

Corrymeela

50 years of lighting the way war war war war



50th corrymeela at

The Ireland Funds have been longtime supporters of Corrymeela, investing in the belief that dialogue can play a profound role in cross-community development and healing. Corrymeela is Northern Ireland's oldest peace and reconciliation organization and in 2015 it celebrated its 50th anniversary. Corrymeela's reach is far beyond Northern Ireland and here, Mark McCleary of Corrymeela shares highlights from the last fifty years.



Prince Charles visited Corrymeela in 2015 to celebrate its 50th Anniversary.

Above: Prince Charles is greeted by John Fitzpatrick, Chairman of The American Ireland Fund





“Would you think Heaven could be so small a thing as a lit window on the hills at night.” — *Helen Waddell*

When Prince Charles visited our residential center in 2015, he quoted Helen Waddell's poem and said, "In Corrymeela, for fifty years, you have been that lit window on the hill; you have given peace a home." He also paid tribute to our founder Ray Davey whose vision of peace was borne out of the devastation of war. Ray was a chaplain who, as a prisoner of war, witnessed the destruction of Dresden under Allied bombing and was profoundly changed.

Before The Troubles

Corrymeela was formed before "The Troubles", though our work quickly became shaped by them. We have a rich history of welcoming individuals and groups from across Ireland to engage in dialogue and community-building at both the residential center in Ballycastle and through programs in local areas. We welcome 10,000 people a year from youth and school groups, family and community organizations, faith communities, political parties, security forces, ex-combatants and people directly impacted by the conflict in Northern Ireland, and are viewed as a safe space for all. Because of Corrymeela's international

reputation for peace-building, hundreds of visitors come to Corrymeela each year from all around the world to learn from our experience.

Since the late seventies The Ireland Funds have been a faithful supporter of our work. More recently the commitment of the current American Ireland Fund Chairman, John Fitzpatrick, and specific financial support through the Eithne and Paddy Fitzpatrick Memorial Fund has been a huge boost to our work. In addition to capital projects including classrooms, recreation space and a children's play park, The Ireland Funds have supported programs in forgiveness education, youth work and empowering women.

The Support of The Ireland Funds

To highlight one example, The Ireland Funds' support for our SEED Program over a number of years has transformed many young lives. It brings together 18-25 year olds from difficult backgrounds to explore identity, self-care, conflict and leadership. We have found that when they understand their own potential,

they are more likely to take up opportunities in employment and education and not drift into unemployment, crime or paramilitary groups. SEED matches the young people with an individual mentor working in an area they are interested in. This is a radical process for young people because it gives them the freedom and power to make choices and live those choices.

A Shared Society, A Lit Window

Returning to Prince Charles and the lit window on the hill, beyond the poetry, we could not switch on the lights without support from around the world. The Ireland Funds, through their long association with Corrymeela, have enabled us to be a place where imagination is fired and enthusiasm and hope kindled in the next generations. Thousands of young people from Corrymeela have developed their hope and vision for a shared society and gone on to express this through work choices that support a safer, inclusive and more sustainable society in Ireland and elsewhere. We thank you.

— *Mark McCleary, Corrymeela*



John Fitzpatrick,
longtime Corrymeela
supporter and Chairman of
The American Ireland Fund.



WHAT IS CORRYMEELA?

We are teachers, writers, people looking for work, retired people; we are young, middle-aged and old; we are people of doctrine and people of question. We are people who seek to engage with the differences of our world. We are people who disagree with each other on matters of religion, politics and economics. We are people who wish to name our own complicity in the fractures that damage our societies. We are people of dedication and commitment. We are people of prayers, conversation, curiosity and questioning. We are people of truth telling and hope.

We are Corrymeela.
And you are always welcome.

Supported by The Ireland Funds, Corrymeela's SEED Program has transformed many young lives. It brings together 18-25 year olds from difficult backgrounds to explore identity, self-care, conflict and leadership.

