



**ONTO THE PAGE  
AND INTO THE LIVES  
OF CHILDREN**

**THE IRELAND FUNDS  
FLAGSHIP GRANT BRINGS  
FIGHTING WORDS  
TO BELFAST**

**FIGHTING  
WORDS** Providing free tutoring in creative writing  
for students of all ages in Ireland.  
[www.fightingwords.ie](http://www.fightingwords.ie)

**FIGHTING WORDS BELFAST** As a recent Ireland Funds Flagship Grantee, Fighting Words is delighted to be able to extend its free creative writing workshops to Belfast's children. Launched in March, 2015 at the Seamus Heaney Centre for Poetry of Queens University in Belfast — a primarily a Loyalist area. Speakers included authors Glenn Patterson and Roddy Doyle, along with Trevor Ringland attending from The Ireland Funds. Here, Co-Founder Seán Love shares an update on that exciting new chapter.



The Ireland Funds have been great friends and supporters of the Fighting Words project since we first opened our doors in Dublin in January 2009. Co-Founded by author Roddy Doyle and myself, Fighting Words provides free tutoring and mentoring in all forms of creative writing, and over the past 6 years in Dublin we have hosted more than 50,000 children and young adults, publishing their stories as books and films. We provide this service with the vital input of 500 volunteer tutors.

Fighting Words was itself inspired by Pulitzer prizewinning author Dave Eggers' 826 Valencia creative writing project that started out in San Francisco. The model is fast becoming a global phenomenon, with similar free creative writing centers for children now established in nine US cities, nine European cities, and in Australia, Argentina, Chile and Canada. As part of this development, Fighting Words in Dublin was approached by groups in Belfast inviting us to partner with them in setting up the model at the Skainos Centre on Lower Newtownards Road in East Belfast. Over the past year we have been gradually putting it together, with generous support from The Ireland Funds, culminating in the 2015 launch. Patrons of Fighting Words Belfast include Glenn

Patterson, Roddy Doyle, Dave Eggers and Nick Hornby.

The partners in the project are the Belfast organizations Young at Art, 174 Trust, Skainos Project along with Fighting Words Dublin. Young at Art is one of Northern Ireland's leading providers of children's arts experiences, internationally recognized for its best

**"FIGHTING WORDS IN BELFAST. WHAT AN INCREDIBLE IDEA. ESSENTIALLY WHAT THIS MEANS IS THAT WORDS WILL BE FIGHTING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION—ONTO THE PAGE AND INTO THE LIVES OF THE PEOPLE WHO CREATE THEM."**—Author Colum McCann



practice in understanding and responding to the needs of children from a range of backgrounds. 174 Trust's Duncairn Centre for Culture and Arts networks with local schools and is a major contributor to the cultural rebirth of North Belfast. Skainos is a regeneration project in inner East Belfast committed to the establishment of shared space in a conflicted part of the city, using the arts as a lever for

positive change.

The Fighting Words center in Dublin has always welcomed all children on an equal basis—and they come from all parts of the country. As a result, children from vastly different backgrounds and locations mix here naturally. Obviously the history of Belfast is different from that of Dublin and offers its own challenges, but

Fighting Words Belfast is operating on the same principle—all children are welcome. The primary focus at the outset is on working with schools and youth groups from north and east Belfast, but as Fighting Words Belfast becomes established and builds its reputation for quality, we expect schools and children from all parts of the city and, indeed, beyond the city, to become regular visitors, and to be hosting similar numbers of children as in Dublin.

Fighting Words is not state funded north or south of the border. Both Belfast and Dublin projects are entirely dependent on philanthropic individuals and organizations, such as The Ireland Funds. For Fighting Words to have the huge impact in Belfast that we have seen in Dublin, we need your continued help.

—Fighting Words Co-Founder, Seán Love

