

Two stories, one city.

Friends Forever staff recently had a very powerful meeting with two alumni from the 2010 and 2011 Northern Ireland programs, while on a recent site visit to meet this year's program participants. Eoin and David are from opposite sides of the political spectrum. This became evident when the two revealed that when the Union Jack was taken down from the Belfast City Hall after a 2012 vote, one was stuck inside the building — unable to leave because of the riots—while the other was outside protesting.

Eoin and David took staff on a joint tour of both a Protestant and Catholic areas, taking turns sharing their communities' perspective on the history of the troubles. While the two do not see eye to eye on all issues, the respect they demonstrated for each other's narratives was inspiring. Given the current political climate of Northern Ireland, it was encouraging to see two young leaders work together to give a balanced, un-biased tour of their divided city.



(ABOVE) Friends Forever Executive Director with Eoin and David during their tour of Belfast.

FRIENDS FOREVER

World Peace... Grown Locally

Twenty-six years later.

By KAREN SWAIM BABIN
Friends Forever Gulf Coast Coordinator
Friends Forever Board Member, 2008-2012

In 1989, a Friends Forever board member made a presentation about Friends Forever to my Rotary Club of Cambridge, MA. It made perfect sense to me that the way to change the culture of conflict in a society, is to shift the attitudes of the young people. The Friends Forever formula does just that. The bonds of trust and friendship forged during the intense two week Life Raft phase, get spread out into their home community through family members, neighbors and classmates, during the year long program of continuing interactions and meetings.

Now more than ever, there are compelling needs for peace building programs. Any program that seeks to emphasize our common humanity can dispel the fear and distrust that is at the root of conflict. Friends Forever delegations give community members around New Orleans and along the Gulf Coast an opportunity to play a small role in an international project, and in a peace building program.

In 10 years, I hope to see Friends Forever delegations being hosted in many more communities across the United States and the world...



Community volunteers like Karen Babin are an essential component of Friends Forever's success and our plans to expand to serve more youth from around the world. Karen—with the help of amazing members in her community—has launched and established 100% volunteer driven programs in Massachusetts, New York, and the Gulf Coast.

One of the most rewarding aspects of Friends Forever is the opportunity to engage your entire community in the international peace process. If interested, Friends Forever will work with you to establish a sustainable program in your community that will enable you to grow world peace locally. For more information, please contact our Executive Director, Steve Martineau at (603)397-5301.



(ABOVE) Karen in 2012 with the first ever Friends Forever group to be hosted in our Gulf Coast chapter. (BELOW) This year's delegation from Holy Family Youth Centre and Mountcollyer Youth Club that will be travelling to our Gulf Coast Community from October 17–November 1. If you'd like to get involved with Friends Forever's programs in the Gulf, contact Karen at ksbabin@gmail.com.



November 4th
#BobRaicheDay

[@friendforeverus](https://www.facebook.com/friendsforever.org)

#BobRaicheDay.

Each year on our late founder's birthday, November 4th, we ask our supporters and alumni from around the world to wear their Friends Forever apparel. It's a great way to spread the word of Bob's mission to promote peace.

So, on November 4th, please take a picture in your Friends Forever gear and post it on our Facebook and Twitter! Be sure to use #BobRaicheDay when posting your photos! Need gear? Visit the Friends Forever store front on our website at www.friendsforeverusa.org or contact us at (603)397-5301.

Stocks for peace.

Donating appreciated stock to Friends Forever is a great way to move us forward in our mission while also realizing significant tax benefits (ask your broker or financial advisor for more information).

If you are interested in supporting Friends Forever in this way, please ask your financial advisor to contact Tim Mardin at Mardin Capital. Please have your broker contact Executive Director and Stephen Martineau, at (603)397-5301 or smartineau@friendsforeverusa.org for *each* transaction, so we can monitor its progress—thank you. Visit the “ways to give” page on our website for more details!

Tim Mardin

Mardin Capital Group
Orchard Park
5 Greenland Road, unit B10
Portsmouth, NH 03801

Phone: (603)766-4700
Toll free: (866)209-1614
Fax: (603)766-4701

Friends Forever Headquarters
One Morgan Way
Durham, NH 03824
(603)397-5301
www.friendsforeverusa.org

Please visit <http://www.friendsforeverusa.org/#!donate/>
Sign up for monthly online donations today!

“That’s why we are all here—to break down barriers and to build bridges, to overcome the past and make a change.”

—Ryan,
Northern Ireland 2014

Our Programs of Peace



Friends Forever works with Arab-Palestinian-Israeli and Jewish-Israeli youth in the Arava, Haifa, and Nazareth regions of Israel. Our year long Life Raft program provides an opportunity for the young people to connect with each other in an environment free from the usual pressures of home. Many people have given up hope that this conflict can be resolved, however Friends Forever has expanded our efforts in the region by doubling the number of schools we work with over the last three years.

The Life Raft Phase of our 2015 Israel program was a great success. This summer, three delegations traveled to our New England and Illinois chapters for an intense two week training focused around community service, team-building, leadership development, public presentation, and cultural exchange. Each activity was aimed at preparing the students for their work back home.

Despite tensions being at their highest in recent history, our young people have begun meeting to plan the remainder of their Implementation Phase, taking place over the next several months. While the majority of their peers and neighbors remain skeptical of trusting the “other side,” our participants continue—as a team—to take steps forward towards building a peaceful future.



Friends Forever currently works with youth leaders from the greater Kampala region of Uganda. The country of Uganda is home to an estimated 35 million people from 42 ethnic tribal groups, with roughly 70 % of the country’s population under the age of 25. In 2010, Friends Forever began partnering with one of the country’s only youth-run peace program, Youth Passionate Organization Uganda (YPO); a group dedicated to conflict resolution through music and dance.

With support from Rotary International and Rotary District 7780, Friends Forever welcomed our first delegation from YPO this past summer. Staying in New Hampshire for three weeks, the group participated in Friends Forever’s “train-the-trainer” program, designed to provide the group with the skills necessary to train their peers in the Friends Forever methodology and create change in their community.

Now back in Kampala, our team from YPO has been working hard to replicate our programming on a greater scale in the local slums. In celebration of the International Day of Peace, YPO partnered with PeaceCorps Uganda for a “Music for Peace and Life” celebration. Using dance, music, games, and the expertise of PeaceCorps staff, over 700 people were reached during the celebration. Of those, 450 people were involved in dialogues about peace, 250 people were tested for HIV and connected with treatment if needed, and 30 women were screened for cervical cancer and received family planning services.



Friends Forever currently works with youth leaders from neighborhoods in and around Belfast, Northern Ireland. As the sectarianism in Northern Ireland continues to shift to urban areas, Friends Forever has shifted our focus and now actively recruits organizations that serve the hardest hit regions. While many organizations in the U.S. decided to cease working in the area when funding became scarce, we are proud to continue to support youth and communities in Northern Ireland as they have faced an escalation of sectarian street violence over the last few years.

From October 17-November 1, three more delegations from our Northern Ireland program will be travelling to the United States for the Life Raft Phase of their yearlong program. Two delegations will be in New England and one will be hosted in our Gulf Coast community. Each group will be comprised of five Protestant and five Catholic young men and women, ages 15-17, and will live as a single unit for the entire two weeks.

The groups have been hard at work during their Group-building Phase, preparing for the rest of their program. They have held Q&A sessions with alumni and parents, met with Friends Forever staff, organized fundraisers, spent a weekend away together, and visited historical sites such as The Crumlin Road Jail and site of the Bloody Sunday massacre. Now supported with a strong foundation, our teams are ready for their intense training in the Life Raft Phase!

If you'd like keep up to date with what our groups are doing while they are in the United States, or to view more great work by our alumni, follow us on social media!

Facebook.com/FRIENDSFOREVER.ORG
@friendforeverus