



the mulcahy scholarship

THE MULCAHY SCHOLARSHIP NEWSLETTER

FALL 2023 EDITION



Our 2023 Mulcahy Scholarship Recipients at the base of Diamond Hill,
Connemara National Park, Co. Galway.

from left to right; Ryan Crothers, Maeve McLaughlin, Sarah Kate Ryan, Niamh Coleman, Kristie Nolan, Grace Lanning, Sinead Dobey, Saoirse O'Sullivan, Patrick McCormack, and Colleen Kelleher

Note from the Board of Directors

Welcome to our 2023 Mulcahy Scholarship Newsletter! This year the scholarship was thrilled to select ten wonderful recipients to travel for two weeks this summer to partake in the Irish cultural program offered by the Celtic Irish American Academy (CIAA), in Galway, Ireland.

Our Board of Directors were handed the tough task of narrowing down the talented applicant pool, as the submissions were extremely strong again this year. It is uplifting to know that our future young leaders continue to show a willingness to do whatever is needed to improve the world we live in. Our recipients exuded many leadership qualities, all while sharing an enthusiasm to explore their Irish heritage.

Our 2023 group consisted of Grace Lanning, Kristie Nolan, Niamh Coleman, Maeve McLaughlin, Sinead Dobey, Patrick McCormack, Sarah Kate Ryan, Saoirse O’Sullivan, Ryan Crothers, and Colleen Kelleher. They travelled as a group to Shannon, Ireland in July, where they were met by representatives from the CIAA and transferred to their generous host families in Galway, where they lived for two weeks as part of the family.

Each day, the group attended classes at the CIAA, where they learned about their Irish history, Irish culture, some “gaelige”, as well as hurling skills, and even sampled some Irish céilí dancing. They were also treated to numerous excursions organized by the CIAA, including a visit to the Cliffs of Moher, NUI Galway, Trinity College in Dublin, Kylemore Abbey and trek on Diamond Hill. Each night, they got to relax with their host families and explore the sights of Galway, with the more adventurous folks taking a dive from the tower at Blackrock in Salthill.

The Mulcahy Scholarship was launched in 2018 by the Aisling Irish Community Center, Yonkers, New York, in tribute to Denis Mulcahy and his family's commitment to Project Children, a charity that for forty years, worked untiringly to change the lives of children across Northern Ireland. Project Children provided the children of Northern Ireland a 6-week summer reprieve from the violence of “the Troubles”. Thus, 40 years later, the Aisling Irish Center is replicating the reverse by providing American high school students the opportunity to experience firsthand their Irish culture in a fun and diverse way. Our board are delighted with the growing interest in our scholarship program, and we will continue our endeavor to offer Irish American high school students the chance to explore their Irish heritage. We would like to extend our thanks to all our donors, as well as Brian Fahy and Johanna Clancy, Directors of the CIAA, and their generous host families.

Le buíochas,

MS Bord Stiúrthóirí

Grace Lanning

Flushing, NY



The Mulcahy Scholarship Program was a once in a lifetime opportunity that has gifted me with a bounty of wonderful memories and meaningful experiences. My gratitude for the program and its namesake, Denis Mulcahy, goes far beyond words.

Thanks to Mr. Denis Mulcahy and the work of the Aisling Center, I got to spend two weeks living in the beautiful city of Galway, Ireland. While living in Galway, I was immersed in its culture while being taught by its residents. I became more aware of the county's rich history, and the kindness of its citizens each day. During the trip's two-week duration, I made extraordinary friends from all kinds of backgrounds. The words, people, and places I encountered on this trip have left a lasting impression on me I will cherish forever.

The classes we attended most mornings were not the usual yawn inducing material I was familiar with from the school year. Our teachers were dynamic in their delivery as we learned about everything from Ireland's greatest artists to its tragic famine. One class that became a standout for me was our morning poetry trek through Salthill. We walked from St. Edna's school to Galway City, stopping at the bronze plaques engraved with words written by Nobel Laureates, local writers, and poets. Other classes were centered around the focus of sustainability in Ireland, the basics of the Gaelic language, and the importance of public speaking. These lessons were unforgettable, and I will always hold onto what I've learned.

Staying with a host family was an unfamiliar concept to me, but by the day of my departure I felt like I was leaving behind my own blood. My host mom had the biggest heart and made the four girls living with her feel like sisters. While she cooked and cleaned for us, she would also share her stories and have us bursting with laughter every day. I became fast friends with the girls I lived with, and we would talk for hours, getting to know each other as we were sitting around the kitchen table and walking to the school. I also bonded with the rest of the kids on the trip as we were hiking up the steep terrain of Diamond Hill and jumping into Galway's freezing water at Blackrock. These exhilarating experiences were foreign to all of us, so doing it all for the first time together was so special. Everyone and everything I came across on this trip has a special place in my heart.

If I could relive the two weeks I spent in Ireland this summer, I would be back there in a heartbeat. This trip was everything I imagined and more. Due to the Mulcahy Scholarship, I got to see a piece of my heritage firsthand, and I can't express just how thankful I am for that.

Kristie Nolan

Yonkers, NY



Traveling to Ireland, as part of the Mulcahy Scholarship was an experience that I will never forget and forever appreciate. From the day I arrived until the day the trip ended, I made countless memories and learned new things about Irish culture that I will carry with me forever.

Making tons of new friends while traveling around such a beautiful country is an experience that not many get to have, and I am forever grateful for Denis Mulcahy and the scholarship committee for making this possible for me. I learned new things inside and outside of a classroom, such as Ireland's 17 goals towards sustainability.

Aside from learning about these and how they apply to Ireland, I took these ideas and goals back to America with me. We studied Irish literature, poems, and songs and how they related to the history of the country. Outside of the classroom, we hiked Diamond Hill in Connemara, volunteered, and cleaned at the Circle of Life Park, took a tour of Medtronic, jumped off Blackrock Diving Tower into the Galway Bay, and met the Mayor of Galway, Eddie Hoare. We had the privilege of being in Galway during the Galway International Arts Festival and this allowed us to visit many art exhibits and admire architecture throughout the city.

Those two weeks truly were a trip of a lifetime, and I cannot thank the Mulcahy Scholarship enough for sending me on this trip. Aside from having the time of my life, I learned and saw things that I never would have before if it wasn't for this scholarship. I saw Ireland in a way that I never had before: learning the history, seeing new counties and sights, and further exploring the culture. Ireland will always hold a special place in my heart, but thanks to the Mulcahy Scholarship, I now have a better understanding as to why it's so important to me.

This experience in and of itself will open up more experiences for me in my future, whether it be through college applications or using my newfound knowledge from the trip. This would never have been possible for me without this scholarship, and I hope that so many more American kids can have the opportunity to experience what I did for years to come, because it truly was one that I will cherish forever.



Niamh Coleman

Yonkers, NY

The two weeks experience I had in Galway, Ireland this summer is one I will always remember, where I made memories that I will cherish and gained knowledge I will value for years to come. As I landed in Shannon airport early in the morning on our first day, I knew I was beginning a two-week adventure. During this time, I was granted independence in a controlled environment so I could grasp what it will feel like living away from home, away from my parents. The independence this opportunity gave me was extremely special to me as it is something I have never had the chance to enjoy before. While learning how to navigate public transportation in a city foreign to me, I encountered social norms that are different to those of the United States. All these experiences in an unknown environment, plus more, will serve a great deal of importance in my future, whether in college, while working or traveling the world.

The two-week course was full of amazing, exciting, and fascinating activities that were immersed in Irish culture. The hands on, living and learning program opened my eyes. Our group learned about environmental sustainability and how we can make our communities environmentally friendly on large and small scales. From seeing government level environmental action, such as windmills for renewable energy to seeing our host families do small things to make the world greener, I understood that there is much more that I can do to in my community. I hope to take this information and inspiration make to my community so I can implement environmental change.

Inside the classroom I was taught what my ancestors lived through and fought for and as we stepped outside, we visited historical sites spread throughout Galway and Dublin. I was taught the history behind my culture, heritage, and traditions so that I can now fully appreciate my parents and grandparents lives and experiences living in Ireland. This level of understanding and love for my history would have been unattainable without this amazing opportunity.

My most appreciated aspect of the trip was meeting a multitude of new people, new friends, new connections, and new role models. Across each of the new people I met, they all taught me something. The new friends each educated me on their specific culture and lives from different parts of the world which was exciting and interesting to learn about. The role models, all demonstrated their life in a country different to mine as well as different paths I can take in life that will make me successful. And finally, the connections of new people I met is incomparable. I'm excited to keep in touch and visit them when the time comes. I can't wait to use the exposure, education, and experiences I gained this summer while considering the colleges I will be applying for in the fall. This opportunity has truly impacted my life and I know it has done the same for others.

Maeve McLaughlin

Yonkers, NY



This year I was honored to be selected as one of the Mulcahy Scholarship recipients. As a recipient, I was given the opportunity to go to Galway, Ireland for two weeks and learn about Irish culture. The trip consisted of so many different activities that helped me explore my own Irish roots and the culture in general. I stayed with a host family for two weeks who I got incredibly close with and learned all about their daily life and how it differed from mine. My host family truly became home away from home, and I cherish all three of my new sisters, mom, and dad greatly.

Throughout the trip, I met so many new people from all over America and other countries such as Spain. We traveled to other counties and explored Galway's fascinating history and impressive landmarks. Through this opportunity, I was awarded independence and the ability to seek out knowledge in a way I was never able to before. We did activities such as climbing the Cliffs of Moher and Diamond Hill, and we went on excursions to Dublin and Medtronic. We were lucky enough to be in Galway during its famous arts festival, which granted us opportunities to explore amazing exhibits.

My new friends and I explored the town almost every day and we were truly able to make long lasting memories and connections with one another. We also went to class and learned so many new things about Irish history and culture, such as the Famine and famous poetry. We participated in fun sessions that taught us Irish sports like Gaelic Football, Hurling, and Irish dance.

While I may come from an Irish neighborhood in America, the experience of being in Ireland and learning about what these aspects of the culture represent to the Irish really made me appreciate my Irish heritage even more. The point of this trip was to extend my knowledge on Irish culture, and I learned more than I could have ever imagined. Meeting students from all over America and other places who came to learn more about Irish culture made the experience even more special for me. I had so much fun and felt so welcomed by the CIAA members. It was an amazing opportunity that would not have been possible without the Mulcahy Scholarship. This Scholarship has really changed my life and perspective on the importance of culture and heritage. Mr. Mulcahy's story really moved me and made me, as well as the other 9 recipients, proud to be a part of something so special. While the trip and the scholarship taught me so much, I think the most important lesson I will always remember is that one person can truly make a difference.

This trip allowed me to grow as a person and frankly, it has helped me prepare for college which I will be attending next year. It taught me independence, resilience, and it gifted me friendships that will last a lifetime. I thank everyone involved and I am so proud and grateful to have been awarded the Mulcahy Scholarship.

Sinead Dobey

Woodside, NY



The Mulcahy Scholarship gave me a summer full of adventure. This past winter, my mom sent me the Mulcahy Scholarship application and suggested I apply. When applying, I never knew how much fun and how many unforgettable memories this scholarship would give me. After seeing “How to Defuse a Bomb” and meeting Denis Mulcahy, I realized the importance of the history of Ireland and how much there was for me to learn and explore.

My parents always taught me to embrace my Irish culture, they had me involved in the GAA and Irish dancing for as long as I can remember and I spent many summers visiting my two grannies back in Roscommon, Ireland. However, my time at the CIAA program as the Mulcahy Scholarship wasn't like my past trips to Ireland. I got to experience living with a host family in Galway, my friend Saoirse and I bonded with this family so much while we were there. They made us feel like we were at home and taught us so much about life in Ireland. Since returning to America, I have kept in contact with this lovely family and always remember the caring environment they created for us.

CIAA, also known as the Celtic Irish American Academy, which was the program we attended through the Mulcahy scholarship, let me meet kids from across America, and even Spain and Ireland. I made so many amazing friendships during my stay that I believe will continue for many years. We got to explore so many parts of Ireland, we had a day trip to Dublin where we saw Trinity college, along with the Molly Malone statue and Grafton street. We had many amazing afternoons exploring Galway city, which was filled with art, music, and Irish culture.

One of my favorite trips was to Diamond Hill in Connemara. We did a hike up Diamond Hill and got to see the beautiful views of Ireland. Another trip filled with beautiful views was attending the Cliffs of Moher. Hearing the water while at the cliffs was so soothing. My 2 weeks in Ireland flew by and each day was filled with so much fun while learning and exploring so many new things. We would start most mornings meeting at the St. Enda's College, where Mr. Brian Fahy would teach us important details in Ireland's history. We had fun activities and classes, such as playing Gaelic football and hurling, Irish dancing, making crafts and playing games in the yard.

Getting to explore Irish culture alongside so many other American students was an experience I will never forget. I am so grateful to have received the Mulcahy scholarship and make lifelong memories and friends.



Patrick McCormack

Hastings on Hudson, NY

My experience in Ireland through the Mulcahy Scholarship was changing in several ways. I applied to the scholarship with the hopes of understanding more about my Irish culture and heritage. Growing up I was influenced greatly by my grandparents and their immigration to the United States. To this day I could sit with them for hours and hear a new story I had never heard before. I knew how hard they worked and the adversity they faced to get to where they were in life however I felt as if it was impossible to understand their struggle fully without seeing where they came from.

The Mulcahy Scholarship allowed me to visit my grandparents' country and experience its beauty, history, and culture. From learning hurling to learning the storied songs of the country there was not a minute I wasn't fulfilled. Not only did I learn much about Irish culture, but I also formed a bond with the students who attended the trip. Going into the trip I had no idea how I would bond with the other kids on the trip. Now I feel as if they are family. I plan to remain in contact with them and can wholeheartedly say they became some of my closest friends. One unexpected advantage of the scholarship and the trip was my journey to college. After the trip, my transition to college has been much easier as it gave me the experience of moving away and getting out of my comfort zone. This has allowed my opening weeks of college to be easier and the Mulcahy scholarship even inspired me to take Intro to the Irish language at Villanova University this year.

Overall, I cannot thank Denis Mulcahy, Linda Croston, and all of those who support this wonderful learning experience. The trip prepared me for college, fulfilled a childhood dream, and allowed me to meet people I will remember for life. To be able to talk to my grandparents about their culture and connect even further was priceless and only granted to me through this experience. I was honored to receive this scholarship and I have no doubts all of the other students who will partake in the experience will be successful moving forward. I look forward to helping the scholarship in any way I can in the future. Go raibh mile maith agat!



Sarah Kate Ryan

Blauvelt, NY

My Mulcahy Scholarship trip was one of the best experiences of my life. This summer I had the opportunity to attend the Celtic Irish American Association trip to Ireland to learn more about Irish culture, heritage, and history.

This trip would not have been possible without the generosity of Denis Mulcahy and his amazing organization. This program helped me understand the importance of Irish culture for future generations and how to stay connected within the Irish American community. We learned so much and grew closer to our Irish roots.

Thanks to the Mulcahy Scholarship, I was able to learn more about Irish history and how it still impacts our lives today. We traveled to so many new places like the Cliffs of Moher, NUI Galway, Kylemore Abbey, and Trinity College. We also learned about important historical Irish events through lessons and activities. Brian Fahy explained Irish poetry and how it impacted education in the past, while Johanna Clancy taught us about sustainability in the environment.

But for me the best part of the trip was getting to experience Ireland in a new way. We got to explore Galway together and experienced what it was like to live in a small Irish town. We went swimming at Blackrock diving board and walked around exploring Galway town. Our host families made us feel so welcome and helped us to adjust with our new surroundings. I met so many amazing new people and gained lifelong friendships with other students from all different parts of the world. This opportunity connected me more to my Irish culture and gave me a deeper understanding of my heritage.

Without the generosity of the Mulcahy Scholarship, this amazing opportunity would not have been possible. I would like to thank Linda Croston and Catherine Flood for organizing this trip and making sure it went smoothly to give us the best opportunity possible. I would also truly like to thank Denis Mulcahy for his time and dedication to this foundation that made it possible for us to have this amazing experience. Thank you!

Saoirse O'Sullivan

Maspeth, NY



Thank you to the Mulcahy scholarship committee, as I received a wonderful opportunity to experience a trip to Ireland this past summer. Every morning on this trip, we received a valuable lesson about the importance of Irish history and the impact past leaders have made to the history of the island.

While we were given a chance to explore Galway City, I made friends that now I would consider best friends. The Mulcahy Scholarship provided me the opportunity to put myself out there and step out of my comfort zone. Being able to be included on this journey with the Mulcahy Scholarship and the CIAA, learning about my Irish culture and meeting new and extraordinary people, really was the highlight of my summer.

The host families were very welcoming and loving towards me and treated me like part of their family. After a good day out learning new things, there was always a funny story to talk about at the dinner table when I came back. They were so interested in what a day I had, that for a moment I thought I was talking to my own family.

The Mulcahy Scholarship benefited me because it allowed me to experience Irish history, Irish culture, and my Irish heritage from a different perspective. When I watched the documentary "How to Defuse a Bomb – The Project Children Story", I was amazed by what I learned about this time in Irish history and how I can inform my peers about it. Being in Galway and seeing how other people live out their daily lives was an eye opener as it is very different to New York lifestyle. The excursions to the Cliffs of Moher and climbing Diamond Hill were breathtaking but also a time for bonding with others and a way to build a friendship with one another. The CIAA showed me things I thought I would never see in Ireland, and I am truly grateful for that. The Mulcahy Scholarship showed me the true value of being Irish and not just saying but understanding it and living it.

When people ask me how my trip went, I have no words, because it was too good to be true. I recommend for any young person to apply for this Scholarship because it is an eye opener for students of Irish heritage, and you really do experience amazing opportunities with people who you will always remember. Now equipped with richer understanding of my Irish culture, I have a different and much deeper respect and "grá" for it, and for mission of the Mulcahy Scholarship and Project Children. Go raibh maith agaibh!

Ryan Crothers

Yonkers, NY



First and foremost, I would like to thank Denis Mulcahy, Linda Croston, Catherine Flood, and everyone involved with Project Children and the Mulcahy Scholarship. It is an honor and a privilege to be a part of an organization that has changed and saved so many lives.

The trip was a fantastic experience. The Mulcahy Scholarship gave me an opportunity of a lifetime, one I will never forget. We flew from JFK into Shannon on July 14th. After a long plane ride, we arrived in Ireland. We met Mr. Brian Fahy, who was the program director for the Celtic Irish American Academy. Brian and his daughter Johanna were amazing program directors, with a very well-structured schedule and great personalities. We piled into the bus and drove to Galway to meet our host families.

I stayed with the Walsh's, who coincidentally, were Brian's cousins. The Walsh's were great, had a similar family dynamic to my own, with three older boys and a younger girl. Whenever we weren't busy with the program, I was playing basketball, watching movies, or messing around with the kids. The first night, everyone from the program met for a walk. There were thirty students total, ten with the scholarship, and twenty others. People were from New York, New Jersey, Chicago, one kid from Spain, most with Irish backgrounds.

Over the two weeks of the trip, we walked around Galway, learned about Irish history, visited museums and monuments, climbed Diamond Hill, walked the Cliffs of Moher, went on a day trip to Dublin and made memories that will last a lifetime. Some of my favorite moments were swimming in the Bay, free time around Galway, hanging out with the family, stuff I feel my parents would have done when they were growing up in Ireland.

This trip meant a lot to me, being a first generation Irish American, it was amazing to have this opportunity to learn more about where my family came from. My father grew up in the North of Ireland, but he was somewhat sheltered from the Troubles because he grew up in a very non-sectarian town called New Castle. It was an honor to be associated with a program that he grew up knowing. After my time with the program, I spent two weeks with family in the North of Ireland. While there, I spread word of my experience and was delighted to hear that so many already knew about the program.

Another great testament to the organization was going to see a play in Belfast, written by a woman named Fionnuala Kennedy, based on the documentary and the Project Children's story. Fionnuala's own siblings were project children. It was a whole-hearted take on the stories of the children that went. I hope to help spread the Project Children's message and be an ambassador for the Mulcahy Scholarship for years to come. I would highly recommend this program for anyone looking to get in touch with their Irish heritage, or even just to see Ireland. You'll meet new people, see new things, and make memories you'll never forget.

Colleen Kelleher

Lynbrook, NY

The Mulcahy Scholarship has had a huge impact on my life. Achieving this scholarship has benefited me in ways that are exceedingly valuable. Being able to explore my Irish culture in primary ways has truly changed my perspective of Ireland.

Through the Mulcahy Scholarship, I have learned new things like Gaelic, and hurling, as well as the history of Ireland. During the trip not only did I have the experience of a lifetime, but I met the greatest friends while there. I could not have grown without the people I got to meet and know through the Mulcahy Scholarship.

Alongside the friendships I made, I found myself falling in love with the country of Ireland and specifically the city of Galway. We saw the Cliffs of Moher which was a wonderful sight and had several trips such as traveling to Dublin. This scholarship has given me an amazing opportunity to grow and learn while making friendships that will last a lifetime.

We would like to extend our sincere gratitude to all of our program donors, and in particular:

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Denis and Miriam Mulcahy with the 2023 Mulcahy Scholarship Recipients at the Scholarship Presentation Awards Night at Fordham University, New York.