

We're in Belfast

October 2008

Things we love about Belfast:

- It is customary to eat and have tea every couple of hours.
- We can walk to pretty much everything.
- The scenery is absolutely gorgeous... when it is sunny.
- The people are friendly, even if they can be rough at times :)
- The exact details of their history is unique, but is similar in many ways to our own and can teach us a lot about our own history and culture.

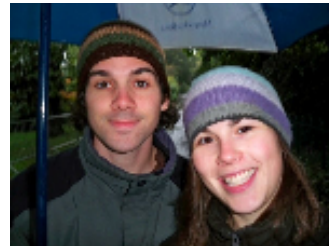
Upcoming significant dates...

Harvest Thanksgiving	Oct. 12
The church commissions a new community and	Nov. 2
Volunteer retreat to Donegall	Nov. 17-19
Thanksgiving	Nov. 20
American Thanksgiving Breakfast @ church	Nov. 23
Christmas	Dec. 25

What we have learned so far...

Seeing as every update all of you have received from us has been from Jessica, I've decided to use this little space to rant and rave about some of the fun things that have been swimming around in my mind for the past month.

Belfast is a wonderful and amazing place and although I miss all of you terribly, there is nowhere I would rather be for this year than here. In spite of the preconceived notions you might have about the city and people here based on the history of violence, everyone is extraordinarily nice and helpful to anyone with an American accent. I've had multiple conversations with complete strangers about things like what I'm doing in Belfast,



why I picked Belfast of all places to volunteer, and how crummy the weather is on most days. I've had an intoxicated gentleman offer to buy me a drink simply because I'm helping out the community, and he thinks that's great.

It's amazing what hidden characteristics can be brought out in people when they are inspired. I believe that this country can move forward with peace in spite of the things that divide people here. It'll take time, courage, planning, and leadership,

but first people need to begin to understand that things don't have to continue in the direction that it has always gone. Just because historically people have hated each other because of political differences doesn't mean that I have to continue that tradition.

The people who do believe this have been inspired. Someone or something has helped them to come to the understanding that what they do matters and because of that, peace has a bit more room to flourish.

If my being here inspires one person to believe that they can make a difference in their community, then I consider my time well spent .

Language differences...

You wouldn't think it would be difficult to understand people in Belfast—they speak English, right? Yes, but we were surprised to find how difficult it could be to understand those around us. The reason for this is that people often speak very fast, have an accent, and use different words than we would use to refer to different things. Here are a few phrases that we had trouble with at first:

- There was a queue at the chippy on Friday night. (There was a line at the place that serves fish and chips...)

songs mock America).

- What's the craic? (What's new? Or What's happening? Craic can also refer to great fun).
- Throw that rubbish in the bin. (Throw that garbage in the trash can.)
- They always whinge. (They always complain).
- He's such a eejit!. (He's such an idiot/dummy).

Well, hope that helped to expand your vocabulary!

- All these song slog America off. (All these

Where we are working...

Throughout the week, we are working with several different programs and with a number of different agencies. Here's a list and description of each program.:

⇒ Fortwilliam and Macrory Presbyterian Church—two Presbyterian churches in the area that have within the past few years amalgamated into one church. Currently they meet at Fortwilliam's campus. (Kevin & Jessica).

⇒ 174 Trust—community center that runs a variety of programs and clubs based on the needs of the community (Kevin & Jessica)

⇒ 174 Trust Afterschools—For kids in primary school (ages 4-12). Provides a safe place for kids attending local schools to play and do homework after school while their parents are still at work. (Kevin and Jessica)

⇒ 174 Trust/Sure Start Parent & Toddlers Group—For parents with children under 3. Group provides arts & crafts, creative activities, snacks, songs & music. (Jessica)

⇒ 174 Trust Nursery—Preschool for kids ages 3-4 years old. Prepares them for entering primary school. (Jessica)

⇒ 174 Trust Disability clubs—three separate clubs catering to three different age groups of people with disabilities—kids, youth, and adults. Provides different activities for children with physical & intellectual disabilities. (Jessica)

⇒ 174 Football—Meets three days a week with different age group boys to play football (soccer). (Kevin)

⇒ Newington Day Center—Provides activities and a meal for older folks (Kevin).

⇒ The Point—Fortwilliam and Macrory's youth group. (Kevin and Jessica)

⇒ Youth Club—Club for kids/youth that meets in Macrory Halls on Saturday nights. Provides football, crafts, snookers (like pool), a tuck shop and cookery. (Kevin & Jessica)

⇒ Home Start—Agency that provides support of parents with young children who may not be able to the support they need elsewhere. (Jessica)

⇒ NICHHS—community organization that organizes programs for youth to encourage peace-making through cross-community relationship building (Kevin & Jessica?)



Kevin pointing to Fortwilliam & Macrory's steeple...it's the tallest building in the neighborhood!

Prayer Requests:

- ◇ **Sensitivity to and understand of the culture in Belfast.**
- ◇ **Restful nights so we have enough energy for our busy weeks!**
- ◇ **To form strong bonds and build friendship with those around us.**
- ◇ **The upcoming events (see page 1)**

Thank; for your continued prayer!

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Check out our website!
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Joel, Kevin, Megan, Alex, & Hannah (all Young Adult Volunteers) sitting on a bench in the Belfast City Centre.