



**Manhattan Club,
201 W 52nd Street, New York, NY
5:30-9pm Thursday 2 December**

www.irishecho.com



The staff of Donovan's with members of the Woodside community awaiting the raffle drawing for the Wells of Life fundraiser. Photo by Madeline O'Boyle.

From Woodside to a Faraway Well

By Dan Connor

It's just over a year ago that the Irish Echo gave us at Donovan's Pub of Woodside the honor of being recognized as Community Champions.

We were truly humbled, especially given the company we were in. All of the honorees were so very impressive.

However, I'm writing this to tell readers that one of those honorees really caught my attention. So much so that we engaged with them to support their efforts.

I thought I would share the story as it is the Irish Echo that made this possible.

I'm sure readers will recall a gentleman by the name of Nick Jordon, who is the CEO of a foundation called "Wells of Life."

Nick told of how his organization brings fresh, clean water to those that don't have it today. He spoke of villages in Uganda where women will walk five hours to fill jugs with dirty water and carry them back to their villages. His organization raises funds to build wells in these villages. Each of the wells costs \$8,000.

Nick's presentation really hit home with me. I drink over 100 ounces of water a day, never mind all the other water I use...and I take it all for granted. That day I decided that once the restaurant was back on steady ground we would build one of these wells.

As the months rolled by our community continued to step up and support us in massive ways. A long-time friend and customer started a GoFundMe that raised \$80k....it was truly amazing. A few months after that we received the Restaurant Revitalization

Funding from the federal government, and at that time we knew we were going to make it.

In August, we had a massive block party outside the restaurant to celebrate its 55th anniversary. Hundreds of people in the street, bands playing, games, face painters and, of course, plenty of food and drink.

At that event I placed buckets filled with water all around the party with signs saying "Hold this in the air for just 2 minutes...I promise I'll explain why later." People were wondering what it was all about, and a few hours later I told them the story of the women that walk so far and so long to fill buckets, and then carry them back.

I then announced that we would be building a well. We offered people the opportunity to join us. They could make a donation via Check with Wells of Life in the memo field, or they could buy raffle tickets at \$5 each. We are raffling off some of our prized sports memorabilia - a signed Jorge Posada jersey, and a signed George Martin helmet, both beautifully framed. We told people if we raise only \$100 we would pay the remaining \$7900. We told them if we raised \$8001, then we would add another \$7,999 and build two wells.

Tonight, and as I write, we will hold the raffle. We figured what better time of year than Thanksgiving. Along the way we had to decide what to put on the plaque that is placed on the base of the well.

We decided to dedicate it in memory of Thomas J. Ashton. Tommy was killed on 9/11. He was just starting his career and it was his second day on the job in



Two sons of Killealy, County Wexford. Irish tenor Anthony Kearns (right) and California-based Nick Jordan, the driving force behind Wells of Life. Photo courtesy Kirsten Fedewa Consulting. Below: Thomas Ashton's name and memory live on in a Ugandan village.



the Local 3 electricians union.

The Ashton family are dear friends of ours and have been instrumental in the many events and activities in our community. They have done incredibly good things in Tommy's memory that have supported thousands of people in our community and beyond. They have also supported us in amazing ways during the pandemic.

The one thing we decided to do was pay for the well right away. We had the money and what was the point of making a village wait when we could help them right away.

I reached out to Nick and he immediately jumped in and helped us through his organization's incredibly simple process.

He even recorded a video for us to share on social media which was a huge help. I'm happy to say that thanks to his amazing team our well went live last week. This well will change the lives of these people for generations to come. It has impacted us so much that even though we didn't raise over \$8k, we are building a second well.

Tonight we will celebrate and have our raffle - and we will give thanks.

Dan Connor is co-owner of Donovan's Pub and Restaurant with his brother-in-law, Jimmy Jacobson.



Jimmy and Leni Jacobson, Jennifer and Dan Connor at Donovan's Pub and Restaurant. Photo by Madeline O'Boyle.



The kids and the sign say it all.

Slaintè!



Many think this means, **“Cheers!”**,
but the Irish know it actually translates to, **“Health!”**
As a global single-use medical device manufacturer
that employs 400 in Castlerea, Ireland, it’s a wish
we offer proudly...and sincerely.

So, we salute the “Irish Echo”
and this year’s Community Champions.
Harmac’s vision is to change the lives of patients,
employees and the communities in which we work —
and tonight’s honorees have done exactly that.

Thank you for the differences you make,
be it across the Atlantic...or simply your street.



*Changing the lives of patients, employees and the
communities in which we work.*



COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS AWARDS 2021



Kerry Purtill

Place of birth: Bronx, NY

What motivated you get involved in your community? Ever since I was a child, I wanted to be a pediatrician. I loved science and I enjoyed working with children. My path to do this took me to NYU for undergraduate school and to University College Cork, Ireland for medical school.

How do you think your community work has brought about positive change? I have been a pediatrician at Children's Medical Practice at 29 Elm St. in Tuckahoe New York for the past 14 years. During that time, I've had the privilege of caring for many children and getting to know them and their families. I live in the community and get great joy in seeing patients at sporting events and the productions of The Riverdale Children's Theater.

I am also a certified lactation consultant

and I've supported many new mothers and babies in breastfeeding.

How has your job or profession helped in your community work? Over the past 18 months we were presented with a challenge that we never experienced before namely COVID-19. In the early days of the pandemic there was a lot of fear and uncertainty. We kept our office open and provided care for our patients and families. Many babies were born during the pandemic and we were able to give them the care that they needed. In addition to working at the practice, I also worked at a COVID-19 clinic evaluating adults and children for COVID-19.

Three things people would be surprised to know about me...

1. I am an avid gardener. I enjoy growing flowers as well as herbs and vegetables.
2. I took a birdwatching class while I was at New York University and I continue to be

passionate about birding and nature.

3. I spent many summers in Ballybunion, County Kerry working (I can pull a pint of Guinness) and enjoying the beach and cliff walk.

I was born in the Bronx and grew up in Woodlawn. My father Micheal Purtill immigrated from Ballydonoghue, County Kerry and my mother Margaret Kiely from Tarbert, County Kerry. I grew up listening to WFUV on Sundays and I remember many walks to Tri Eddie's to pick up the Irish papers including The Irish Echo.

I attended New York University and University College Cork. I did my pediatric residency and chief residency at Westchester Medical Center. I met my husband Rowan while in medical school in Cork. We have three children and live in Westchester.

Erin Kathleen Kelleher

Place of birth: Mt. Kisco, New York

Although American born, both my parents are children of Irish immigrants. I am a graduate of the University of Notre Dame and Trinity College Dublin Medical. My husband, Eamonn is an Irish Citizen (Dublin) and he moved to the United States in 2001. We live in Westchester with our 4 children: Michael, Katherine, Kevin and Joseph.

I have been practicing in the lower Westchester community as a General Pediatrician since 2003. I am a certified lactation consultant and also have a special interest in adolescent medicine. I am currently the Vice President of the Parish Council at St. Patrick's Church in Bedford where I have organized and directed Children's Liturgies, Parish Social events and represented the needs of growing Catholic families for the parish. I am also an avid volunteer at the Boys and Girls Club of Mt. Kisco...anything from fundraising to food

drives/distribution, aquatics and more. I am constantly energized by my interaction with people and serving my community in many different ways gives me great joy.

In the height of the Coronavirus Pandemic I answered the call to Phelps Hospital to assist in the care of critically ill adults. I am so proud to have served and grateful to have been given the opportunity to apply my hard-earned skills in a time of real crisis.

Our practice in Tuckahoe office has been serving the community EVERY DAY during the coronavirus pandemic. I am very proud to be part of this amazing group of people at 29 Elm Street Tuckahoe.

People would be surprised to know I am an avid swimmer, former college swimmer and synchronized swimmer and current USA Swimming Swim Official. Independent swim training and ND Synchronized Swim Team. I have travelled all over the country officiating at youth swim meets, it helps my children are all avid swimmers too. Swimming is my passion and I can be found swimming at 6 in the morning any day of the week.



Dr. Aniela Nastase

Place of birth: Romania

I have always enjoyed working with people. In my position as office based pediatrician I have enjoyed taking care of children of all ages and have gotten involved in the medical community in various hospital events. My husband is also a physician and we have both been involved in the community where we live and raised our 2 children.

I am a Romanian immigrant and I keep my ties to my home country by visiting regularly and participating in fundraising/donations for local orphanages.

In my free time, I enjoy talking to families about healthy lifestyle habits including exercise and a balanced diet. I have a special interest in nutrition

and sports medicine. I even play a bit of tennis when I can. I love to travel and have visited Ireland in 2018. I met many wonderful people and had some awesome food.

During the pandemic I discovered there are many ways to stay connected and even though I couldn't travel abroad I discovered many beautiful places in our own state which has sparked my love of travel and interest in history even more.



Glenn Greff

Place of birth: New Jersey

What motivated you get involved in your community? My parents motivated me to get involved in the community. Both my mother and my father were school teachers. They were very involved in contributing to the well-being of their schools both inside and outside of the classroom. Their continuous service to their community inspired me to get involved in my community.

How do you think your community work has brought about positive change? I think my community work has brought about positive change on account of the multifaceted nature of my service. I served as a Fair Lawn All-Sports Boys Baseball Coach, volunteered with the North Jersey Council of the Navy League of the United States, was a member of the Warren Point Green Team, and served as a driver for Meals on Wheels. I have also held

various volunteer positions of leadership within the Boy Scouts of America (BSA). Through the BSA, I have been part of countless service projects in Fair Lawn, NJ. I have also contributed energies to working with a special committee to construct a playground at Fair Lawn's Warren Point Elementary School, as well as helped construct a garden patio at the elementary school.

How has your job or profession helped in your community work? As the Resource Center Coordinator at Bergen New Bridge Medical Center, I do my part to contribute to the operational efficiency of one of the most impactful healthcare institutions in America. Bergen New Bridge Medical Center is the largest hospital in New Jersey, and the fourth largest public hospital in the United States. It spans over 65 acres, has 1,070 beds, and experienced more than 11,265 emergency visits in 2020 alone. The impact Bergen New Bridge Medical Center has on the community is incalculable and my profession has helped me contribute to the positive influence it has had on others.

Three things people would be surprised to know about me...

1. I used to work as a life guard at Long Beach Island
2. I love to go fishing
3. My favorite color is purple

Glenn Greff serves as the Resource Center Coordinator at Bergen New Bridge Medical Center. Bergen New Bridge Medical Center is the largest hospital in New Jersey. Outside of work, Greff has been an active volunteer within the community. He has held several leadership roles within the Boy Scouts of America, including Troop Unit Kernel and Life-to-Eagle Coordinator. He has also led several Boy Scout Troop 60 fundraising efforts. In the aftermath of Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines, Greff contributed to scouting volunteer relief efforts in Fair Lawn to support the region.



Congratulations to Melissa McDonald Schulz

The Irish Echo's "Irish Community of Champions" Awardee for 2021



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*With love from your Dad - Judge Terry McDonald & Johanna
Allison & Gerry Mulvey ▪ Elissa, William & Erin O'Brien
Sue Weller ▪ Eileen & Wayne Faught ▪ Joan Moody*



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Thank you for your incredible work,
and commitment to our cause.

COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS AWARDS 2021



Kathleen Power-Cronin

Place of birth: USA

What motivated you get involved in your community? I was motivated to get involved in my community because I saw a real need. I joined the SBDC in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy. During that crisis, several small businesses lost everything. I knew I had to do my part to help them pick up the pieces. Fast Forward nearly a decade and I am still working with small businesses who have faced considerable hardships to turn their fortunes around.

How do you think your community work has brought about positive change? I have worked to make the dream of entrepreneurship a reality for more people in the community. For many members of the community, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, starting a business feels like an impossibility. I

have made it my mission to prove to them that this isn't the case and have brought about positive change through showing what they think is impossible is actually attainable.

How has your job or profession helped in your community work? I have used my outreach abilities to connect people to resources that they would have otherwise never known they had access to when starting and managing a business; working with diversified populations to bolster their marketing prowess and provide them with the guidance needed to successfully grow their businesses. It is through my involvement supporting the business community that I am able to enrich my community.

Three things people would be surprised to know about me...

1. I am a Montessori certified teacher, English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) Business English, Accent Modification Specialist

2. I practice international languages as a hobby including Irish Gaelic
3. I had a background in theater production, stage management, a playwright & acting before joining the business consulting sector

Kathleen Power-Cronin of the New Jersey Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at Ramapo College leads outreach efforts to support small businesses. In addition to her involvement with the SBDC, She previously served as an Executive Board Member of the Irish Business Organization of New York, volunteer for the NY St Patrick's Parade, St Patrick's Cathedral Social Media Committees, New York/New Belfast Conference, delegate for the Belfast International Homecoming. Now a member volunteer of the UNA United Nations Association of NY and NJBIA Women Business Leaders Council.

Eileen Colleran Sprague

Place of birth: Woodside, NY

What motivated you get involved in your community? I attended an Irish Studies lecture at Queens College 7 years ago and heard about a plan to create an oral history of the Irish in Queens. I jumped at the opportunity to be part of it, especially since my parents arrived in Woodside, Queens from Mayo in 1950. They raised my eight siblings and I in St. Sebastian parish. I always wished I had recorded their Ireland-to-NY stories so, with them in mind, I decided to collect and preserve the immigrant tales of the elderly Irish who were still in the neighborhood as well as those who had moved away.

The project has grown to include Irish immigrants of all ages who made their first home in NYC. It's been a genuine pleasure and privilege to spend time with wonderful people whose stories capture an important part of our collective heritage and provide valuable insight into Irish and Irish American life past and present.



How do you think your community work has brought about positive change? My team and I have organized many events in various Queens neighborhoods to promote the oral history project and provide opportunities to socialize. Many attendees, especially seniors, have expressed how

much it means to have fun events to attend and to feel part of the community. Whether it's a film, speaker, book reading or music event, we get a good turnout and people volunteer to be interviewed. During the worst of the pandemic, we did telephone and Zoom interviews to keep in touch and find out how people were coping with a myriad of challenges. Excerpts from some of those interviews were featured in an episode of Colm Ó Mangáin's podcast on RTÉ. We're grateful to be able to continue to promote and develop the oral history project with support from the Irish Consulate.

How has your job or profession helped in your community work? While working at Queens College, I've had the opportunity to collaborate with many talented people to organize various events for the Irish Studies program including a 1916 anniversary exhibit, an art exhibit, a film premiere and a cultural celebration. These events have enabled us to promote interest in the oral history project and to celebrate the contributions of the Irish in New York. We hope to host some in-person events in the

spring. The college also provides the means to archive our interviews in the Benjamin Rosenthal library so they will be preserved and protected for future generations.

Three things people would be surprised to know about me...

1. I lived in Yellowstone National Park for three months.
2. I was a pre-kindergarten and 2nd grade teacher.
3. I was an Emergency Medical Technician.

Eileen Colleran Sprague is the Director of the Irish in NY Oral History Project. She and her team members record interviews with Irish immigrants of all ages and from all walks of life who live or have lived in NYC. Their goal is to protect and preserve these precious stories for present and future generations.

Eileen was born and raised in Woodside, New York and is the eighth of nine children born to Thomas and Teresa Colleran from County Mayo. She and her husband Ed have two daughters and one son and are delighted grandparents to Norah, Henry and Keaton.



Jason Loughran

Place of birth: Queens, NY

What motivated you get involved in your community? I was motivated to get involved in the Veteran community because I witnessed many of my fellow servicemembers struggle to transition out of the military and back into a civilian living.

How do you think your community work has brought about positive change? I hope my community work has brought hope to veterans and their families. Today's struggles make it very difficult for individuals to reflect on themselves and judge their effort in becoming a successful member of a society in the most expensive and competitive city in our country. As people who fought for the freedoms of this nation, the

positive change I think I have brought to my community is a reassurance that we have what it takes to overcome those challenges and that we are not alone in doing so.

How has your job or profession helped in your community work? Working in the newest New York City government agency created, my job has helped me and my community have constructive discussions around the role in which government should play in serving veterans and their families. Additionally, my job offers me the unique ability to influence educational institutions and major industries across NYC's thriving economy to create a culture that supports veterans.

Three things people would be surprised to know about me...

1. I lived in Antarctica.

2. I love reading comic books.
3. While growing up I was an altar boy at my local Catholic church.

Jason Loughran has served in the United States Navy since his entry in 2008. Jason deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in 2010 with Air Cargo Detachment-ONE, where the detachment received a Flag Letter of Appreciation and a Presidential Unit Citation for extraordinary heroism in action against an armed enemy.

Jason is currently the Executive Director of Special Projects for the New York City Department of Veterans' Services where he synchronizes the efforts of public, private, and not-for-profit agencies to overcome the barriers hindering New York City veterans from accessing critical resources.



Kevin Mead

Place of birth: Kanturk, Co. Cork

What motivated you get involved in your community? A lot of things that elsewhere are provided by the government through taxes are a part of the non-profit and voluntary sectors here. So, if you can, there is sort of an obligation to help fill those needs in your community.

How do you think your community work has brought about positive change? Yes, but very minor - but if we all do a little bit it helps. So consider how your time, talent and treasure could be a part of it.

How has your job or profession helped in your community work? Having a financial background means that I was often pushed towards that. But while I enjoy that, community work also gives you the ability to search for other things that you might be good at or enjoy.

Three things people would be surprised to know about me...

1. I once dated Sheena Easton - OK, I won the date in a contest on the radio, but it still counts!
2. I was three hamstring injuries (all occurring to better players than me)

away from playing for London Irish in the 1980 John Player Cup Final.
3. I have nearly 7,000 people in my family tree - and not one of them is famous in any way at all!

Kevin is Executive Director of the IPPF, a foundation dealing with two rare autoimmune skin conditions. From 2018 to 2020, Kevin was the VP of Resource Development at Spokane County United Way. At United Way, Kevin developed fundraising and volunteerism initiatives. Before United Way, Kevin was the CEO of PrimeGlobal - A worldwide association of accounting firms for 16 years. While there, he merged three organizations into one and grew the organization 400%. From 1994 to 2001, Kevin worked for the Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA). While at the IIA, Kevin held a number of positions including Manager of Conferences, Manager of Field Services and Manager of Certification Development.

Kevin's community involvement includes being on the Board and volunteering at Green Mountain United Way, being a volunteer rugby coach In addition to his professional and volunteer responsibilities, Kevin is a rugby referee and restores and rides old motorcycles.



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COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS AWARDS 2021

Michael Caplice

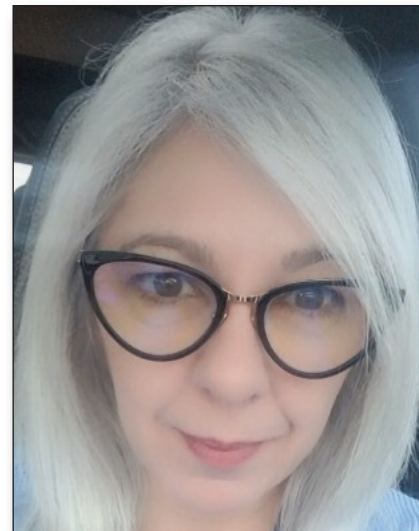
Place of birth: Manhasset, NY
What motivated you get involved in your community? I was primarily inspired by my mom and dad, who both spent their lives doing everything they could to help people. I've always tried to emulate the example they both set for me. In addition, when I was in college, I had an opportunity to sit down at a student roundtable with the First Lady at the time. My mother had cancer and had lost her long term care insurance, and the First Lady offered to help. After that encounter, I received a follow-up call from the White House, and it completely blew my mind. I was awakened to how much politics and government could really impact people and make their lives better, and I wanted to help others the same way someone had tried to help me.
How do you think your community work has brought about positive change? In



addition to my work at the New York State Comptroller's office, I have the privilege of sitting on the Board of Directors of the United Way and being Vice Chair of the Urban League of Long Island. I'm grateful to be a part of both their efforts to lift up

and empower historically underserved populations. One of the most exciting initiatives that the Urban League is focused on is the creation of a workforce development institute in Wyandanch Village that will provide job training and placement, and help diverse talent find rewarding careers.
How has your job or profession helped in your community work? As Long Island Director for the NYS Comptroller, I have the opportunity to assist people on a daily basis. I've been very fortunate to be able to help several thousand people with all kinds of issues over the years. Many times I am dealing with people who feel like they have nowhere else to turn, and nothing beats seeing their smile and hearing the happiness in their voice once I've found a way to take care of their problem. I can't think of anything more rewarding or fulfilling.
Three things people would be surprised to know about me...
1. I'm a singer and a musician in my spare

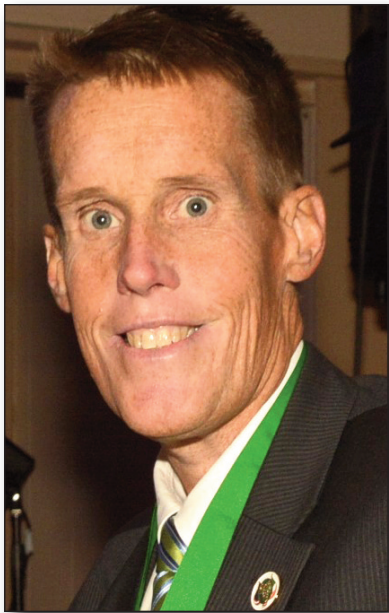
time, and a few years ago I co-wrote, performed and recorded a song with two Grammy nominated producers that got over a million views on YouTube.
2. I'm a huge animal lover and longtime vegan.
3. I had the chance to meet the President of Ireland at the Irish American Society a few years ago.
Michael Caplice has over 18 years of experience in all levels of government service. He currently serves as the Long Island Director for the Office of the NYS Comptroller, and previously worked for the NYS Assembly, the County of Suffolk, and the U.S. House of Representatives. In his free time, he is an active member of the community, including being a member of the Board of Directors of the United Way of Long Island and Vice Chair of the Urban League of Long Island. He is also a member of both the Irish American Society and Irish Americans in Government.



Melissa Schulz

Place of birth: San Antonio, Texas.
What motivated you get involved in your community? My motivation came from a friend who asked me to volunteer setting up exhibits for the San Antonio Children's Shelter. That is where I found my purpose, passion and life changing mentor.
How do you think your community work has brought about positive change? I have noticed positive change in the way my community and coworkers respond to domestic violence issues and the families impacted by them. More advocacy, awareness, and resources for both the victims and batterer, are available.
How has your job or profession helped in your community work? I've been lucky to work on the issue I'm passionate about, safe relationships. The collaborations I have developed and nurture through work have provided the awareness and tools that I use to continue to improve my community.
Three things people would be surprised to know about me...
1. My favorite meal is bean and cheese nachos with jalapenos.
2. I would like to learn how to play the bodhran or xylophone.
3. I impersonate the vocalist when I sing (to myself),

5th generation Irish and Hispanic American, born and raised in San Antonio, Texas where she worked until joining the Office of the Attorney General- Child Support Division in 2018. She serves the families of Texas as the Family Violence Specialist, helping survivors of family violence stay safe while accessing child support services. Melissa is a member of the Harp & Shamrock Society of Texas. She served as society president and continues to volunteer as the Chair of the annual St. Patrick's Day Wreath Laying Memorial Ceremony at the Alamo.



John Manning

Place of birth: Brooklyn, NY
John J. Manning is the oldest of four children of John A. Manning and Kathleen Manning (Nee Morrow). John & his siblings Coleen Lyons, Kevin Manning & Kelly Lynch grew up in Mill Basin, Brooklyn. John's Grandparents hail from Longford, Clare and Mayo.
On November 25, 1996, John entered the FDNY EMS training academy at Fort Totten. For the past 25 years John has served New York City with pride and the love of giving back to his community.
The EMS FDNY Help Fund was created and organized in 2018 and is a 501 (3) (c) non-for-profit organization (www.emsfdnyhelpfund.com). The funds that are raised, are designated expressly for the Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics of the FDNY. In June of 2019 John was elected Chairperson to the Board of Directors and currently still holds that position. During COVID John and his fellow Board of Directors raised 1.3 million dollars for the EMS FDNY Help Fund during the Pandemic. Our Mission is to ensure the security of our EMT's & Paramedics and their families in the event of a death, injury, illness & hardship. We strive to provide our dedicated EMS professionals a peace of mind.
John is also currently the New York State President for the Ancient Order of Hibernians in America.
Three Things people would be surprised to know about me: As many of my family & friends will tell you I'm a very open person, and to be honest, there is nothing I can think of that I would surprise anyone.



Vera Scanlon

Place of birth: Brooklyn, New York
What motivated you get involved in your community? I was raised with the example of my parents volunteering at my grammar school, Saint Patrick's in Brooklyn. I have

been involved with community organizations since college, including a year with the Jesuit Volunteer Corps in Louisiana, and board memberships with the Catholic Migration Services, the NYCLU, the Federal Magistrate Judges Association, and the Marymount School of New York. One of my mentors, the late Court of Appeals Judge Robert Katzmann, encouraged me to join the Second Circuit's Justice for All civic engagement initiative. In this effort, I have been able to connect my interest in education and civic participation with my work as a magistrate judge.
How do you think your community work has brought about positive change? The subcommittee on civic education of the federal court's Justice for All: Courts and the Community initiative has helped teach thousands of students in New York, Connecticut and Vermont about the workings of their government, especially the federal judiciary. We have introduced students to our courthouses, developed new educational materials about the judiciary, created innovative programs such as the judiciary and the arts project, and expanded existing programs such as library labs. We made our programs available virtually with the onset of the pandemic, keeping students and the courts connected.
How has your job or profession helped in your community work? My day-to-day work as a magistrate judge has confirmed for me the importance of the public's understanding of how the judiciary works. The Second

Circuit Court of Appeals Justice for All: Courts and the Community initiative works closely with the federal court where I work, the Eastern District of New York. Together, we have developed celebrations for Constitution Day/Citizenship Day with special naturalization ceremonies; created Law Day events with visits by judges and lawyers to schools, and students to courthouses; and hosted class visits to our courthouses.
Three things people would be surprised to know about me...
1. I am an enthusiastic beginner pickleball player.
2. I first went to school at Saint Clare's Convent National School in Harold's Cross, Dublin.
3. I am in my second year of studying for a diploma in Irish Studies from the National University of Ireland-Galway.
I was born in Brooklyn, New York. My mother is a nurse from Newtownmountkennedy, Co. Wicklow, and my father was with the FDNY and from Brooklyn. My grandparents were from Counties Wicklow, Galway, Mayo and Kerry. I graduated from Columbia and Yale Law School. I clerked for three judges then joined a firm where I litigated civil rights and commercial cases. In 2012, I was appointed a United States magistrate judge in the Eastern District of New York. I have a significant other, four siblings, and seven nieces and nephews, all proud of their Irish connections.



Warmest 'Congratulations' to our 2022 New York 'Mary' Saoirse Moloney Stevenson on her worthy honor this evening, there is no one who worked more diligently as you have over the years –

Thank you to the Irish Echo newspaper for featuring community champions each year

'Congrats' to all the other recipients this evening.

Hello to Mike Carthy and his staff

Much love from the NYMFD committee

Shaun Boyle, Veronica Cassidy Barry, Eileen Coyle, Mary Gallagher, Sioban Traynor

Helga and Renata Lose and Anne-Marie Mc Cullagh

2019 'Mary from Dungloe' Roisin Maher-Carlow

New York 'Mary from Dungloe' Inc. www.maryfromdungloe.ie

Congratulations

to the

2021 Irish Community Champion Honorees

and

The Irish Echo on a successful event.

from

James and all the staff



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COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS AWARDS 2021

Saoirse Moloney-Stevenson

Place of birth: Queens, NY

What motivated you get involved in your community?

Throughout my childhood I watched my parents being charitable. They always included my brother and I in gathering donations year round. If someone needed food, they were welcome at our table. Because I was raised this way, it is never a question whether to help someone if I have the opportunity to.

In addition to this-I spent most of my summers at a place called the Four Green Fields in Ulster County. Since its beginning, the combined efforts of all members has built a wonderful summer home for multiple generations of Irish families.

How do you think your community work has brought about positive change?

I try to do what I can to help the community in as many areas as I can. I donate blood to the New York Blood Center. I put together food and clothing throughout the year for local shelters and churches. I donate books to a local literacy foundation. I am a part of a group called The Angel Card Project, we write letters to people across the globe who need them most. I participate in garbage clean up along the roadsides. At my current job, I am a part of a company that has created a wonderful assisted living center for children and adults to grow and thrive.

Currently I am the NY Mary From Dungloe for 2022 and I hope through this role I can inspire more people to support their local businesses and be active in bettering their community.

How has your job or profession helped in your community work?

Currently I work at a wonderful place called The Center for Discovery. We offer clinical, residential, and special education programs to over 1200 amazing adults and children. There are also over 1700



incredibly hard working employees there making it happen.

I began there as a chef, and it was vastly different than any other professional cooking I had done before. At the Center, food is medicine, and I was able to create meals that directly benefit the health of residents. The menu is designed around using produce and livestock from our own bio-dynamic farms. It was very rewarding to work directly with the residents and help educate about unfamiliar ingredients and help some of the pickier eaters feel comfortable trying new things.

Currently I work as the Food Quality and Safety Control Coordinator. I work in our warehouse within the Purchasing department. Everything comes through our

department to be redistributed across the agency. It takes a lot of hard work, and all of the purchasing staff are dedicated to making it happen every day, every week.

I make sure that the food we receive to distribute is of the highest quality, and is safely handled. I also communicate with our vendors to discuss any quality or stocking problems. It's rewarding knowing that my job helps protect the food supply for all the residents. When the pandemic began to cause logistical problems worldwide I was only in my position for a few months. There were many days where I had to call several vendors in one day to try to fill the needs for the entire agency. It was eventually decided to bring in an emergency stock of food due to the increasing shortages. During all of this, Purchasing never stopped deliveries and packing orders. I am thankful to be a part of such a dedicated team. Through the combined efforts of many, we were able to ensure our residents received the same high quality food as always.

I was proud to be a part of the Center before the pandemic, but even more now. The entire agency did such an incredible job working together during an international emergency, one of the greatest examples of community and teamwork that I've ever seen.

Three things people would be surprised to know about me...

1. I've dyed my hair every color of the rainbow.
2. I'm not particularly fond of avocados.
3. I dabble in guitar playing.

I was born in July of 1992, and grew up in Orange County NY. I completed a 2 year Prostart Culinary Arts Program while in high school. After graduation I attended the Culinary Institute of America. During my time in college I briefly lived in Nantucket, MA. Currently I live in Sullivan County, NY and have two cats. My hobbies include hiking, painting, gardening, and tie dying.

Shauna McGrath

Place of birth: Ireland

What motivated you get involved in your community?

The Aisling Irish Community Center is a huge part of the community and I was always interested in the work that they did. When I knew the center was in partnership with Foróige I immediately wanted to get involved. Having worked and volunteered with Foróige prior to New York I knew the opportunities and skills this program would have for the young people within communities.

How do you think your community work has brought about positive change?

From the onset of COVID-19 we saw that there was a need within the communities for young people to have a social space where they could meet with friends, enjoy fun interactive games and learn communication and leadership skills. Having Foróige allowed for the members to meet new people, enhance these skills and have a voice within their community. Foróige has a group of amazing volunteers that put in so much work and effort into these youth clubs to ensure positive changes, and without their support and

commitment it would not be possible.

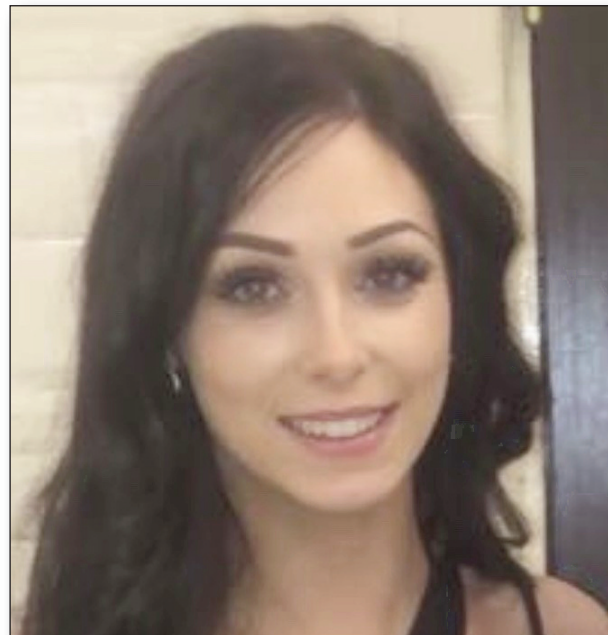
How has your job or profession helped in your community work?

It has allowed the young people have a voice and a leadership role within their communities. The young people with the support from the volunteers work together on identifying projects that they can work on to support the community. Allowing the community and the young people to come together and build relationships and a network.

Three things people would be surprised to know about me...

1. I don't like vegetables.
2. I hate spiders.
3. I am afraid of water

I am the Youth Development Officer for Foróige based in the Aisling Irish Center. I am native from Co. Leitrim having moved to New York in 2019. I have been working with children and families since 2016 having graduated with an Honors Degree in Social Care and a Masters in Family Support Services from National University of Ireland Galway. I also have a great love for Gaelic Football.



Ryan McNally

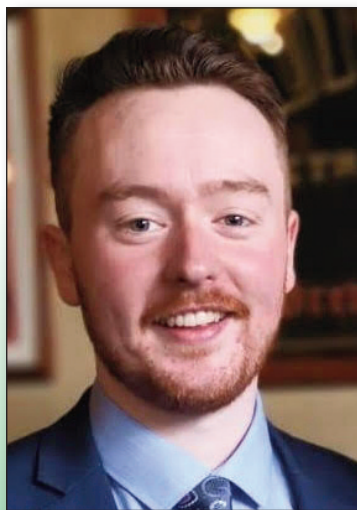
Place of birth: Armagh / Tyrone

What motivated you get involved in your community?

My motivations to get involved in our community have always been to help out as best I can and to get directly involved as much as possible. For many here in New York being away from home and Ireland can be tough; especially over the past two years. Direct involvement in Irish community groups and in places like the New York Irish Center allows individuals to meet and reconnect with our community. I have always been heavily involved in my community back home (Carrickmore, Co Tyrone); as soon as I got to New York I didn't want that to change. I am so proud to be able to wake up each day and work with so many amazing individuals and groups in our community.

How do you think your community work has brought about positive change?

I hope it has, especially over



the last two years our community as whole has come together so much. Working on joint projects like Sláinte2020 and running our senior delivery program over COVID allowed us to see the positive impacts first hand. Now being back in person; much of our community has

returned to the Center. When our senior citizens knew they could return to their Wednesday Lunch Club we had a big celebration. Simple anecdotal evidence from all different community members shows me first hand that our work has brought about positive change to the lives of so many.

How has your job or profession helped in your community work?

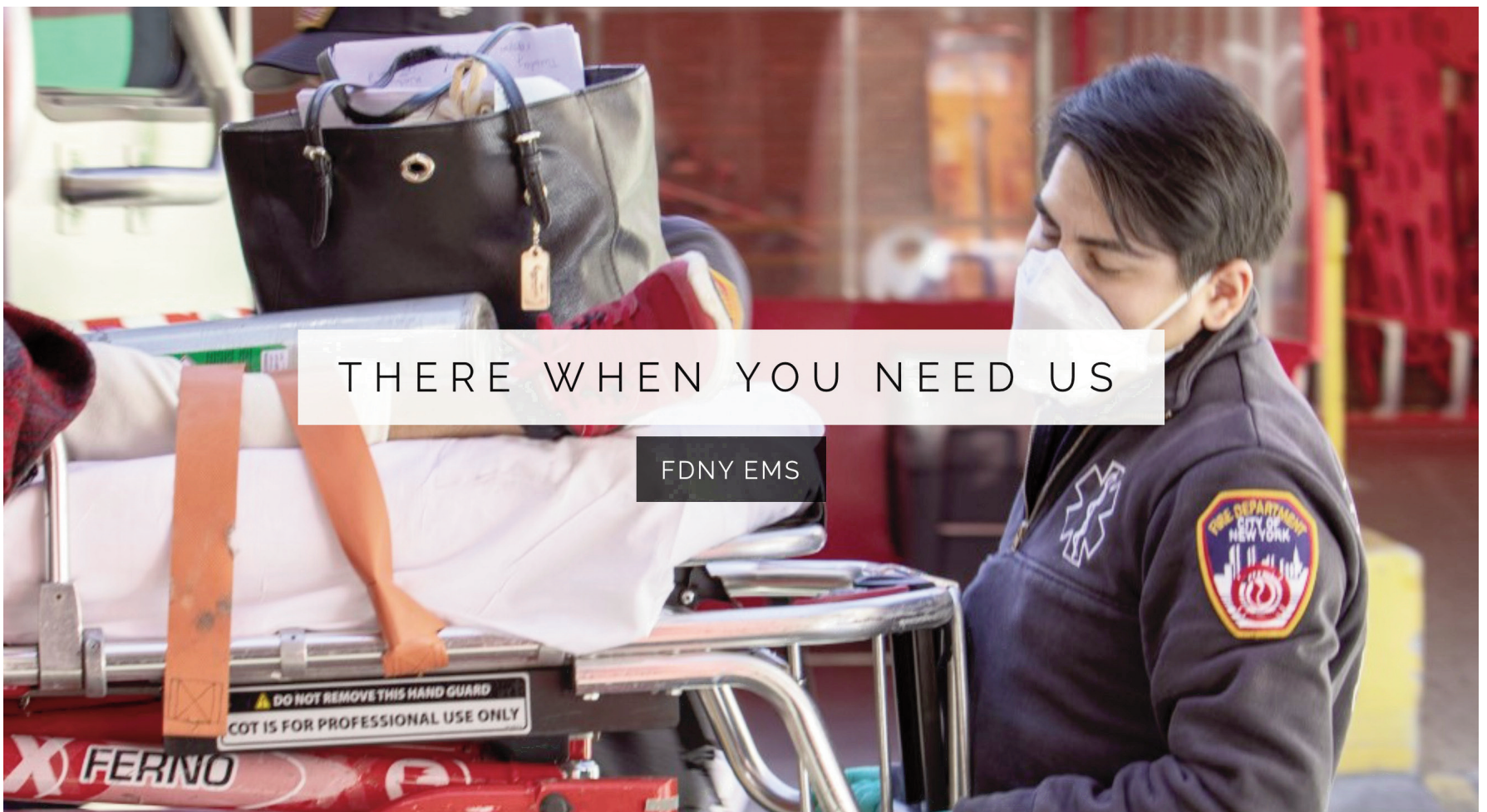
Training as a social worker back home in Ireland has helped me enormously with my community work here in New York. I worked previously in different community settings for youth and those over 65+; these experiences have influenced much of my current work with our community. Juggling the demands of working directly with a range of different community groups /

age ranges can be a challenge but highly rewarding. Having the base of the New York Irish Center also allows me to engage on a much bigger scale with our community here as a whole. Serving so many different groups, clubs, associations and individuals really allows me to keep up to date with such a diverse group of people.

Three things people would be surprised to know about me...

1. I am a triplet; with two sisters (one now lives in Sydney & one lives in Edinburgh).
2. I was asked to leave my school choir because my singing voice was too unusual (I couldn't hold a tune).
3. I come from a family of bee keepers.

Ryan serves as Director of Social Care at New York Irish Center implementing and managing a wide range of community services & programming for the organization and its members. He has been living and working in New York for over 4 years. A Social Worker from Ireland, Ryan studied for 7 years at 'Dean Maguirc College' in Carrickmore before obtaining a place at Ulster University Magee, Derry where he graduated with a BSc (Hons) in Social Work. He is a registered Social Worker with the Northern Ireland Social Care Council. His previous work includes those 65+ and young people.



The EMS FDNY Help Fund Board of Directors Congratulates
John Manning
on being honored for the 2021 Irish Echo Community Awards

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COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS AWARDS 2021



Stephen Long

Place of birth: New York
What motivated you get involved in your community? An intrinsic link exists between the Irish and service—be it serving the community at large or just doing someone a favor—and as the son of two Irish immigrants, constantly exposed to this particular ethos, I felt drawn into the fold.
How do you think your community work has brought about positive change? My job puts me in the unique position of engaging with the community on a daily basis. If I can field a phone call about applying for Irish citizenship, direct a researcher about Irish history in the right direction, or just make a check-in phone call on one of our seniors in the community, it's been a rewarding day. On a greater scale, curating cultural programs that help people find a bit of Ireland in this corner of New York City, that enrich the lives of those who left Ireland for America or those seeking out their own Irish heritage, hopefully enlivens

their spirits and enriches their connections to their roots.
How has your job or profession helped in your community work? As the Director of Arts & Culture at the New York Irish Center in Long Island City, I embrace the community daily. At the New York Irish Center, we are the intersection of cultural and community enrichment, and I do hope the creative work that we host for the public gives a platform to the multitude of voices emanating out of Ireland, from around New York, and from around the world. Anyone in search of what it means to be Irish in today's world will find meaningful voices here, hopefully finding a richer connection to Ireland and deeper understanding of the ever-expanding Global Ireland.
Three things people would be surprised to know about me...
1. I'm a bit of a motorcycle fanatic. I have owned a Triumph Bonneville for over six years, and I'm enthralled by all that's involved with owning and riding a motorcycle.
2. I have participated in several Scór novelty acts on stage, despite containing

not an ounce of acting skill. I once submitted an audition tape for a Burger King commercial, and I'm still waiting on the callback.
3. I coached youth basketball for four years, a team that included the son of a then-NBA player on the Knicks; I was hastily informed I "didn't know as much about basketball" as his dad.

Stephen Long has served as the New York Irish Center's Director of Arts & Culture since 2019. Prior to joining the New York Irish Center team, he was the associate editor at American Iron Magazine for four years, a motorcycle publication where he directed the redevelopment of the social media and digital strategy, broadened publication reach, and wrote and edited articles and features across four different publications.

Stephen attended the University of Scranton, earning his B.A. in English Literature with a minor in History. He is a first-generation Irish-American, the proud son of a Galway woman and a Wexford man.



Ryan Cook

Place of birth: Elkhart, IN
What motivated you get involved in your community? Helping others is a trait that has been a strong foundation in my family. It was only natural for me to also be drawn to seeking out ways to help and give back. My belief is that, we have the ability

and responsibility to make our community a more hopeful, stable and peaceful place. To change a life is to change the world.
How do you think your community work has brought about positive change? There is much disgust in the world today. I truly believe that hope is the light that shines through the darkness. That light is inside us all and we can be a great people if we choose to be. We can make the world a better place, but we first must start with our communities. Improving our communities, inspires our neighbors to also give back. We may all come from different backgrounds, but for all our differences, we share something stronger, bigger, higher and that is to have a strong community. We, together, can create a change, a difference, an impact that strengthens our present

as well as our future.
How has your job or profession helped in your community work? Most of my professional career has been spent working for some of the largest companies in the world. After an unexpected job lost in 2017, I established a volunteer based mental health organization, The Hope Corner. The Hope Corner, allows for volunteer opportunities, I myself volunteer and do not receive any income, as a way to connect with our neighbors. By providing an outlet, and resources for someone who may be experiencing a mental illness, we aid in the improvement of their lives, via education, peer support and grounding techniques. We help them see that they, we, are stronger than we realize and anything is truly possible.
Three things people would be surprised to know about me...
1. I'm a direct descendant of the founders of Connecticut.
2. I can do a wide range of impersonations.
3. I've been skydiving, at an altitude of 14,000 feet!

Raised in Connecticut, by my mother and maternal grandparents, I was always shown the values of life. Diagnosed with multiple disabilities, I've faced many challenges over the years, but I feel those are the trying times that make us into the person we are meant to be. As a young child, needing specialized classes, to attaining Dean's List status in college, I've always felt our dreams can indeed come true if we never give up. Now, my goal in life is to help others believe in themselves.



Sister Marie Sorenson

Place of birth: NY
What motivated you get involved in your community? My motivation stems from my commitment to serving those most in need and valuing the needs of the common good. We are most authentic when we are connected and committed to the uplifting of our brothers and sisters.
How do you think your community work has brought about positive change? St. John's Bread and Life has served the Bedford Stuyvesant community since 1981. During the

pandemic this past year we expanded our footprint in Brooklyn and Queens and were able to feed 230,000 families by distributing 4.2 million pounds of food and 1.7 pounds of produce. Our hope was to provide access to fresh food to communities where access is limited.
How has your job or profession helped in your community work? My career in social work has certainly played a big role in my involvement and work in the community. In my current role as Associate Executive Director at St. John's Bread and Life is focused on serving the local community

Marie's professional social work career has been focused in a variety settings. In 1990, she obtained her M.S.W from CUNY Hunter. Since then Marie has been involved in agency-based practice in an administrative role. Currently at St. John's Bread and Life since 2014, Marie participates in a team leadership role. She is responsible for overseeing casework services, the volunteer department, maintenance and security departments.



Tim Bohen

Place of birth: Buffalo, New York
What motivated you get involved in your community? I have always loved history. As the family historian, I set out to write our family story. And in the course of my research, I discovered the First Ward—a relatively unknown Irish working-class

neighborhood located on Buffalo's waterfront. As I came to know the people of this community I realized that theirs was a story that needed to be told. After publishing my book, *Against the Grain: The History of Buffalo's First Ward* (2012), I have been asked to share the story of the Irish in Buffalo more broadly in articles in local newspapers and magazines. I have also been invited to join several community organizations, Irish and non-Irish. Next year I

will be publishing a comprehensive history of the Irish in western New York in which I will be profiling the lives of dozens of men and women who have made a difference in our city and country.
How do you think your community work has brought about positive change? My book happened to coincide with the rebirth of Buffalo's First Ward. I would like to think that my work has helped to shine a positive light on the wonderful and interesting people who live in this unusually tight-knit community. After my book came out, Buffalo's local PBS station produced a popular documentary on the First Ward, which introduced the neighborhood to thousands of people. I've also become involved with various Irish organizations in Buffalo, including our award-winning Irish Classical Theatre Company, Buffalo's Irish Center, as well as supporting the renowned James Joyce Collection at the University at Buffalo. Whether it is raising money or connecting people to these organizations, I strive to raise the profile of these worthy institutions.
How has your job or profession helped in your community work? At first glance one might not see a connection between being a salesman and being a historian. But sales is essentially about people and building trusting relationships. Likewise, my work as a historian is about people and, in my case, I am interested

in the relationship between Buffalonians and their Irish community and heritage. I think my curiosity about people and their stories serves me well in both areas of my life.
Three things people would be surprised to know about me...
1. I am the oldest of fifty first cousins.
2. I am a hopeless romantic. On my honeymoon, during our few days traveling in Ireland, I dragged my wife to Skibbereen for a day-long visit to the Famine burial pits. She still has not forgiven me.
3. I get dejected when AncestryDNA updates my ethnicity results and reduces my Irish percentage. I started out at 100% Irish. Now it's a mere 89%. My wife, however, enjoys reminding me of my above-average Neanderthal DNA score.

I am a business professional who lives in Buffalo with my wife, Dr. Kimberly Blessing, a philosophy professor. All of my ancestors came from Ireland and most settled in Buffalo. Outside of work, I write about local Irish people or events, lecture on Irish topics and participate in the aforementioned civic organizations. I have appeared in two PBS documentaries and was interviewed by C-SPAN. I am currently writing a history of the Irish in western New York. If I were to win the lottery, I would travel between my two homes: one in West Cork and the other in Provence.

Congratulations | Irish Community Champion

How has your profession helped in your community work?

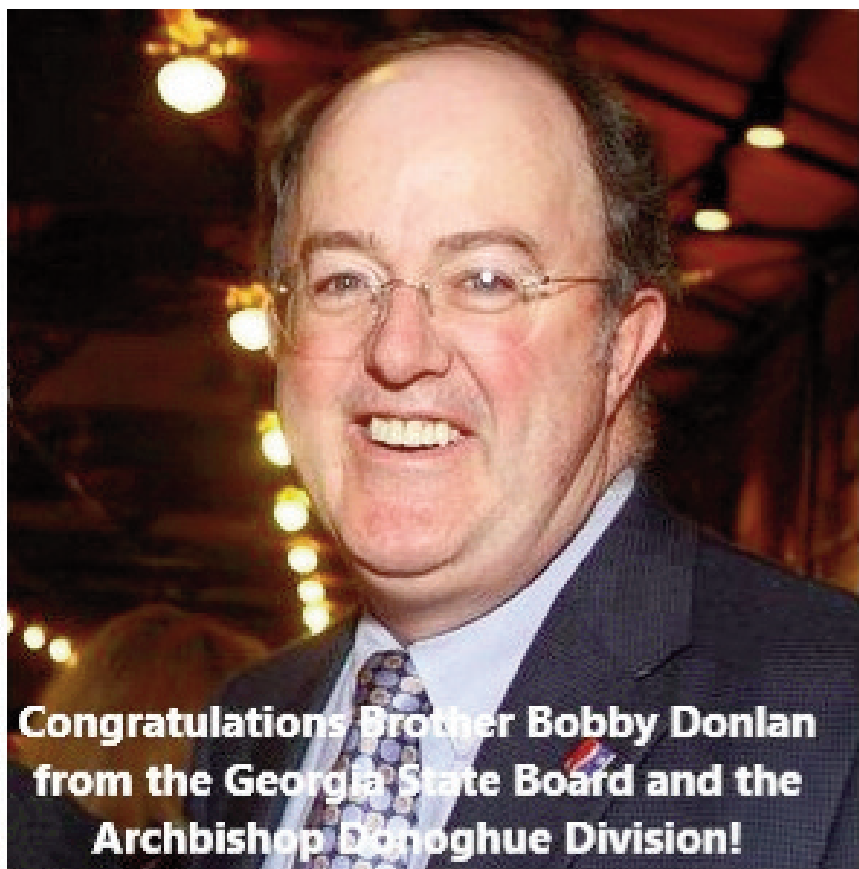
"I do my part to contribute to the operational efficiency of one of the most impactful healthcare institutions in America. Bergen New Bridge is the largest hospital in New Jersey, and the fourth largest public hospital in the United States. It spans over 65 acres, has 1,070 beds, and experienced more than 11,265 emergency visits in 2020 alone. The effect Bergen New Bridge has on the community is incalculable and my profession has helped me contribute to the positive influence it has had on others."



Glenn Greff
Resource Center Coordinator
Bergen New Bridge Medical Center



Congratulations to Eileen Sprague,
Community Champions honoree,
for her directorship of the Queens College's Irish in New York
Oral History Project!



Congratulations Brother Bobby Donlan
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COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS AWARDS 2021

Callan Gist

Place of birth: Phoenix

What motivated you get involved in your community? Since I was young my parents always had my brother and I involved with community-oriented programs and volunteering; I remember being excited as a child to pick out items to be packed in shoe boxes for operation Christmas child as each Christmas time approached. Those experiences stuck with me as I grew up and being active in my community is something I hold as a core belief, as a little girl I wanted to change the world as and while I may not be able to change the world; I can continually put myself into places where I might be able to change just one person's world for the better.

How do you think your community work has brought about positive change? I think the two most important ways that I've brought about positive changes is by being a part of already existing organizations and by influencing those around me to get involved. There are many existing organizations with great programs and outreaches who continually need volunteers, and often times making a change in your community is as simple and easy as signing up and showing up. Often I think some of the most important work I've done is be "just a volunteer" at some of the amazing organizations here in Arizona. I also believe that allowing my passion to influence those around me to get involved is important, from starting volunteer club in high school to starting volunteer nights in a local community theatre group I strive to allow my passion for the community to influence every aspect of my life.

How has your job or profession helped in your community work? With volunteering being one of my core values I have tended towards jobs that both support and encourage their employees to be active in their communities; for example, State Farms 100 for Good campaign, paid time offer for volunteering and donation programs. Since I have aligned my values with the companies and work I have chosen this has helped to provide me with time and resources that continue to support my goals, allowing my continued success in the community.

Three things people would be surprised to know about me...

1. I think people would be surprised to know that when I was young I lived in Hawaii on a cattle ranch for about a year.
2. A few years later at only seventeen I ran a



gubernatorial campaign

3. And recently in 2019 I was selected as the Arizona Friends of St. Patrick Young Ambassador and spent two weeks in Northern Ireland at the St. Patrick Centre with other ambassadors from across North America learning about the ongoing peace and reconciliation process and working with some of the many organizations involved.

Individuals are a beautiful mosaic of the people that have touched their lives, and her passion is to use her mosaic to make a positive impact on the world. An educational background in the biological sciences and business; she has spent the last 6yrs in the insurance industry. Recently entering real estate and mortgages while putting her marketing skills to work as a social media manager starting her own business. She is also active in her local community involved with many volunteer organizations including Special Olympics and Hunkapi Farms, and is an active member of the Arizona Irish Cultural Center.



Tom Mc Grath

Place of birth: County Fermanagh Ireland.

What motivated you get involved in your community? The US has been so, so good to me giving me and my family food, shelter and freedom- it is time to give back.

How do you think your community work has brought about positive change? I see positive results in people who have addiction issues as results of my positive work and words.

How has your job or profession helped in your community work? Yes I have a lot of access to the community as a business owner.

Three things people would be surprised to know about me..

1. That I run 100s of miles.
2. I produced a film about addictions and recovery.
3. That I am a recovering alcoholic.

Tom McGrath describes himself as the Irish Forrest Gump. And he has indeed pounded America's roads from coast to coast. But unlike the movie character played as a one off by Tom Hanks, Tom McGrath has starred in numerous running sequels. He is a long time, long distance runner and at 71 he has no plans to hang up his running shoes.

Tom's running exploits, invariably for a good cause, have been documented for many years and are familiar to Echo readers. His life's pursuit of running mileage has also been recorded in a documentary, "Lazarus Running." Tom's passion for running is not lifelong. But it could turn out to be the reason for a long life. At one point in his journey Tom was in hospital and close to death. The cause was alcohol. He made promises to his doctors, and to himself, that if he came out of hospital alive he would do two things: quit drinking and start running. He has kept both pledges.

Tom's most recent run covered four marathon distances in four days, the final one being the actual 2021 New York City Marathon. The good cause this time around was the Tunnel To Towers Foundation. The Fermanagh man is truly a community champion, and a champion of multiple community charities.



Bobby Donlan

Place of birth: Boston, MA.

What motivated you get involved in your community? Being the oldest of 10, my parents were hard working middle class who stressed reading and school work and with only one car and a non-driving mother. The town library was less than half mile away and Mom worked part time there as we grew older and able to baby sit ourselves, she stressed year round our Irish heritage, especially the month of March and the feast of St. Patrick. Marrying into a very Irish family and finding out that both families were from Tuam, Galway further solidified my Irishness and with the birth of our three children we named our daughters Erin Kathleen, Kerry Ann, and son Robert Emmett III. We started attending St. Patrick's days masses at the Cathedral of Christ the King, and meeting a lot of the Atlanta Irish community, joining both the Ancient Order of Hibernians and the Benevolent Order of the Hibernians and pretty much being a liaison between the two, and lecturing at the Hibernian mass on St. Patrick's day.

I am also involved with the Irish Chamber of Commerce, which was a major factor in the recent addition of an Atlanta Irish Consulate.

How do you think your community work has brought about positive change? I am also involved with the Atlanta Irish Chamber of Commerce, which was a major factor in the recent addition of an Atlanta Irish Consulate, which is a huge step for the local Irish community.

How has your job or profession helped in your community work? Being a high end steak restaurant owner in Atlanta and

in the building next to Irish Consulate of Atlanta, I have been privileged to have served both Taoiseach's Brian Cowen and Enda Kenny at my restaurant, all those complimentary gift certificates to Atlanta Irish causes paid off. I have also participated in fundraising for the continuing of the annual St. Patrick's day parade for the past decade, I was floored to learn 10 years ago that the parade was in arrears a \$100k which our committee quickly erased.

Three things people would be surprised to know about me...

1. I always wanted to play left field for the Boston Red Sox.
2. My wedding day anniversary September 17 is now a "bar" mini holiday of half way to St. Patrick's Day.
3. Big Laura Nyro fan, she wrote some great songs that were covered by great groups; When I Die-Chicago; Wedding Bell Blues Stoned Soul Picnic-5th Dimension; Eli's Coming-3 Dog Night.

Oldest of 10 Irish Catholic children. Parents Bob and Mary. Married 44 years to Paula (Concannon) Donlan. 3 Children Erin Robert III, Kerry. 2 Grandchildren Will, Caroline. Raised in Abington, MA 6 years publicly educated and 6 years of Catholic education. Graduated from Cardinal Spellman Brockton and studied US History at UMASS Amherst. 50 year career in restaurant hospitality career, retired in March 2020. Raised countless thousands of dollars for all causes. Involved in my retired life with the Giving Kitchen, Hospitality Business Network and volunteer /Board of Directors with Ignatius Jesuit retreat center Atlanta Robert Emmett Donlan Jr.



Congratulations to
Declan Walsh,

a proud member of our Society
and an Irish Echo Community Champion!

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COMMUNITY CHAMPION AWARD 2021

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COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS AWARDS 2021



Declan Walsh

Place of birth: Dublin Ireland

What motivated you get involved in your community? Necessity. I came to the USA for a year knowing only peripherally some friends of my brother who let me stay on their sofa for longer than they should have. I found that reaching out to the Emerald Isle Immigration Center (I was introduced to EIIC at a meeting in the basement of St Barnabas Church in the Bronx) was a great way to learn what was happening in New Yorks' Irish community. I ended up volunteering in the Queens office and later was invited to join the BOD.

How do you think your community work has brought about positive change?

I have been a very small part of the great work done by the Emerald Isle Immigration Center. EIIC is a small organization that is not heralded as much as it should be for the critical work they do.. Daily they help anyone that walks through their doors in the Bronx and Queens. Be you from County Clare or the Congo they help a very

stressed immigrant community navigate the myriad of obstacles thrown their way with love and caring in NYC. That is a rarity in the immigrant advocacy world we live in today.

How has your job or profession helped in your community work?

As Director of Community Outreach and Service Learning at John Jay College of Criminal Justice I have had the opportunity to work with thousands of 1st generation college students from NYC and around the world. I have also worked with An Garda Siochana on the Gerry McCabe Fellowship Exchange which helps members of An Garda get a Masters Degree in Criminal Justice. I have worked with Habitat for Humanity on educating college students on the critical need for affordable housing in NYC for the last eight years also..

Three things people would be surprised to know about me...

1. Was a founding President of the Red Hook Poultry Association along with my wife and three kids in Red Hook Brooklyn. We raised a flock of backyard chickens that lead to an appearance with some chickens

on the Today show with Lester Holt.

2. Started Bloomsday In Brooklyn with John Burns and the Society of Friendly Sons of St. Patrick Brooklyn which has become a highlight of the celebration of James Joyce's literary works on June 16th every year in Brooklyn.

3. I have an amazing Wife Maria and 3 kids who have followed their individual passions, one a Flower Farmer, one an Actor and one a Bitcoin/Solar/NFT entrepreneur.

A high school dropout from Crumlin Dublin Ireland. Completed my GED with the help of my gorgeous wife Maria Mackin who then encouraged me to go to college. I am a proud graduate of CUNY's John Jay College of Criminal Justice with degrees in Forensic Psychology. Worked as a building super in Brooklyn for 14 years while going to college and helping raise our three children, while learning the ropes of the real estate world of NYC. Have served as a Director at John Jay College since 1998 to present. A Steelers fan as my wife is from Pittsburgh!

Becky Carroll

Place of birth: Chicago, IL

What motivated you get involved in your community? My father, Jack, was a very socially conscious individual who believed passionately in the rights of all people to live their lives free from oppression and judgment. He exposed me at a very early age to many authors and philosophies and ideologies, as well as Ireland's long history of oppression at the hands of the English. I probably read every book that I could get my hands on about that history and the ongoing troubles. It was a very important part of my social awareness and developing consciousness as a young person.

I was a teenager in the late 1980s when multiple human rights issues converged, which included the troubles in Northern Ireland, Apartheid and the aids epidemic. In high school I was engaged heavily in all of these issues - I even helped to found a social activist organization with one of my high school friends to help students at my school add their voice to these issues. I also was actively involved in Irish Northern Aid at that time and served as Secretary in the Chicago region. I marched in support of funding to address the AIDS epidemic. I was also very active in the local anti-apartheid movement.

Those experiences guided the priorities and values that I would carry with me throughout my adult life which still guide me today. It's what motivated me to engage in politics and support those who



reflect my values and the sanctity of protecting human rights and democracy. I worked on several political campaigns including two presidential campaigns where I served as Communications Director for Illinois on the Gore Campaign and as National Director of Women for Obama on the Obama campaign in 2008. And it all really started with learning about my family's history, and the history of Ireland where many of them came from, and that exposure guided me to be the person that I am today.

How do you think your community work

has brought about positive change? I

certainly hope that my work has helped to bring about positive change. I think my goals have always been to raise awareness and to ensure people have facts around situations impacting the livelihood of individuals whether they're in my own city or somewhere across the world. I've challenged friends and strangers to speak up and get involved whether it was to march or participate in a social media campaign or give time or resources to a cause. At the end of the day, I want to be able to use my voice to help give a voice to others who may not be able to use their own. Most recently in my life I worked hard to make an impact over the course of a couple of years in what is one of our worst human rights tragedies in a generation: Syria. I helped cofound a global social media campaign to draw attention to atrocities in Aleppo, Syria and elsewhere in that country. It troubles me greatly to this day that, despite all the progress we have allegedly made in recognizing the basic rights of human beings, governments like that of Syria can continue to torture, maim and murder their own people. So, I'll never be silent when I see things like that happening and I will always do my best to help raise the consciousness of others around these issues as well.

How has your job or profession helped in your community work? I worked for 20

years on political campaigns and in government to help promote people and public policies that I believe reflect my values. People who have been committed to improving the lives of others who have

not been so fortunate. Six years ago I founded my own public affairs and strategic communications firm to continue that kind of work by supporting clients who are trying to make my city and state a better place for everyone. And, it's allowed me to continue my personal engagement on issues that I care about, in particular being able to help others who are deeply in need. So I am very fortunate to be in a position where I've been able to build a career around helping others.

Three things people would be surprised to know about me...

1. I was a math, science and spelling bee champ throughout my latter elementary school years.
2. I used to play a clarinet, fairly well.
3. I'm a living encyclopedia of most things related to the Kennedy family.

Considered one of Chicago's top public affairs strategists, Becky served for two decades advising both private and public sector executives, from City Hall and Illinois Governor's office to Fortune 500 companies and some of Chicago's most respected nonprofits and businesses. In 2015, she founded the award-winning C-Strategies, a strategic communications and public affairs firm, which has also allowed her to continue pursuing her lifelong passion for empowering women and marginalized communities, doing so via platforms like her monthly podcast "The Broad Cast" and managing advocacy campaigns to influence legislative outcomes that have long lasting social and equity impacts.



Mick McEvilly

Place of birth: Cincinnati, OH.

What motivated you get involved in your community? Love of performing--acting, singing and playing music, and an interest in my Irish heritage. A few years after joining the Irish American Theater Company of Cincinnati, our director Maureen Kennedy and husband Kent Covey opened the Irish Heritage Center of Greater Cincinnati (IHC) (c. 2008), and I've been privileged to be a part of it from the start.

How do you think your community work has brought about positive change? On a personal level, the work has brought me closer to my family and friends, and earned me many new friends. Traveling to Ireland, and being part of a team and cultural family that promotes Ireland, its people, traditions, arts, and history, is an education for all concerned.

How has your job or profession helped in your community work? For one thing, practicing law has given me the income

and schedule flexibility to be able to travel with our theater company. In another regard, being a lawyer--just like any job or profession--brings its own level of understanding to cultural and other differences.

Three things people would be surprised to know about me...

1. Started my law career as an Assistant Prosecuting Attorney.
2. Was on the Board of Directors of a bank for 15 years.
3. Have sponsored children in Central America for 20 years.

Born Cincinnati, 1946. Catholic educated at Nativity Elementary, St. Xavier High, Marquette University, then law degree from NKSU Chase Law School. Had 4 children by age 28, and now 5 grandchildren. Practiced law 47 years. Play guitar, banjo, and sing with the Woodpickers since 1981, with Kettering Banjo Society since 1999, with Celtic Font since 2010, and on my own, of course. First visited Ireland in 2000, met Sligo singer Mai Hernon in 2003, then married her 2013, happily retired in Northern Kentucky.

Congratulations from
Chicago's 46th Ward Democrats
to
2021 Community Champion
BECKY CARROLL!



Community
leader

Human rights
activist

Genesis fan



CONGRATULATIONS
to EIIC Board Member
DECLAN WALSH
**2021 IRISH ECHO
COMMUNITY
CHAMPION**

AND PLEASE SAVE THE DATE
8 JUNE 2022
FOR THE EIIC/AOH DIV 7
CELTIC CRUISE
TO BENEFIT THE EMERALD ISLE
IMMIGRATION CENTER



**“LIVE SIMPLY, SO THAT
ALL MAY SIMPLY LIVE.”**

Mother Elizabeth Anne Seton

CONGRATULATIONS

Sr. Marie Sorenson, SC
Associate Executive Director

Our Community Champion

You continue to inspire all of us with your love for our
brothers and sisters. May you be blessed always!

Sr. Caroline Tweedy, RSM, Executive Director
The Board of Directors
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COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS AWARDS 2021

Daniel Dromm

Place of birth: Brooklyn.

What motivated you get involved in your community? I came out as an openly gay teacher in 1993 to support the Children of the Rainbow curriculum which taught tolerance of all of NYC's diverse communities including the LGBTQ community. I realized that in order to create real change one had to effect political change and that's when I decided that someday I would run for office. Sixteen years later I was elected as a NYC Council member.

How do you think your community work has brought about positive change? I founded several LGBTQ organization in Queens, NY. I founded the Queens LGBTQ Pride parade which shined a light on the tens of thousands of LGBTQ people who live in the borough. Invisibility is our biggest enemy. When people know that LGBTQ people are their family, friends and neighbors they love us. Bringing people out of the closet has created that political change. Love is love. I also was a founding member of the St. Pat's for All Parade and successfully fought for LGBTQ inclusion in the NYC St. Patrick's Day Parade on 5th Avenue.

How has your job or profession helped in your community work? My job came about because of my community work. My activism laid the groundwork for my political run. My activism gave me hope and a zest for living. In the NYC Council, I served as Chair of the Finance Committee. I was also Chair of the Irish Caucus. This allowed me to prioritize giving funding to Irish and LGBTQ organizations. I believe that building institution empowers communities. I am proud to have allocated record levels of funding for several Irish organizations.

Three things people would be surprised to know about me...

1. I love dogs and adopted two little pups recently.
2. I am a bit of a loner and cherish my time alone in my upstate home.
3. My Irish Catholic roots/education significantly impacted the man I am today!



Daniel Dromm has been a progressive leader in Queens for over 20 years. Dromm was elected to the New York City Council in 2009 and represents District 25 (Jackson Heights & Elmhurst). He serves as the

Chairperson of the Finance Committee.

- In the City Council, Dromm has been a tireless advocate with a proven record of delivering for the community.
- \$4 million to Elmhurst Hospital to create a Cardiac Care Unit and expand the Emergency Room.
- \$6 million to double the size of Travers Park in Jackson Heights, adding much needed green space.
- More than \$860 million to build new schools for our community and fight overcrowding.
- Led the effort to enact Local Law 6, certifying that all undocumented immigrants in City foster care get put on a path to citizenship.
- Reformed Stop and Frisk policies – and implemented real policing solutions.
- Passed Paid Sick Leave' defending workers from unfair employers and protecting consumers from the spread of contagious illness.
- Implemented innovative and successful open space initiatives like the 78th Street Play Street and Diversity Plaza (37th Road) to promote local small businesses.
- Created IDNYC, the city's first government-issued identification card.
- Established the community's first slow zone, bringing crucial safety measures to the district.
- Funded the first LGBT liaison within the NYC Department of Education, helping to ensure no child falls through the cracks in our schools.
- Leading voice in the effort to end corruption and bring transparency to the Rikers Island jail complex.

Prior to his election, Dromm was an award-winning New York City public school teacher at PS 199Q in Queens from 1984 to 2009. Dromm is a pioneer of the LGBT rights movement in Queens and organized the first Queens LGBT Pride Parade and Festival. A fluent Spanish-speaker, Dromm graduated from Marist College and earned his master's degree at City College. He lives in Jackson Heights



Michael Lamb

Place of birth: Pittsburgh, PA

What motivated you get involved in your community? I had a lot of ideas on how to improve our local government and make it more efficient, effective and equitable.

How do you think your community work has brought about positive change? Our local government is much more transparent and accountable than it was when I started.

How has your job or profession helped in your community work? My training as an attorney has helped me to think critically about problems and help community members cut through the red tape of local government.

Three things people would be surprised to know about me...

1. I am an avid outdoorsman.
2. I make excellent limoncello.
3. I love to work in the yard/garden.

Michael Lamb is the Pittsburgh City Controller serving in his 4th term having first been elected in 2007. Lamb has put a focus on making Pittsburgh government more transparent and efficient while making the Controller's Office more effective and accountable. His audits have exposed waste, fraud and abuse and have saved millions for Pittsburgh taxpayers.

He is an Attorney admitted to practice in Pennsylvania and a graduate of the Duquesne University School of Law. He holds a Bachelor's in Political Science from Penn State and a Master's in Public Management from Carnegie Mellon.

He and his wife Jill live in Pittsburgh



Jim Lamb

Jim Lamb is President of the Ireland Institute, a nonprofit organization dedicated to peace and reconciliation and economic development in Ireland and cultural, commercial, and other partnerships between Ireland and Pittsburgh. Jim serves as the responsible officer of the Institute's US Department of State-designated Exchange Visitor (J-1 Visa) programs.

During his tenure over 2500 young Irish men and women, Catholic and Protestant, north and south, have participated in Ireland Institute programs including but not limited to the International Fund for Ireland's Wider Horizons scheme, the Walsh Visa Program, the Rooney Fellowship, Carbon Zero Northern Ireland, the POINTER Programme, and hundreds of individually sponsored Summer Work & Travel, Irish Work & Travel, Intern, and Trainee visa programs.

Jim has led eight business and trade delegations to Ireland and has hosted dozens of Irish company executives, entrepreneurs, professionals, government and political representatives and community leaders, facilitating two-way trade, cultural exchange, and strategic partnerships between Ireland and Pittsburgh.

In 2011 Jim was appointed by the Irish Government as its first Honorary Consul of Ireland for Western Pennsylvania and West Virginia. In this role Jim advocates for the rights of Irish citizens residing in or visiting the greater Pittsburgh area. Jim also represents the Irish government and its interests as they pertain to Pittsburgh-area business, community, political, and government initiatives.

Jim also performs as a professional musician, primarily in Pittsburgh-area Irish pubs, festivals, and other Irish cultural events. His band has performed in several US cities, on various Caribbean cruises, and in Ireland on multiple tours. Jim is a native Pittsburgher tracing his roots to Co. Galway and Co. Monaghan. His wife, Ann Burns Lamb hails from Creggan, Crossmaglen, Co. Armagh. They reside in Pittsburgh with their son, Ciaran.

Dr. Marc Rabuse

Dr. Rabuse has spent his career in private practice enjoying general pediatrics. He has a special interest in pediatric infectious disease. At Children's Medical of Westchester Health, Dr. Rabuse focuses on identifying, evaluating, and treating children with a variety of complex medical and developmental conditions. He develops a long-term relationship with his patients and their families to help maintain and improve their health and overall well-being, emphasizing disease and accident prevention, childhood development, and effective family communication. He has over 500 second- generation families, having been in practice for 37 years.





Congratulations

to our beautiful daughter

Saoirse Moloney Stevenson

The Center for Discovery

Food Quality Control Coordinator

*on your 2021 Irish Echo Community Champion Award.
The recognition is well deserved. We love you very much!*

*Mom, Carol, Liam, Mark
and the Moloney Peterkins Family*



Lynn Bushnell

Place of birth: Maine USA
What motivated you get involved in your community? An important piece of Irish history was shuttered by an indifferent administration at Quinnipiac University. Ireland's Great Hunger Museum in Hamden, CT contains the largest collection of art and artifacts relating to Ireland's Great Hunger anywhere in the world. It explores, through fine art, the underlying political, social, economic and historic causes of the Great Hunger, and the magnitude of the disaster on Ireland and its people. President Michael Higgins called it, "the greatest social calamity, in terms of morality and suffering, that Ireland has ever experienced."
How do you think your community work has brought about positive change? We certainly have brought much greater awareness to the Irish and Irish American communities regarding the museum's permanent closure. I hope we have prevented the collection from being broken up and sold, for that action could never be undone if that were to happen. We are making every effort to preserve the collection in its current location and intend to raise enough financial support to enable us to reopen the museum either in its current location or at another location yet to be determined.
How has your job or profession helped in your community work? My 25+ years of work in the public affairs arena

informed my approach to saving the museum. Through collaboration and teamwork with other equally committed and passionate individuals, we believe we can garner greater support and awareness about the museum.
Three things people would be surprised to know about me...
1. My six grandchildren all under the age of six, are among my most precious treasures.
2. Other treasures include close friendships with some of NY's finest: Turlough McConnell, Adrian Flannelly, Christine Kinealy and Aine Sheridan, all of whom have educated me about Ireland and its complicated past.
3. I love the Red Sox, Celtics, Bruins and Patriots.
Lynn Bushnell was vice president for public affairs at Quinnipiac University in Hamden, CT for 25 years. Her responsibilities included the internationally-known Quinnipiac Polling Institute and Ireland's Great Hunger Museum. Working with then president John Lahey, she helped build the reputation of the museum's collection and brought it to Dublin Castle, West Cork Arts Centre in Skibbereen and Cultúrlann Uí Chanáin, Derry, where it was viewed by more than 100,000 people in less than a year. Lynn also published a pictorial history of the New York City St. Patrick's Day parade with historian John Ridge for the parade's 250th anniversary.

Much More Than Just A Meeting Place

The Irish can be found in just about every major American city and count Buffalo among them. But while you're at it, count Buffalo again.
The second largest city in New York State is home to one of the highest concentrations of Irish Americans west of the Hudson River and east of Chicago.
As the website of the Buffalo Irish Center explains, many Irish settled in Buffalo after the completion of the Erie Canal, the coming of the railroads and the industrial revolution later in the nineteenth century.
States the website: "Nevertheless, unlike many other American cities with large Irish-American populations, Buffalo's southside Irish came to the United States relatively late. By far the largest concentrations came from the Irish Counties of Clare, Cork, Mayo and Wexford."
"A large percentage of South Buffalonians can trace their Irish ancestry to the area in and around the town of Kilrush in County Clare. Indeed, most were post-famine arrivals who were recruited to work the burgeoning steel mills, petroleum refineries, foundries, flour mills, automobile factories, and machine shops sprouting up in this highly industrialized city."
"Many more of South Buffalo's Irish would wind up working in the ranks of the protective services for the Buffalo Police Department and Buffalo Fire Department. Others found jobs in the various unionized building trades, such as in the labor unions representing the carpenters,

bricklayers, iron workers, and operating engineers."
Given such a significant Irish contribution to the story of Buffalo it is no surprise that there is a center dedicated to the preservation and promulgation of such a grand cultural and social legacy.
The Buffalo Irish Center, again according to its website, is much more than just a meeting place.
"Since 1970, the Center has grown to become home to over a dozen non-profit Irish-American organizations each promoting a different aspect of its culture. Collectively, the Buffalo Irish Center has become one of the richest cultural and ethnic centers in Western New York."
"The Irish Center was designed to enable the WNY Irish-American Community to share a common space where they could foster interest in our Irish heritage. The Gaelic American Athletic Association (GAAA), was formed to own and operate the Buffalo Irish Center."
"The beautiful ongoing renovations necessary to transform the old YMCA building into the reality of a true Irish Center are the results of insightful and masterful planning by the GAAA Boards together with hard work, dedication and hours of volunteerism by members working diligently to accomplish each project as available funds dictate."
The story of Buffalo's Irish is indeed ongoing and the center is an ever present resource and facility making sure that it is told and told well.



Buffalo Irish Center

What motivated you get involved in your community?
In 1970, the Gaelic American Athletic Assoc. of Buffalo, NY INC. (Buffalo Irish Center) was formed to encourage all local Irish American groups to come together under one roof. It became a home away from home for the Irish born for whom it provided a base where the Irish Emigrants could share their culture and network as they were woven into the community.
How do you think your community work has brought about positive change?
The Center has now become the fulcrum through which our Irish culture and heritage can be shared with the area. It is a gathering place and the anchor building

for this section of Abbott Road. The Buffalo Irish Center produces the Buffalo Irish Times (WNY'S Irish American paper) and is home to over a dozen non-profit organizations. You can learn Irish dance for children or adults, Irish Language, Gaelic Sports or enjoy a book from our Irish themed library. Collectively, the Buffalo Irish Center has become one of the richest cultural contacts for the participating organizations and for our community.
Three things people would be surprised to know about us
The Buffalo Irish Centers:
1. is open to the public--it is not a private club.
2. has a full restaurant available.
3. features music on the weekend





Congratulations to all
Community Champion Honorees
for their dedication to serving
their communities

The Aisling Irish Community Center Board of Directors,
staff and families in our community are proud of the
120 volunteers that lead our Foroige Youth Groups
with the guidance of Aisling Youth Officer
Shauna McGrath.

Thank you for creating a magic place
for young people in our community.



www.aislingcenter.org 914-237-5121



**Best wishes to all attending
the 2021 Irish Community
Champions Awards Dinner.**

**Congratulations to Community
Champion honoree Michael
Caplice, Long Island Regional
Director for the Office of NYS
Comptroller.**

Thomas P. DiNapoli
New York State Comptroller



Congratulations to our dear friend
LYNN BUSHNELL

Under your watchful eye from day one until
your retirement,
Ireland's Great Hunger Museum at
Quinnipiac University
grew and thrived.
Displaying the museum's collection
throughout Ireland
was an historic bonus.
Nobody would have dared shut it down!

Thank you Lynn.
Adrian Flannelly



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Ireland's largest Catholic, university-level
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learning, our American students can
study with us remotely.

We are very proud of our links with the
American Irish community and we admire
the outstanding work achieved by all
the nominees for the 2021 Community
Champion Awards. We wish all the
nominees the very best of luck at the
awards ceremony and we hope to have
the opportunity to warmly welcome them
to our campus in the historic, riverside
city of Limerick, Ireland in the future.

www.mic.ie



Congratulations to all the Irish Echo Community Champions and especially Lynn Bushnell

**From Somers Pubs
Proud Sponsors of this year's
Irish Echo Community Champions**





**Sister Marie -
We are so proud to call you our
sister, aunt, and grand aunt!**

**Congratulations on this
well-deserved recognition.**

**Your loving family,
Arthur and Pamm, Rebecca, Susan, Bob
and Rose, Lenny, Sonny and Samuele Spitale
– We Love You –**

Congratulations to our 2021 Community Champions

Tim Bohan
Buffalo Irish Center
Lynn Bushnell
Michael Caplice
Becky Carroll
Ryan Cook
Kathleen Cronin
Callan Dalton Gist
Bobby Donlan
Daniel Dromm
Glenn Greff
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Jim Lamb
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