited frequently, though I won't be bringing blackberry brandy home with me. A Long Island Iced Tea, however, is another matter. Although I was nervous arriving alone at Newark Airport, Matt and Michelle made me feel instantly at home.

A major highlight was attending three concerts at Bethel Woods Center for the Arts, the site of the original Woodstock festival. Michelle and I learned quickly that jazz is not for us, but Avril Lavigne more than made up for it, and I even found myself enjoying +Live+ and Collective Soul despite rock not being my usual genre. Another unforgettable experience was descending 300 feet into an abandoned coal mine and learning about the vital but harsh role Irish immigrants played in the industry. A strenuous seven-mile hike in Ricketts Glen State Park rewarded us with stunning waterfalls and a bear cub sighting. I also went to two baseball games, even throwing the first pitch at one, though my 30 percent effort may explain why it didn't reach the catcher. Vintage car shows, especially riding in Matt's 1982 Trans Am, were another favourite part of my stay.

The internship offered opportunities to explore nearby cities. In Philadelphia we toured Independence Hall, saw the Liberty Bell, tried a Philly cheesesteak, and climbed the Rocky steps (slowly, in my case). A two-day trip to Washington DC, guided with military precision by Matt, included Arlington National Cemetery, the Capitol, Library of Congress, a night tour of monuments, and Mass at the Basilica. I also spent two weekends in New York City,

though my long-anticipated trip to Carlo's Bakery in Hoboken proved underwhelming.

Matt's deep Irish heritage made him a fascinating host. His knowledge of his lineage—and the relics he shared, including his grandfather's Irish passport—surprised me more than any "I'm one-thirteenth Irish" comment ever could. He and Michelle are two of the most generous people I've met, constantly giving their time and support to others, and my stay with them is only one example.

I was initially apprehensive when my internship at Callinan & Smith LLP began, as it felt like being thrown into the deep end. But I quickly saw the value in learning by doing. I worked across their offices in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York, drafted interrogatory answers, compiled exhibits, prepared filings, and used their case-management system. I gained insight into the full discovery process and, surprisingly, found great satisfaction in entering my billing.

I observed several Examinations Under Oath, each attorney with their own distinctive style, and attended two trial hearings with Matthew, even contributing legal research on whether a spouse can represent a pro se litigant. Watching hearings, settlement conferences, and the dynamics of the courtroom gave me a genuine appreciation for insurance-defence practice—especially New York no-fault law, which I may never use again but am glad to have learned.

I want to thank Matt and Michelle for their extraordinary hospitality. I look forward to seeing you both in October at The Devenish.

Harry Boyce

Callinan and Smith LLP

Ramsey, NJ



I had always wanted to work in a professional setting in the US so applying to Project Children was a no-brainer. I was initially nervous to meet my host family, having never lived with one before. However, when we arrived in Honesdale, Pennsylvania, I got on very well with Michele and Matt, listening to their fun stories and having sarcastic banter with them. I also was warmly welcomed by their dog Zoe, the two cats, two birds and rabbit.

For my internship, I accompanied Matt to Callinan and Smith, an insurance defence firm, alongside my fellow intern Lewis. I had never worked in this type of law before, learning the US civil law system inside out including answering opposing attorneys' interrogatory (disclosure/discovery) questions. I was treated like a real worker, and I was really excited to do multi-jurisdictional work, moving between the three branches in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New York, even accompanying an attorney to Brooklyn Supreme Court and local courts.

I also did case research, observed depositions, did exhibit preparation and redactions, and drafted pre-trial reports. The role has led to me considering the U.S. as a possible place of work.

Beyond work, we got to experience what I see as the real U.S. – small town living. Our town was walkable and had lovely local businesses, and even held its own concerts. I was amazed by Pennsylvania's beauty and vast forests, even if the fact it was 30°C and extremely humid was daunting. Matt and Michele made sure we became culturally assimilated, including their home with historic architecture. I experienced a county fair for the first time, as well as a baseball game (go RailRiders!), a 4th of July party and vintage car shows. We also got to try true American food like delicious BBQ, the famous Philly cheesesteak and the odd, but delicious deep fried Oreos.

Lastly, we got to see a lot of the U.S. Outside of my own travels to the great NYC and Boston, we were brought to Scranton, the setting of *The Office*, D.C., Philadelphia and even the original site of the Woodstock festival for a concert. We had what I would call a 'marathon day' in D.C., exploring it from 7am-11pm. I left feeling like I'd seen everything, even if it seemed like Matt and I went through war. I felt inspired seeing the inside of the Capitol Rotunda and I was really interested by Philadelphia, being the original signatory of the Declaration of Independence. We got to see the famous Liberty Bell and Independence Hall. The vibrance and scale of U.S. cities was astonishing, and showed just how many cultures live amongst each other.

The highlights for me were Philadelphia and its history as the catalyst for civil liberties, the amazing vintage car show, the baseball game, but most of all the great American kindness and hospitality Michele and Matt showed constantly showed us during our stay.

Killian Walsh

Habitat for Humanity Denver, CO



When I boarded the plane in Dublin I was unsure what lay ahead for my summer in the US. I was very excited but also nervous to be away from family and friends longer than I've ever been before. However this concern quickly vanished as I met my very welcoming host family Eddie and Susan McCarthy and Colorado coordinator Anthony Massey and his wife Darlene. Alongside them was my fellow intern Tiarnan McCann who had arrived a week earlier and was equally as welcoming. I had the first few days to settle into Colorado before working however acquiring bronchitis on the journey over managed to act as an obstacle to settling into life in Colorado.

Thankfully after recovering I was able to begin work at Habitat for humanity at their boulder site,

following my fellow intern tiarnan who had begun work a few days prior. I was eager to begin building houses with the very talented workers and volunteers.

Our first few days comprised of sweeping and tidying the site but it progressed to working alongside the other workers, helping in the construction process of the buildings, such as putting up walls and roofs. I know for sure none of this would've been possible without the excellent mentorship we got on site from workers such as Brendan, Utah, Mike alongside the many volunteers who were always quick to help us and show us how to do our task. one thing that fascinated me with my time working at habitat was seeing houses being built by wood, which amazed me how easy houses could be made. My highlight of each day was meeting new volunteers who came from various walks of life, being united by building affordable houses together for who needed it. I learned various skills from my time working at habitat and cannot thank Brendan, Utah, Mike and the various volunteers enough for making my experience so memorable and rewarding.

Our work week was from Tuesday to Saturday which left time for Tiarnan and I to discover the best of what Colorado had to offer. Our Sundays and Mondays often consisted of trips to various landmarks. One of my favourite trips was our trip to Leadville as I was fascinated with the story of the Irish miners who fled the famine in order to search for a better life. It is a sad story as the graveyard outside Leadville highlights the horrific conditions these miners had to face as well over a thousand Irish are buried in unmarked graves alongside women and children.

This trip to Leadville made me feel fortunate that I had the opportunity to come to America for a summer filled with great experiences and did not have to face the same worries many Irish did 150 years before in a battle to stay alive. Our other free days comprised of enjoyable trips to sport events (colorado rapids and Colorado Rockies), a challenging but enjoyable hike with Anthony Massey, trips to interesting museums (Denver history museum and wings over the Rockies).

Music events at the Louisville street fair were a weekly treat on a Friday. We also visited beautiful natural attractions such as pikes peak, garden of the gods and the Rockies mountain national park. Each of these places were equally as breathtaking and highlighted the amazing natural sights Colorado had to offer. Another highlight was having the opportunity to meet Jim Lyons. He played a significant role in supporting the peace process and economic development in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. I was very interested to meet him as he supported cross-community projects in Northern Ireland during a time where the country was very divided and he also currently serves as the Honorary Irish Consul in Denver. Meeting Jim was a great experience and one I will remember fondly.

Overall my trip to Colorado was one of a life time and I will be forever grateful to my host family Eddie and Susan McCarthy, Colorado coordinator Anthony Massey and his wife Darlene, habitat for humanity and of course Denis and everyone involved in project children. Without them none of this would've been possible. I will treasure this summer forever and reminisce on the experiences I had and the life lessons I learned.

Tiernan McCann

Habitat for Humanity

Denver, CO



This summer I participated in Project Children's Summer Work and Travel Program. After my visa was approved last minute due to unforeseen delays, I was quickly preparing for my journey to Denver, Colorado. On arrival, I was warmly welcomed by the program coordinator, Anthony, his wife Darlene and my host family, Eddie and Susan. I had a week free before I started work which I spent getting to know everyone and exploring Denver and nearby city of Boulder. Coming from sea level, this time also allowed me to adjust to the altitude. After being in the states for 5 days, I met up with Killian, another intern who I would be living and working with during my time here, and it didn't take long before we got to know each other well. A few days after Killian arrived, Anthony took us on an 'easy' hike, which made me realise how unfit I was as Anthony was hardly breaking a sweat. Nonetheless, it was worth it in the end.

My work placement was with Habitat for Humanity who are a non-profit organisation dedicated to building and improving homes for families in need. Their operation in Boulder tackles the area's high cost of housing by replacing aging flood prone mobile homes with modern houses. On a work day I could be doing a range of tasks including installing insulation, framing houses or landscaping. It amazed me how quickly these houses were able to be put up with only help from volunteers. Most days, I was working with other volunteers, a lot of which had construction/engineering experience. I really appreciated that these people took time out of the day to share their knowledge with me. I want to say a special thanks to Brendan and Utah who made my experience even more enjoyable with all the craic we had together. I tried to get out and explore as much as I could during my time off. Some of my favourite experiences include seeing Joe Bonamassa at Red Rocks, golfing with my uncle at Arrowhead Golf Course and watching the Colorado Rockies (who are one of the worst teams in MLB history) make a phenomenal comeback to beat the Pittsburgh Pirates 17-16. I also had the pleasure of meeting Jim Lyons, the Honorary Consul of Ireland in Denver. We met at his office, where he shared stories about his work fostering connections between Ireland and the United States, as well as his long-standing support for Project Children. Another highlight of my time here was visiting the Irish Miners Memorial in Leadville - a tribute to thousands of Irish immigrants who came to the states seeking work and a better life, many of which faced dangerous working conditions.

It connected me to a part of Irish history in America, and reminded me of the resilience and determination shared by so many Irish immigrants across generations. Killian and I have become great friends and will be sure to meet up in Galway or Derry when we get back home. I couldn't have asked for a better host family than Eddie and Susan - they made me feel at home from the moment I arrived. Susan kept me spoiled with her incredible cooking which I will certainly miss when I'm back home. Overall this has been an experience of a lifetime that I will never forget. I am beyond grateful to be a part of this program, and I hope that I will be back some day to meet up with all the amazing people I've met here.

Madison Murphy

Irish Cultural Center of the Mohawk Valley, Utica, NY



My Summer with the Project Children internship program has been such an enriching and impactful experience. I was so lucky to be placed with the Hennessey family in Boonville.

They were nothing but welcoming from the beginning, I really became part of the family. This allowed us to quickly settle in the US. I am delighted to have a second home in America. Myself and Mary- Kate were lucky enough to Intern in the Irish Cultural Center in Utica one day a week. During our time here we got to help host, and spent some time in the Museum, where we got to help out with the Boilermaker exhibit. We actually got to run the 5K Boilermaker race with our Host brother. The Crowds and support at the race were unbelievable, and I don't think any race will ever live up to the Boilermaker. We also got to appear on the Joe Kelly show with Pat Costello, which was such a fun opportunity.

As a Law with Politics student in Queen's University Belfast, I also had the opportunity to gain first hand-insight into the American legal and political systems. We had the opportunity to meet with Senator Joe Griffo, who took us to Boy's State. He also took us to Albany, where we got a tour of the State Capitol. As a politics student I loved this experience. We also met with the Mayor of Rome, and we appeared on the Keeler in the Morning radio show with him.

We got the chance to meet with District Attorneys from both Onondaga county and Oneida County. Additionally we spent some time with Judge King in Lowville, where we got to sit in on some Criminal and Family trials.

One of my highlights of the program was spending time with the Oneida County Sheriff's Department. We were able to participate in a Police-ride along, which was a once in a life time experience. Also, we got a tour of the County's correctional facility, which allowed a border perspective on law enforcement operations and practices in the U.S

I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to everyone who made my Project Children experience so meaningful.

First and foremost, a massive thank-you to Kathy, our amazing host mum. Your kindness, and endless support made us feel at home from the very beginning. You went above and beyond to make this experience seamless and special, and we're so grateful for everything you did to take care of us and organise our time here.

To the Hennessey family—thank you so much for welcoming us into your celebrations and your lives. Being invited to your graduation parties and your family gatherings gave us a real sense of American family spirit. A huge thank-you to Pat Costello, as none of this would have been possible without you.

We appreciated every lift, every story, and your amazing sense of humour. We especially have to thank you for introducing us to the DropKick Murphys. Most importantly, a sincere and special thank you to Dennis Mulcahy. Thank you for your dedication and for giving us the chance to be part of something so meaningful.

This summer has truly been a once in a lifetime opportunity, and it is all thanks to the amazing volunteers, who make this program possible.

Mary-Kate Donaghy

Irish Cultural Center of the Mohawk Valley, Utica, NY



I have loved every second of my experience on the project children internship this summer. Madison and I were so extremely lucky to be placed in Boonville with the Hennessey family as our hosts. We have loved spending time with the Hennessey family and really feel like we have a second home in America. We got to attend graduation party's with the family's as well as family dinners and we all just instantly clicked and Boonville felt like home for us this summer. We got some incredible opportunities that we only could have wished for during our time here. Every Wednesday we got to intern at the Irish Cultural Center in Utica, during our time here we got to host tables, help with events and meet and network with so many different people.

Al and Pat always made sure that we were busy staying out of trouble! I loved getting to speak to the customers at the 5 points bar and hearing their stories about Ireland. We also had time in the museum where we helped to put together and exhibition on Senator Donovan. The staff were so welcoming and friendly and we have made friendships for life!

As well as this we were so lucky to be able to gain internships in our areas of study, which Pat Costello was able to help facilitate alongside our host family. Being a law student it was so exciting that during our time we were able to have the opportunity to meet with Senator Joe Griffo and get a private tour of the New York State Capitol. Furthermore, we met with District Attorneys from Onondaga County and Oneida County, where we were able to review cases and appear alongside them in court to see the real behind the scenes! Kathy, our host mum set us up with some amazing opportunities in Boonville like getting to meet with County Court Judges and shadowing them at court and also having us intern at local summer recreational programmes. One of my favourite parts of our trip was when we got to feature on the Joe Kelly Show! Mr Kelly asked Madison and I if we would like to appear on the show and of course we said yes! Pat joined us as well and we got to speak about the project and all the fun things we had the opportunity of getting to accomplish while we were here. Pat was also such an amazing part of our time here, he would drive us anywhere without complaining and made sure we were laughing the whole way there! However, no matter how far the journey Pat always made sure that we would have time for ice cream- morning or night! I cannot thank him enough!

The hospitality of our host family has been astounding and we are so lucky to be able to have a second home so far away.

Our host sister Emma has been a big part of our journey if it was just spending time with Emma at the gym, going for coffees or just hanging out in her room after a long day the 3 of us would always be laughing - I will miss them all so much! I would like to thank everyone who volunteers with project children and especially Denis Mulcahy for letting me have the summer of my dreams!

SUMMER SPOTLIGHT!

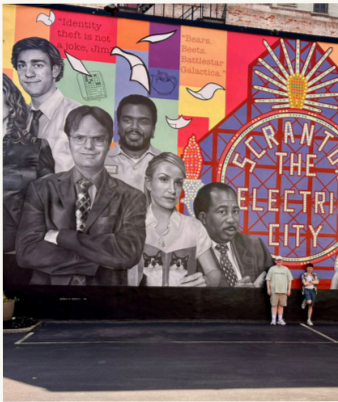


SUMMER SPOTLIGHT!



Pictures by Kevin Fitzgerald

SUMMER HIGHLIGHTS: OUR INTERNS IN ACTION



SUMMER HIGHLIGHTS: OUR INTERNS IN ACTION





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