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**NEWS**

# History repeating itself for Irish youth charity

For the last 20 years the Irish Youth Foundation has been assisting young Irish people and projects across Britain and the North of Ireland with financial aid. Now with a renewed wave of emigrants leaving Ireland for Britain's shores, Graham Clifford reports that the need for their helping hand is more vital than ever

HISTORY appears to be repeating itself for the Irish Youth Foundation (IYF). When set up in 1989 by a small group of Irish men and women the wave of emigration from Ireland to Britain was long, sustained and painful. Now two decades on the voluntary charity is once again aiming to help and support those crossing the Irish Sea in search of employment.

The Foundation has raised nearly £4million since its inception and over the years has helped a range of Irish community groups in Britain dealing with the disadvantaged and vulnerable.

In 2009 the Foundation awarded grants of nearly £250,000 distributed to welfare, educational and cultural groups working with young Irish people in both Britain and the North of Ireland.

Patron of the Foundation President Mary McAleese paid tribute to the body this week, saying: "They play a pivotal role in assisting young people who sometimes find themselves in vulnerable situations. Through support of the welfare agencies, as well as cultural and educational projects, (the foundation) helps to improve the quality of life for many marginalised members of the Irish community."

Amongst those to receive grants in 2009

from the IYF was the New Horizon Youth Centre in London which provides practical help and support for young homeless people in the city, many of whom are Irish. Others who have benefited include the London Gypsy and Traveller Unit, Irish Community Care in Merseyside and the Brent Adolescent Centre.

The grant provisions also include a programme known as the Lawlor Educational Grants, which support disadvantaged pupils in the North of Ireland and Irish students in need of financial assistance at universities and colleges in Britain.

In 2008 almost £10,000 was awarded to 23 Irish students in full-time education in Britain to give them a practical helping hand as they attempted to gain invaluable qualifications.

One of those was Niamh Moore from Cork who in recent weeks has secured a position as social worker in a hospital in Chichester, West Sussex. Niamh told The Irish Post: "Due to family difficulties I moved to England at the age of 16. I left school without my Leaving Certificate and had to begin English education at GCSE level. I found myself accommodation and completed an Access Course. This enabled me to attend Sussex University where I

spent three years completing the BA (Hons) Degree in Social Work.

"The financial assistance I got from the IYF enabled me to work less so that I could concentrate on my studies. I think it's great that there is help for young people from Ireland to get ahead in England. I also believe knowing there is a community of young Irish out there is a comforting thought."

The Chairman of the IYF John O'Neill said recently: "Now as the Irish economy falters and unemployment there rises, we have seen a return to emigration to Britain, so on our 20th anniversary the need for our help is becoming greater than ever."

"With the continuing support of our friends amongst the business community in Britain, as well as many British companies and individuals, the Irish Youth Foundation looks forward with both pride and confidence to the future."

In total, IYF grants were awarded to 29 projects in Britain and to 11 projects based in the North of Ireland in 2009 and the grant application process for next year has just begun.



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**IYF Chairman  
John O'Neill**



## Foundation celebrates anniversary in style



Seamus and Breege Carr from Donegal.



THE IYF held its 20th anniversary ball at the London Hilton on Park Lane.

Over 400 people attended the event, which had a 1950s theme.

Among those present were IYF Chairman John O'Neill, pictured right, and Cecilia Gallagher and Mary Clancy (left) who were two of the founders of the IYF.

Pictures: Malcolm McNally



Ines and Helen Murray, Kryisia Lake and Eileen and Megan Comer.



Irish Ambassador Bobby McDonagh and his wife Mary, pictured here with Kathy Murphy from The Murphy Group.



Tony McFadden from Donegal and his wife Philomena from Sligo.

### Projects aided by IYF in 2009

The Brandon Centre For Counselling & Psychotherapy For Young People, London (£5,000)

Brent Adolescent Centre, London (£15,000)

Bristol Playbus Project (£9,000)

Causeway Irish Housing Association, London (£4,500)

Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann, Johnny Doherty CCE, Motherwell, Scotland (£1,000)

Immigrant Counselling And Psychotherapy, London (£7,000)

Irish Arts Foundation, Leeds (£1,500)

Irish Commission For Prisoners Overseas, London (£3,000)

Irish Community Care Merseyside (£11,500)

Irish Cultural Centre Hammersmith, London (£7,000)

Irish History Month, Leeds (£500)

King Academy of Irish Dancing, St. Helen's, Merseyside (£500)

Liverpool Irish Festival Society (£1,000)

London Gypsy and Traveller Unit (£9,000)

London Irish Centre (£5,500)

London Irish Women's Centre (£7,000)

Manchester Irish Education Group (£2,500)

The Maya Centre, London (£2,500)

New Horizon Youth Centre, London (£14,500)

St. John Bosco Youth Club, London (£3,000)

St. Michael's Irish Centre Liverpool (£8,000)

Sandwell Irish Society, West Midlands (£1,500)

Solace Women's Aid, London (£7,500)

Tyneside Irish Cultural Society (£1,500)