

IrishEcho

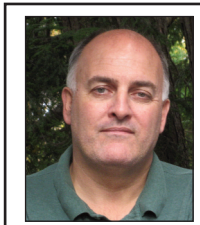
COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS



VIRTUAL AWARDS CEREMONY
FRIDAY 13TH NOVEMBER 2020

IRISHECHO.COM

Champions in the Battle Against Covid-19



Ray O'Hanlon
rohanlon@irishecho.com

The idea of community is something that we all cherish, but sometimes, perhaps, take a little for granted. Much of the time we go about our daily lives as individuals, or as members of families.

The broader concept of community does enter our consideration of course, sometimes in a positive context, sometimes in a situation in which one or more of us might be under pressure or stress. It's in difficult times that we look for the headline about the community "coming together."

We all understand that if that line was nowhere to be seen we would be in, to say the least, a spot of bother. In the normal run of things our communities depend for their health and wellbeing on individuals and groups reaching out, taking an extra step, going that extra mile.

It's fair to say that most of the work undertaken by people we would recognize as being community champions goes largely unseen and unacknowledged. And that's as most would have it. But from time to time we like to see what is being done to make life easier and better for people. We like to acknowledge this work and reward it, if for no other reason than for the possibility that

by holding unselfish acts up to the light we might inspire others to follow, to pitch in, to themselves take that extra step for others.

Back in 1996, the Irish Echo held an awards event at the Irish Consulate in Manhattan to honor individuals who fell under the definition of "Unsung Hero." What we learned at the time and as a result of people nominating their unsung heroes was both surprising and inspiring. We're in the business of news and knowing things, but the unsung heroes who stepped into the light that evening twenty-four years ago were as surprising to us as they were remarkable in their previously, but mostly unsung, lives.

Unsung Heroes was a one-off event. But we never forgot the impression that it made on us. And in the intervening years we have not forgotten that there are folks in the community who, every day, work to make the world a better place. Most of the effort takes place under the radar.

Regardless of the precise nature of the work, and drawing on the spirit of those unsung heroes from 1996, we held our inaugural Community Champions Awards event at Rosie O'Grady's in Manhattan in 2016. The awards were well received and, in truth, we were not surprised. People want to acknowledge the best in their fellows. The Echo simply provided an opportunity and

venue. We did so again in 2017, 2018 and 2019, and were planning a similar get together this past spring.

But of course we know what happened in the early months of 2020. Covid-19 was unleashed upon the world and the constellation of definable communities in our world. So a gathering to celebrate community champions was suddenly a non-starter. Nevertheless, a new plan was drawn up and it was decided to go ahead with the awards, though now with a particular focus on Covid-19 and honorees who are in some way or another working in the front lines on behalf of our Irish American community, and our broader American one.

And so, this Friday, November 13, we will be gathering together by means of technology to salute a group of extraordinary individuals from around the United States who are battling the pandemic and its grim effects in a variety of ways. But, honestly, we hope this is a one off, that Covid-19 is forced into retreat and ultimately eliminated. Then we can return to honoring community champions in the broadest possible way, and by gathering together in person in a physical space.

But for now, and regardless of the format, congratulations to the Community Champions of 2020. You deserve applause and so much more for all that you are doing in this most challenging time.



Vivienne Murrphy

Place of birth: Ireland

Biography: Vivienne Murrphy, a native of Co. Kildare graduated from University College Dublin with a Diploma in Business Studies and went on to receive a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Business from the Portobello Business Institute. She spent many years working in the Financial Services Sector in Dublin before relocating to New York. Here she worked in the Finance Division of a Business Management &

Consulting Firm as a Senior Project Coordinator, whose primary focus centered around changing its clients internal processes and systems to optimize growth.

During this time, her husband Cormach Murrphy founded a Structural Steel Company named United Structural Works, "USW". In 2010, they started a family and Vivienne became a full-time Mother while Cormach continued to expand USW to become a tri-state Leader of Structural Steel fabrication and erection. They never forgot their Irish roots and

Cormach supported numerous organizations including the GAA and the Aisling Irish Community Center. Once Cormach realized that the Aisling Center had purchased their building with the hope of expanding, he committed to helping in whatever way he could. Tragically, Cormach passed in July 2019 and would not be able to see it through. However, Vivienne and all of the USW team embraced and honored Cormach's commitment and succeeded in raising \$117,000.00 for Team Aisling in his Memory.



Stephen Reid

Place of birth: Ireland

Company & position: President, United Structural Works (USW)

Biography: Stephen Reid who is a native of Pomeroy, Co Tyrone, is a graduate of Queens University Belfast, with a Bachelor's Degree in Mechanical Engineering. Stephen was raised in the construction industry, mentored by his Father, who started Reid Engineering. As President of United Structural Works, Stephen

guarantees and continues USW's commitment to excellence.

Stephen's initial responsibility was Purchasing, Fabrication and Quality Control for USW. He was a fundamental component in the design and development of USW's initial fabrication shop expansion in 2010 and again in 2018. Stephen utilized his vast experience in structural steel fabrication to develop a production line purpose built for USW's clients. Stephen continues to improve and streamline USW's fabrication

process in order to provide his clients with a high-quality product within stringent timelines.

Stephen's hard work ethic holds no bounds and he wasted no time in helping with the fundraising efforts for the Aisling Irish Community Center. In November 2019, he proudly hosted the Aisling Irish Center, Board of Directors, Employees, and Team Aisling Captains at USW and presented them with a check for \$117,000.00 in memory of his good friend Cormach.

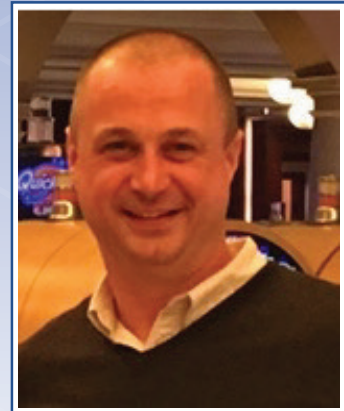
CHAMPIONS IN A TIME OF PANDEMIC



CONGRATULATIONS TO TEAM USW HONOREES



*Vivienne Murrphy
&
Stephen Reid*



VIRTUAL AWARDS CEREMONY

FRIDAY 13TH NOVEMBER 2020

SPECIAL CONGRATULATIONS TO

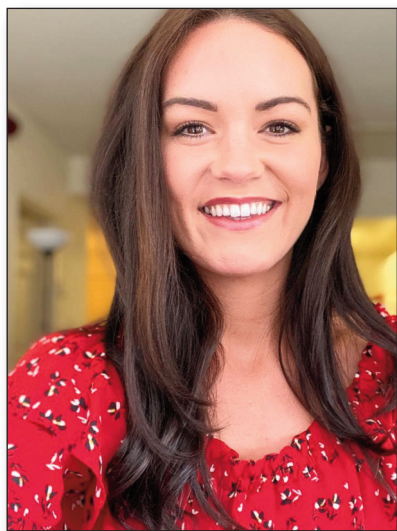
Catherine Flood and all the honorees

- from the USW team, Management and Staff



45 Hemlock Drive, Congers NY 10920
T: (845) 268-3600 • F: (845) 268-3200

usw-inc.com



Sophie Colgan

Place of birth: County Down, Ireland

Company & position: Co-Chair, The Meitheal; Program Director, The Ireland-U.S. Council

During the Coronavirus Pandemic, how did your profession/job/volunteering work help others? During the Pandemic along with good friend Brian McCabe we initiated a community project called 'The Meitheal' to source and donate PPE to Hospitals in New York and New Jersey because health staff were struggling to get their hands on PPE that they desperately needed to stay safe themselves while they tried to protect and save others. We reached out to the Iris American Community and got construction companies, bars, restaurants, small businesses such as beauty salons as

well as individuals to rally together and donate what they could be it gloves, masks, disinfectant etc.

We also raised \$50,000 to donate directly to hospitals in need.

As a front-line worker/volunteer, how did you cope during the pandemic? Getting the opportunity to work with 'The Meitheal' team really did so much for me personally during the Pandemic because it distracted me and kept me and my boyfriend Brian Glynn really busy. Brian was also working very hard himself as project manager for Irish Construction Company Archstone as a project manager on a large emergency Hospital project with the Army in East Orange, NJ. The fact that we were both able to be part of such an amazing team actively working to make a difference to people working tirelessly on the frontlines was truly

a blessing. For me, instead of being locked in our apartment worrying I was incentivized and busy and able to put time and effort in to helping those who really needed it, it worked wonders for my mental health.

Biography: My name is Sophie Colgan I'm from County Down in Ireland, I moved to New York in 2014. In 2015 I was the New York Rose of Tralee and in that year I became Events & Marketing Coordinator at the American Irish Historical Society. In 2019 I transitioned to Program Director at the Ireland-U.S. Council. I am also an active member of the GAA in New York. I got involved in The Meitheal along with my boyfriend Brian Glynn, through Brian McCabe, once a colleague of mine at AIHS, and now an inspiration and friend for life.

Frank Brady

Place of birth: Manorhamilton, Co. Leitrim, Ireland

Company & position: Retired College Professor.

During the Coronavirus Pandemic, how did your profession/job/volunteering work help others?

Covid 19 certainly hit home as I lost a close family member and many of my friends lost their jobs and businesses. I published a number of articles in the local press to highlight the severity and the extent of the problem, particularly in the Irish and Irish-American communities. Some of these articles reached Ireland which influenced people here to donate to the causes here. I also published articles promoting the fundraising activities of the groups that combined to form Slainte 2020.

Team Aisling decided to run virtual races to raise money for Slainte 2020. As a team member I opted to run a half marathon through the hills of Yonkers, and my friends in the County Leitrim Society, the Leitrim

Football Club, the Sheridan Golf Group, along with family and friends generously sponsored me for close to \$10,000 for the Slainte 2020 Fund.

As a front-line worker/volunteer, how did you cope during the pandemic? I adhered to the precautions and restrictions that were set into place. Unfortunately, my brother-in-law contracted COVID-19 and passed two weeks later. His death had a huge impact on our family and inspired me to get involved in any way possible.

Biography: Frank, a Leitrim native earned a B.A. and a H.D.E. from Maynooth. He taught in Sligo and Cavan. In the US, earned an M.A. and Doctorate from NYU, and joined the faculty at L.I.U. and progressed to become chair. Frank has been active in the NYGAA, with Leitrim, St. Barnabas, Cavan and New York teams. He is a member of the Aisling Center, the Leitrim Society, Leitrim GFC, and the Sheridan Golf Tour, and the Echo's sports writer. Lives in Yonkers with Helen, and two adult children Douglas and Sharon with three grandchildren.



Megan C Ryan

Place of birth: Rockville Centre NY

Company & position: Nassau Health Care Corporation, Executive Vice President of Legal Affairs, General Counsel

During the Coronavirus Pandemic, how did your profession/job/volunteering work help others?

Organized donations from community to our healthcare workers.

As a front-line worker/volunteer, how did you cope during the pandemic? Came to work every day trying to support our hospital personnel anyway I could and ensure that the Corporation was in compliance with all state and federal mandates.

Biography: Megan C. Ryan, Esq. serves as Executive Vice President and General Counsel/Counsel to the Board for NuHealth/NUMC. She is the corporation's Chief Legal Officer overseeing all legal, corporate governance, privacy and ethics functions. Ms. Ryan earned her Bachelor of Science degree from Fordham University and her Juris Doctor from Saint John's University School of Law. She is a member of the Nassau County Bar Association, Nassau County Women's Bar Association, New York State Bar Association and the American College of Hospital Executives. She serves as President of N Merrick BOE and resides in N Merrick with her husband and children.



Maureen Lyons

Place of birth: Ireland

During the Coronavirus Pandemic, how did your profession/job/volunteering work help others?

As we did not have the skills to be in the front lines ourselves, we wanted to support those who were. Our work has helped others by supplying front line workers in local hospitals with meals. Sandwiches were the order of the day many times as they did not have time to sit and eat. All food delivered to local hospitals was from local vendors, Hearty and Healthy, Dee's Deli and Mickey Spillane's, who donated very generously every time.

As a front-line worker/volunteer, how did you cope during the pandemic? In the big scheme of things what we did was small. But it does a heart good to see how people pull together in tough times. We will be forever grateful to those who put their lives

at risk for us and our families.

Biography: Maureen Touhy Lyons was born in Grangemockler in Tipperary. She was born to Lucy and Eddie Touhy and is one of 6 children. Maureen emigrated to the States in the early 80s where she met and subsequently married her neighbor, Jim Lyons. They are the proud parents of teenage twins Jack and James. Jim is the proprietor of Gossip Bar and Restaurant in the New York City. Maureen has worked in various positions in the catering industry and nursing field. While working full time Maureen completed a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology and is a graduate of Lehman College.

I'm very honored to have been nominated as a 2020 Community Champion. I felt at a loss during the early stages of this pandemic as people couldn't go to work, our kids could not go to school and all their activities and friend interactions had been cancelled. However, all our hospitals and nursing homes were still expected to function as normal despite overwhelming numbers of sick patients due to this virus. We were all told to stay home but our friends and neighbors in the hospitals and care homes were required more than ever to be at work. After delivering food to the elderly in the community, I reached out to a few friends suggesting that we collect and deliver food to hospital workers and those on the front lines.

I received an astounding response from my friends, and in turn their friends and the local Yonkers business community. Everyone wanted to contribute and to be helpful. I recruited my children and along with my friends we delivered food to hospitals, nursing homes, maintenance workers and children's homes. I co-founded Grateful Givers along with Sharon Bailie. I am very grateful to the local businesses who went above and beyond in their own time of need to help others more needy in their community, Hearty and Healthy, Dees Deli, Mickey Spillane's, Yonkers Avenue Deli.

YOUR FRIENDS AT
ARCHER, BYINGTON, GLENNON & LEVINE LLP
ARE PROUD TO SUPPORT

NUMC CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER
MEGAN RYAN

AS ONE OF THE IRISH ECHO
IRISH COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS OF 2020



ARCHER, BYINGTON, GLENNON & LEVINE LLP

Attorneys at Law
One Huntington Quadrangle,
Suite 4C10

Melville, New York 11747

Telephone: (631) 249-6565

Facsimile: (631) 777-6906

John H. Byington · Marty Glennon
Gary A. Thayer · James W. Versocki
Richard S. Corenthel
Matthew Hromadka · Paul K. Brown



Tracy Koutsoulidakis

Place of birth: Queens, NYC

During the Coronavirus Pandemic, how did your profession/job/volunteering work help others? I have been a Registered Nurse at Wyckoff Heights Medical Center in Brooklyn since 1994. In my current role as Manager of Clinical Informatics & Analysts, I manage the teams that configure, support & retrieve data from our electronic medical record systems. Though I no longer work as a bedside nurse, my team and I supported the hospital staff & patients by making updates to the computer systems to facilitate the day to day needs. This included adding newly created locations and granting access for & training the temporary workers who were hired to assist our staff. Often, that needed to happen on the fly to accommodate the surge of COVID patients

coming to the hospital.

At home, I learned that a local food pantry (the only one open during the pandemic) was in need of donations for the community members they serve. I picked up some extra items while food shopping & dropped off the bags to the pantry to help them provide for my neighbors in need.

As a front-line worker/volunteer, how did you cope during the pandemic? To cope with stress during the pandemic, I would speak with colleagues to ensure they were doing ok, as well as offer encouragement to the nursing & medical staff who came to our office for assistance with the computer systems and a quick reprieve from patient care. I would practice some self-care routines at home like mini at-home spa treatments and spending time with my family doing puzzles, taking walks and playing board games as we were not able to do much in the

way of outside recreation during the shutdown.

Once we were able to dine outdoors, we went out to eat with friends and neighbors including my nominators Eileen & Gerry McGuirk! They have been wonderful neighbors & friends, lending a hand in removing part of the tree and inviting us to stay at their house while the tree & repairs are being done.

Biography: I was born & raised in Queens, NY and still live there. My parents both have Irish roots (Counties Cork & Dublin). I am married to my HS sweetheart Nick & we have 2 grown daughters, Irene & Diana. I have been working at WHMC for my entire nursing career (26 years). I was a Girl Scout & volunteered for events with Girl Scouts when my daughters were scouts. I am a member of The College Point Civic Association & have participated in several community events & community meetings to support my neighborhood.



Siobhán Durand

Place of birth: Detroit, MI

Company & position: University of Michigan Hospitals, Michigan Medicine Registered Nurse
During the Coronavirus Pandemic, how did your profession/job/volunteering work help others? During the pinnacle of the pandemic at Michigan Medicine, my Pulmonary Medicine Inpatient Unit quickly converted into a Covid-19 ward. It has been a worrisome time to be a Registered Nurse and equally such a rewarding and humbling experience. In the beginning, there were many uncertainties regarding the virus: What are our patient care plans? How do we have enough personal protection equipment for staff? Am I safe to go home to my family? Etc. The core of my care focused on finding best practice treatments for Covid-19. I administered oxygen therapy, assisted with respiratory

treatments, and, trialed study medications. I put every task, detail, and, skill into laser focus to ensure a positive, healthy outcome for each of my patients.

I value the efforts provided by our community to improve our Covid-19 patients' mental health and wellbeing. Apple i-pad Tablets were donated to our hospital to connect patients to their families virtually. It was magical to utilize the i-pads and witness patient anxiety levels reduce during "Zoom" calls. I feel so much pride to be a frontline worker. The pandemic enhanced what it means to be able to care compassionately for the sick, work under pressure using my best clinical judgement, and re-affirmed my vocation in the nursing profession.

As a front-line worker/volunteer, how did you cope during the pandemic? I cope during the pandemic by focusing on the positive, being vigilant, and providing my absolute best

nursing practice to each patient under my care. I have a supportive husband and family who listen to me and cheered me on during these unprecedented times. My workplace has become a 2nd home, and my coworkers have become family. We all rely on each other for courage and uplifting support. A bit of Irish Whiskey can always calm the nerves too!

Biography: I was thrilled to be nominated by my brother, Cornelius, an Officer in the United States Army. I immediately flashed back to my Nanny, who always read the Irish Echo! I am a 2016 alumnus of the University of Michigan School of Nursing, and work at Michigan Medicine as a Registered Nurse. My maternal grandparents are natives of Co. Kerry. My paternal side hails from Co. Mayo. My Irish upbringing and heritage are important facets of who I am. I am happily married to Paul Durand and enjoy lake life on Zukey Lake in Pinckney, Michigan.



Steve Burke

Place of birth: Boston, MA USA

Company & position: Executive Director, Irish Cultural Centre of New England

During the Coronavirus Pandemic, how did your profession/job/volunteering work help others? Despite being forced to shut down essentially on the eve of St. Patrick's Day, we were able to pivot the focus of the ICC in ways that allowed us to continue being the primary resource of Irish culture and community to so many in our region. We immediately began enhancing our virtual programming capabilities, and began offering Irish music, history and literary classes online.

Going virtual actually allowed us to impact a much broader audience geographically, enabling many people to benefit from our programming for the very first time. Although hosting any GAA football, hurling camogie or rugby matches was prohibited, we instead invested significant time and effort into improving the conditions of our 4 athletic

pitches, which will be in tremendous shape when we host the GAA North American Finals in August 2021. And once the COVID restrictions began being lessening, we utilized our large covered tent to turn the ICC into a vibrant outdoor restaurant and Pub with live Irish music every weekend. Not only did we provide an ongoing sense of community for both our longtime members and new comers, we also gave jobs back to nearly all of our previously laid-off bar and kitchen staff, even adding some new employees.

As a front-line worker/volunteer, how did you cope during the pandemic? Instead of allowing all the things the ICC was no longer permitted to do to drag me down, knowing that 90% of everything out there was really beyond my control, I chose to focus on the 10% of things that I could control, and directed the efforts of me and my team into making sure we did those things well. Remaining relevant as an organization whose primary mission is bringing people together to celebrate their heritage in a communal way has been a tremendous challenge during this pandemic, but I had

confidence that we could be successful as long as we could align our new business model with our core mission.

Coming up with new ways to keep people engaged with and enjoying the ICC while staying focused on our mission was a great coping strategy for me and hopefully for others within the organization.

Biography: Steve is Executive Director of the Irish Cultural Centre of New England, directing the preservation and promotion of Irish culture through sports, music, literature, dance and other activities. He has decades of business development, marketing and non-profit experience, including as a business development executive at major Boston law firms and President of the MA Sports Partnership. He founded Boston to Belfast Youth Empowerment, using sport to instill leadership skills and civic engagement and awareness among Boston and Belfast teens. He is an active member of BIBA and IN Boston, and graduated from Holy Cross College and New England Law School.



Maureen Morstatt

Place of birth: Pequannock, New Jersey

During the Coronavirus Pandemic, how did your profession/job/volunteering work help others? During the pandemic I worked as a bedside nurse caring for COVID19 patients. We provided not only medical care but also emotional support for those patients whose families were unable to be with them.

My colleagues and I spent hours with patients who were facing the end of their lives. We held their hands and consoled their families over FaceTime, ensuring them that their loved ones were not going to die alone.

As a front-line worker/volunteer, how did you cope during the pandemic? I'm so thankful for my amazing team of nurses, doctors, techs, and managers who all worked together and supported each other so incredibly during the pandemic. Also my family and friends were amazing sending me gifts, meals, love, and support throughout my time working on the COVID unit.

Biography: My name is Maureen Morstatt, I'm 28 years old and I have been working as a cardiac nurse at Morristown medical center for 6 years. I'll be graduating with my master's degree in May and am eager to start my career as a nurse practitioner. I recently got engaged to my fiancé John and we are so excited to start planning our winter wedding next year!

Congratulations
Maureen Morstatt
on your recent nomination as
a Community Champion.
Thank you for all you do.
We are so proud of you!

Trish O’Keefe PhD, RN
President, Morristown Medical Center
and all your colleagues at Morristown Medical Center



#1 HOSPITAL IN NJ
3 YEARS IN A ROW!



Atlantic Health System
Morristown Medical Center



Thomas J Hanlon

Place of birth: Baltimore, Maryland
Company & position: New York City District Council Carpenter, Local 157 Carpenter, Works for ADI Foreman
During the Coronavirus Pandemic, how did your profession/job/volunteering work help others? I was laid off and out of work for 8 weeks. Someone gave my daughter a sewing machine and my wife was a front-line worker who needed masks to go to work. I taught myself how to sew and design a mask. I used the tools, knowledge, and skill as a union carpenter in the field to cut fabric. Then my wife shared on social media how I made a bunch of masks for her to take to work. I was connected w The Mask Squad of Somerset County and began assisting them in making masks for front liners in need. Several nurses contacted me to make masks to put over their N95's and it just took off. I was nominated and awarded a brand-new sewing machine donated by

Brother, Inc located in Bridgewater, NJ. I would make masks and pass out at the grocery stores, Home Depot, and other random places focusing on helping the senior community that needed masks.

As a front-line worker/volunteer, how did you cope during the pandemic? Sewing kept me busy. Listening to music on Alexa and sewing away. Taking masks to work and giving out to my fellow brothers and sisters or the random senior that needed one.

Biography: I am a simple man. I keep to myself. I support my family and my wife who has been at the forefront during the pandemic. Making sure she had masks to go to work or when the kids went to see the doctor. Volunteering my time is not something I do. To me making masks was more of a necessity than volunteering. I wish when 9-11 happened we had these masks when I was cleaning up because now everyone, including myself has asthma or breathing problems due to all the dust and stuff in the air back then.



Marybeth Blakely

Place of birth: NY
During the Coronavirus Pandemic, how did your profession/job/volunteering work help others? As a Registered Nurse in an acute rehabilitation hospital, I cared for patients who were admitted with and recovering from COVID-19. I also was responsible for screening employees as they entered the hospital to be sure they were asymptomatic and COVID free.

As a front-line worker/volunteer, how did you cope during the pandemic? Being able to go home to my husband and children every night as well as receiving tremendous support from my Mom, sisters and brother.

Biography: I grew up in Pequannock, NJ. I have two sisters & a brother. My husband & I have three children, a son and two daughters. After 27 years working for Verizon, I retired at the age of 46 & went back to school & earned my RN. I then began my second career as a nurse. Going to school full-time while raising three children was a challenge but worth the hard work. I have truly found my calling as an RN caring for patients who are rehabbing from strokes, traumatic brain injuries as well as other types of injuries.



Brian McCabe

Place of birth: Brooklyn, NY
Company & position: System Director of Security, Bon Secours Charity Health System

During the Coronavirus Pandemic, how did your profession/job/volunteering work help others? Working in Healthcare I was able to observe on the front line the surge in cases and the challenges presented across all the disciplines during the most critical times of the pandemic. Confronting the crisis, I partnered with Sophie Colgan to form the Meitheal, a group of like-minded individuals to support healthcare workers with personal protective equipment, meals, and emotional support.

As a front-line worker/volunteer, how did you cope during the pandemic? I coped with the crisis by remaining engaged working greatly extended hours across seven-day work weeks professionally, and continuing the work of the Meitheal. There was much to do, and that focus with the team, and ability to make a difference and proactively deal with the crisis allowed no time for negativity or anxiety.



Sister Caroline Tweedy, RSM

Place of birth: Brooklyn, NY
During the Coronavirus Pandemic, how did your profession/job/volunteering work help others? As the Executive Director of St. John's Bread & Life, one of the largest providers of emergency food in New York City, when the COVID-19 pandemic struck I quickly pivoted our programs to focus on what I saw as the most exigent need – providing emergency food to the thousands of members of our community who were being furloughed or laid off, as well as to such at-risk populations such as the homeless and seniors.

To that end, I reassigned all staff to first maintain, and then greatly expand our emergency food programs so that we could ensure the organization would be able to meet

the needs of the hungry in the community for as long as the crisis lasted.

Since March alone, Bread & Life has provided food in the form of grab-and-go meals and prepackaged pantry bags totaling nearly two million meals – more than double what the agency typically furnishes in a full year.

Along with food, we have continued providing emergency social services support, and most important of all, we have expanded our capacity as part of a resource-sharing program providing food to the community fridge project which now serves all five boroughs of New York City; as well as a comprehensive pick-up and delivery system working with more than a dozen smaller social service agencies to provide pantry bags to the elderly; domestic violence victims and their families; and the medically-fragile. Throughout the crisis, Bread & Life has worked to ensure that hot meals are served daily

with no barriers to anyone in need, allowing the agency to serve more than 700 individuals hot breakfast and lunch each day, as well as more than 500 additional families who receive 32-pound prepackaged bags of groceries, each including about ten pounds of fresh produce.

Perhaps the biggest success has been keeping the agency open every day, with no employees getting sick, serving more than 12,000 families over the course of the pandemic so far.

As a front-line worker/volunteer, how did you cope during the pandemic? As the Executive Director at St. John's Bread & Life, I led the development and implementation of strict protocols weeks before shutdown and stay-at-home orders began. PPE equipment was purchased and made available to staff and guests, and plans were developed to engage guests in a contact-free manner. Daily check-ins were initiated, along with staggered staffing, and weekly successes at meeting demand and keeping everyone healthy were constantly celebrated, helping to bring a positive approach to each day. Leadership created logistical operations teams which were assigned to tasks that were meaningful to staff, which was especially important because of the need to eliminate the agency's large cadre of volunteers, as the majority of them were older adults in high-risk categories. By taking all of these safety and morale-boosting measures, Bread & Life has ensured for those who rely upon it that the "new normal" will continue to encompass the agency's unwavering service to the community.

Biography: While I was born and raised in Brooklyn, my family traces its heritage to county Limerick and Derry, Ireland.

I came to St. John's Bread & Life in 2016 as Associate Executive Director, becoming the agency's Executive Director in 2018. Previously, I spent more than a quarter century as the Chief Development Officer of Brooklyn's Mercy Home for Children, where I was a Member of the agency's Executive Cabinet.

A Sister of Mercy since 1985, I attended Catherine McAuley HS, Brooklyn College, and Fordham University, and hold a Masters in Administration from Fordham with certificates in Nonprofit Management and Supervision.

Creating a Living Legacy

DEDICATING A MEMORIAL WELL

Dedicating a life-giving water well to a community is a beautiful way to honor a loved one.



CREATING A LIVING LEGACY: *Celebrate Your Loved One*

A memorial well is a beautiful way to honor a loved one, a way to celebrate their life by providing an entire community with a lifeline of hope. Wells of Life will drill a clean water well (borehole) that will provide access to clean and safe drinking water to a community up to 1,000 people. **Memorial Well Cost: \$6,000**

FOREVER MEMORIALIZED: *Memorial Package*

Every memorial well receives a dedication where the life of your loved one will be celebrated! A plaque will be placed to honor their life for years to come. The family will be provided with a beautiful photobook of the installation and dedication of the well that is sure to capture the impact of this living memorial. **When you donate a well in honor of a loved one, you give life to an entire community.**

MORE THAN WATER: *The Gift That Keeps Giving*

When you give clean water you give time, opportunity, education, and empowerment. In Africa alone, women and children spend 40 billion hours each year walking through isolated, dangerous rural areas to collect disease-ridden water for their families.

Not only does clean water save lives, but it gives children the opportunity to receive an education and women an opportunity to grow food, earn income, and provide for their families. When a community receives clean water, they are given the resources of health, hygiene, and time to create a more sustainable community.

ABOUT WELLS OF LIFE

Wells of Life is a 501(c)(3) non-profit Christian organization whose mission is to provide rural Ugandans access to safe, clean water through the installation or restoration of sustainable borehole water wells and WASH (water, sanitation, and hygiene) educational programs. Please visit us at WellsofLife.org for more information! **Our wells are collectively serving more than 600,000 people.**

If you have someone you would like to honor, please contact Nick Jordan at Nick@WellsofLife.org or by calling 949-584-6166



The Women of Irish Heritage Inc.

Congratulates all 2020 Irish Echo Community Champions especially our WOIH Members

MaryBeth Blakely, Maureen Morstatt and Lorraine Kenney-Spiotta

We are very proud of our "WOIH Heroes" and their dedication to their professions during Covid-19 & Beyond.



Women of Irish Heritage Inc., the Founding Club is Celebrating its 47th Anniversary as a social, philanthropic & charitable organization serving women of Irish descent. Monthly Meetings promise a taste of Irish Culture, Entertainment and Good Craic in a social atmosphere.

Meetings Held: First Wednesday of every month – September through June at 7PM.
Location Friendly Sons of the Shillelagh Club,
648 Prospect Avenue, West Orange, NJ
07052.



For general or member information, contact: Gwen Glazier, President (973-731-1637/gglaz@verizon.net) or Jane Reilly, Financial Secretary (845-788-7182/jmreilly66@gmail.com). Be sure to visit us on Facebook – Women of Irish Heritage – Northern New Jersey.



Sally McNally

Place of birth: Dublin Ireland

Company & position: Women/s Health Partnership Medical Group, Ventura California, Certified Nurse Midwife, Women's Health Nurse Practitioner.

During the Coronavirus Pandemic, how did your profession/job/volunteering work help others? My work is primarily with women and most of them are pregnant. The pandemic has changed how women usually enjoy their pregnancy and birth. Their partners cannot come to the office visits and they have drive by baby showers. They are afraid and very anxious, during their labor and birth everyone around them is wearing extra PPE even though they may have had a negative Covid test. Their partner is the only one allowed in for the delivery which can be very beautiful and private but some women miss the excitement and celebration of having their families attend the birth.

So, because of the isolation and the fear we have noticed a sharp increase in the amount of

depression and anxiety our patients are experiencing. I have started a quality improvement project for our patients where we screen them for perinatal mood disorders more carefully and more often. Giving the patients more time to discuss their fears and their feelings may help to reduce the risks of postpartum depression, and when we find a woman who is struggling with a perinatal mood disorder we find her the help she needs. I am also a Yoga Instructor and a Certified Hypnotherapist; I teach a prenatal yoga class and a hypno-birthing class through Zoom every week.

I try to give the women a sense of their own power and confidence going into labor. Covid-19 has changed a lot of things but it has not changed the way we birth our babies. I encourage my patients to stay calm, to trust their bodies and to invite their inner wise woman to help them through their labor. During their births I am very aware of the family members who may be missing from the room and I try to fill that space for my patients. I am their midwife, their mother, their sister, their

friend.

My videos are available for free on my YouTube page Sally McNally The Irish Midwife. As a front-line worker/volunteer, how did you cope during the pandemic? As a front line worker I have to remind myself that anyone of my patients may be infected with Covid-19, so I wear my mask during any interaction with a patient in the office. When I am doing a delivery, I wear full PPE. I try to keep myself as healthy as possible doing yoga and hiking in the hills of Ventura.

Biography: I originally trained as a midwife in Ireland, I worked as a Nurse Midwife in Saudi Arabia for five years receiving invaluable experience in the labor room. I moved to the US in 1996 and I worked in Georgia, Alaska and finally California where I met my husband John McNally. We have one daughter, Brigid (the light of my life), and after she went to college, I went back to school to earn my Masters in Midwifery and also Women's Health Nurse practitioner. I am almost finished my Doctorate in Midwifery and I plan to teach midwives in the future.



Shannon Faught

Place of birth: San Antonio, Texas

During the Coronavirus Pandemic, how did your profession/job/volunteering work help others? My background in nursing is in Cardiac Intensive Care Unit. But at the start of the pandemic my company had opened a hospital specifically to house COVID-19 patients. I immediately volunteered and was one of the first nurses to be trained and helped convert what was once Operating Rooms, to patient rooms. Many patients were nervous and alone. I would sit with them, talk to them,

and bring them books or activities from the outside since many of them were in the hospital, and in the same room for at least 14 days.

As a front-line worker/volunteer, how did you cope during the pandemic? I spent many hours at work, helping patients, and volunteering to work extra so my co-workers could spend time with their families. Seeing patients recover from COVID-19 and then, them seeing their family for the first time, was rewarding. I was a part of breakthrough research, and got to hang the first few bags of COVID-19 convalescent plasma which housed

antibodies from recovered patients. You could almost see the recovery overnight, which was also so rewarding. Outside of work I spent a lot of time enjoying the outdoors, reading or really any activities that were social distanced.

Biography: I'm a 25-year-old Critical care nurse from San Antonio, Texas. I love outdoor activities, working on cars, and travel. I've been to Ireland many times to visit family and have traveled across most of the United States. As a graduate of the University of Texas, Health Science Center, my lifetime goal of being a nurse has been fulfilling and I hope and pray to continue to help others in my community.



Michael Cremin

Place of birth: New Castle West, Co. Limerick, Ireland

Company & position: Emerald Dry Cleaning, Owner

During the Coronavirus Pandemic, how did your profession/job/volunteering work help others? Being in the Laundry and Dry Cleaning Business, we worked everyday cleaning and maintaining the doorman uniforms and essential staff uniforms for all our buildings. While many dry cleaners closed down, we kept our doors open to clean and sanitize the buildings uniforms.

As for volunteering, we used our vehicles to transport PPE to numerous organizations and hospital throughout the five boroughs. We also

worked with Owen Rogers transporting for the Meitheal Appeal delivering PPE and Patrick McGowan at the Solace House.

As a front-line worker/volunteer, how did you cope during the pandemic? I changed our hours of operation to the early hours of the morning to safeguard my driver's exposure to others. I also took the opportunity to teach my two daughter's Nicole and Michaela the important lesson of giving back to your community. Both girls assisted with every delivery of PPE supplies and as somber as it was driving around with empty streets and the security at the hospitals, over all it was a lesson learned that we have to help our Police, Firefighter's, EMT's, Doctors, Nurses and all front line workers in their time of need. I also helped fundraising events for the Solace

House, which offers free confidential, therapeutic counseling for anyone who is experiencing suicidal thoughts or suicidal distress as well as those who engage in self-harm, or have been bereaved by suicide.

Biography: Michael is a successful entrepreneur from Newcastle West, County Limerick, who arrived in New York City in 1993 on a business visa. The business relationships he developed led him to start Emerald Dry Cleaning in 1998. He has since expanded his business to include uniform sales and business maintenance. In addition to his business, he serves the community as a Knight of St. Patrick and as a Knight of Columbus. Michael and his wife, Rhonda, have two daughters, Nicole 19, and Michaela 14. Michael enjoys following Gaelic sports, as well as the occasional chat in his native tongue.

Mary Sugrue

Place of birth: Cahersiveen, Co. Kerry

Company & position: Chief Executive Officer, Irish American Partnership

During the Coronavirus Pandemic, how did your profession/job/volunteering work help others? As CEO of the Irish American Partnership, I oversaw the transition of our operations to be fully remote. Bolstered by the generosity of our community, I was able to lead our small non-profit through the pandemic, retaining all staff and maintaining all of our commitments. We redoubled our efforts to support teachers, students, and community leaders as they navigate the challenges presented by this new world. As Ireland continues to grapple with economic and health crises

wrought by the virus, we continue to stand with the people of Ireland - from providing technological resources to facilitate distance learning to furnishing outdoor classrooms and PPE to supporting university students on the frontlines through access programs.

But even as we help Ireland respond to the most pressing challenges the island faces today, the work of the Partnership has always been about aspiring for a brighter future for the island—one that preserves an Irish way of life we cherish, while also creating a more inclusive and equitable society for all. To make our shared vision of a better tomorrow a reality, this year, the Partnership has also made innovative investments to unlock Ireland's full potential and equip our future leaders to stand up for justice. Through our new empathy education initiative to tackle bias and racism, homelessness education program, and support for the first medical school in Ireland's North West, it is our hope that we can develop tomorrow's leaders to compassionate citizens and changemakers.

As a front-line worker/volunteer, how did you cope during the pandemic? While this year has been devastating in many ways, a sense of unity and solidarity has still sprung up even in the darkest of places, illuminating the best of our humanity. To cope, I have focused on stories of courage and perseverance and been fortified by our wonderful community across Ireland and

America. Each day, I find hope in the undeniable power of connecting people. It is this principle of belonging that is crucial to resilience in the face of adversity, and that lies at the heart of the Irish and American spirits. I am heartened that the things the world will need most as we emerge from these crises—empowered and enlightened young people, and stronger communities—are exactly what the Partnership has always worked to deliver. By remaining dedicated to our organization's mission of educating and inspiring the next generation of Irish leaders, I have not only been able to cope during this global tragedy, but I have also been afforded renewed hope that brighter days lie ahead and that we all continue to work together to emerge from this crisis stronger to build an Ireland where all can thrive.

Biography: Mary Sugrue is the CEO of the Irish American Partnership. A native of Cahersiveen, Co. Kerry, Ms. Sugrue has dedicated more than thirty years to the Partnership's mission of building a more peaceful and prosperous Ireland - one that preserves a cherished Irish way of life while also creating a more inclusive and equitable society for all. An Irish teacher by training, she possesses an indispensable perspective for furthering the to educate and inspire the next generation of Irish leaders through impactful grants to schools, educational programs, and community development initiatives.



CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS!

Team Aisling would like to congratulate our good friends, **Catherine Flood, Frank Brady, Vivienne Murrhly and Stephen Reid** on being honored as the Irish Echo's Community Champions.

Catherine, no words can describe our thanks and gratitude for all that you do for Team Aisling. You were the driving force in its foundation and continue to inspire and motivate us. You have done so much for us, the Aisling Irish Center and the Irish community over the years and for that we are extremely grateful. You never shy away from a challenge and always put the community needs to the fore. The Irish community in New York is so lucky to have you.

A big thank you **Frank**, for all the fundraising you have done for Team Aisling. You also joined forces with Team Aisling this year to raise much needed funds for Slainte and went above and beyond in your endeavors. We are lucky to have great leaders in our community like you.

Vivienne and Stephen, we are so grateful for all your support. Through the wonderful Team USW, you raised a tremendous amount for the Aisling Irish Center and Slainte in memory of a very special man—Cormach Murrhly. We are beyond grateful for your support.

Congratulations to all the other Community Champions honorees.



CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS!

The Aisling Irish Community Center would like to congratulate **Catherine Flood and Frank Brady**, on being selected as the Irish Echo Community Champions.

Catherine and Frank, you are both wonderful leaders in our community, playing major roles in both the development of **Team Aisling** and the Aisling Irish Community Center. Thank you both for your tireless dedication to the community.

Catherine, you have been instrumental since the creation of the AICC almost 25 years ago, supporting and guiding its development, helping at every opportunity throughout the years. It's because of your dedication and hard work that **Team Aisling** was formed in 2018, and that **Foroige** youth club is now available in New York. We are truly grateful for everything you have done for the Aisling Irish Community Center.

Frank, thank you for all your work and dedication to our community center. You have been a constant source of guidance during your years of service. As a valued board member and fundraiser, you have demonstrated your true commitment to Team Aisling. The Irish community appreciates your hard work and dedication to the Aisling Center, and many other organizations.

Congratulations to all 2020 Community Champions. We'd like to offer a special acknowledgement to **Vivienne Murrhly and Stephen Reid** for their tremendous support for Team Aisling. We are very grateful to you both and all at Team USW (United Structural Works), Congers NY.

The Aisling Irish Community Center provides a wide range of programs and services for the community. Please visit our website WWW.AISLINGCENTER.ORG for further details. For general inquiries email INFO@AISLINGCENTER.ORG.

For anyone who is facing anxiety or depression during these uncertain times, please contact our licensed clinical social worker Siobhan Curnyn at socialworker@aislingcenter.org or 914-237-5121.



Patrick Donston

Place of birth: Cleveland, Ohio

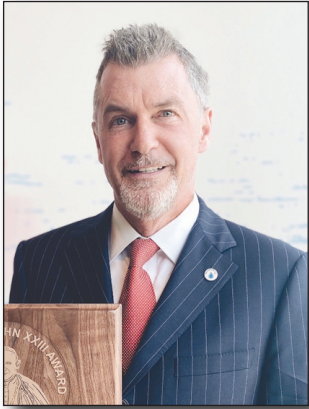
Company & position: ABSOLUTELY FISH INC; PRESIDENT

During the Coronavirus Pandemic, how did your profession/job/volunteering work help others? I think it is more about what we did for animals. We had no choice but to commit in working every day to care for the ten thousand baby fish at our Aquaculture Facility as well as the 14,000 gallons of tropical fish we house from around the world.

Through voluntary stay-home policy, our work-force decreased by 50%. This made the day to day duties exasperating, difficult and tiresome to say the least. Surprisingly moral was good, probably because we knew the importance of our jobs with respect to animal-care. It came easy with our love for fishes.

As a front-line worker/volunteer, how did you cope during the pandemic? We reduced hours of work, so that our employees could get home to family and love ones at reasonable hours. I felt this was the most important for mental health. Of course, we installed plexi-glassed in our office and retail floor areas and where there may be outside interaction. Mandatory mask policy and one designated employee every hour to deep clean with germicidal and virucidal disinfectant mixes.

Biography: This September Absolutely Fish just passed our 20 year anniversary. Viewed by many as New Jersey's premiere aquatics center, we've been certified and awarded numerous times through conservation societies. We've just been awarded one of the "America's Coolest Pet Stores" by Pets Plus magazine. "Education/Conservation, the art and science of fish keeping is our passion and what defines us."



Nick Jordan

Place of birth: Enniscorthy Co Wexford Ireland

During the Coronavirus Pandemic, how did your profession/job/volunteering work help others? Our main work is drilling water wells and providing access to clean water in rural Uganda communities. The Uganda national government asked Wells of life to be a first responder. With support from our donors we purchased and distributed over 80,000 bars of soap and over 500 facemasks to communities' hospitals and health centers. We created handwashing stations to prevent the spread of the virus.

We were given the freedom to continue our work which our team willingly did knowing the risks involved and to date have repaired 26 broken wells and drilled 23 new wells.

As a front-line worker/volunteer, how did you cope during the

pandemic? We took the necessary safety precautions when traveling throughout the rural communities and kept in close contact with our office here in Irvine California as well as our office in Ireland. We chose to continue doing the life-giving work or providing access to clean water and since the pandemic began, we have been able to serve over 60,000 people with access to clean water.

Biography: I am originally from Kiltale, County Wexford and after teaching school in Dublin for four years immigrated in 1986.

Spent two decades involved in the real estate sector and in 2008 founded Wells of life. As the organization grew, I finally became the full-time CEO in December 2015. I lead an organization that's based on three continents that after 10 years of drilling wells no provides water to over 600,000 people every day. A water well is the difference between life and death and so we work with schools' churches businesses and families to provide water wells.



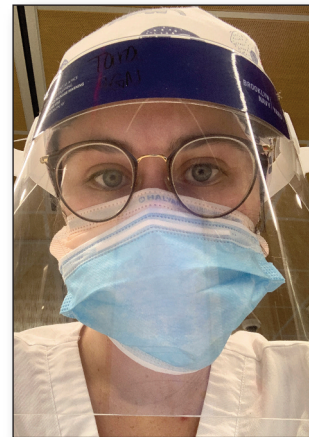
Martin Griffin

Place of Birth: Connemara, Galway, Ireland

Company & Position: I am self employed with a small construction company in Massachusetts.

During the Coronavirus pandemic how did your profession/job/volunteering work help others? I didn't really do a lot, I just checked on two of my cousins and an older lady on my street to make sure they were okay and if they needed food shopping I would go for them and then leave it at their doors.

Biography: My name is Martin Griffin, and I was born in a little village called Scneebe in Connemara. I have been living in Boston, MA since 1980 where I run a small construction company. I didn't really lose a lot during the virus, only those first few weeks where people were putting jobs on hold because they didn't want anyone in their homes. I didn't really do much in the way of volunteering, I just looked after the elderly who lived on my street by doing their shopping and making sure they didn't have to be out and possibly be exposed to the virus. My contribution during the pandemic was minor compared to all the front-line volunteers and workers.



Tara Cummins

Place of birth: Brooklyn New York

Company & position: NYP- Columbia - Registered Nurse

During the Coronavirus Pandemic, how did your profession/job/volunteering work help others? I worked as RN, my unit was the first COVID unit in our hospital. I actually worked with COVID at the beginning

As a front-line worker/volunteer, how did you cope during the pandemic? Thankfully the team that I have at my workplace is amazing and we all supported each other.



Christina Blum

Place of birth: Bermuda
During the Coronavirus Pandemic, how did your profession/job/volunteering work help others? As a volunteer Irish dance teacher, the coronavirus pandemic forced us all to adapt, and quickly. A lot of us were facing the same challenges: how do we teach virtually?

How do we keep dance fun and engaging, especially for our young dancers? I did everything I could to keep dance engaging for my students, to continue their learning, and most importantly try to retain some sense of normalcy. I am a firm believer that teachers are also mentors, but the pandemic brought about different challenges being a mentor to others while also trying to navigate our own way through this.

There was a great deal of empathy that I needed to bring each day to our classes, constantly reminding myself to understand how our students must feel. Their learning styles were completely upended as they had to adapt to a drastic change in a "new" way of life. I often checked in to see how they were coping with these changes, letting them know that they could always reach out if they needed to talk,

whether or not it involved Irish dance. In any capacity, I will be there for our students—even if I have to be silly to put a smile on their face or show them how my dogs dance to Irish music!!

After the travel restrictions were lifted in NYC, I came down to North Carolina where I continued my volunteer and mentorship with the Irish dance school virtually. At that time, our school partnered with the New York Irish Center, in virtually hosting our 3rd Irish Annual Irish Heritage Night. This year's Heritage Night was a little different, not only in it being virtual, but also in doing a fundraiser for the NYC itself. Friends and supporters from all over got together to watch various singers, dancers, musicians, and community members from Queens and the local area. I've learned that despite these challenging times, it is important not only to give back to our community, but also find ways to bring our community together. I hope everyone felt a sense of community while watching the virtual heritage night, and look forward to being back together next year.

Outside of Irish dance, I also became a certified therapy dog handler. While most senior centers are closed, I have been able to do home visits within my parents' community here in North Carolina. I've found any way I could to foster a sense of community and put a smile on people's faces, whether through dogs or dance- for that is what we all need to get through this together.

As a front-line worker/volunteer, how did you cope during the pandemic? Navigating through the shut down and the drastic change in one's way of life certainly is no easy

feat. I recognized how the restrictions were in place for the benefit of the whole community, in hopes that the virus will someday be eradicated. I took each day head on, constantly reminding myself that we, as a community, will get through this as long as we followed our community's guidelines. Each day I dedicated to doing something for our dance students, such as making videos so that they could stretch or drill themselves at home.

I also gave back where I could. I greatly admired our nurses and doctors who were working long days to save others, and I applauded them for how they were able to cope with such difficulties. As strange as this may sound, but donating to various organizations to raise monies for PPE, or buying gift cards at a local restaurant to give to our healthcare workers, helped me cope. It was that sense of compassion and empathy that got me through, as it was a constant reminder that we are all in this together. By being compassionate, not only will we become stronger as individuals, but we will strengthen our community.

Biography: Being born in Bermuda, Christina grew up in a multicultural community boasting various dance and music forms. Although she had her start in ballet, it wasn't until the family moved to Michigan, where she fell in love with Irish dancing and exclusively focused on Irish dance at the age of 7. Now, as a resident of New York City, she helps teach at the McManus School of Irish Dance and passes on her love of dance and Irish music to children. She thoroughly enjoys cultivating the kind of community feel that she benefited from while growing up.



County Leitrim Society of New York
Donal O'Connell, President

The County Leitrim Society of New York is extremely proud of our member

Frank Brady

As he receives Irish Echo's Irish Community Champions Award

Frank has always shown the best side of Leitrim people and has done so much to benefit both the Leitrim Society and the Irish and Irish-American community in New York.

His efforts on behalf of SLAINTE 2020 helped to make it a great success.

This honor is well-deserved.

November 13, 2020



Special Congratulations to my husband **Frank** on this well-deserved award, Enjoy! You have been a great husband, father and a wonderful grandad to twins Owen and William and baby Emma Rose

Love, Helen

You certainly embody the Jesuit motto of being "a man for others."

Congratulations on an honor so well deserved.

Love, Sharon

Congratulations Dad on an honor well deserved

from ***Doug, Kelly and family.***



James Jacobson

Place of birth: USA

Company & position: Donovan's Pub, Proprietor
During the Coronavirus Pandemic, how did your profession/job/volunteering work help others? With funding from Feed the Front Lines, we were able to deliver thousands of meals to local hospitals.

As a front-line worker/volunteer, how did you cope during the pandemic? During the pandemic we were able to offer take-out and delivery to keep a few of our staff work-

ing. More staff was brought back when outside seating was allowed. Our incredible staff also helped with preparing and delivering the food to the hospitals.

Biography: I first started working at Donovans as a busboy in 1985 at the age of 15. I worked as a bartender for 30 years before becoming the owner with my brother in-law, Danny. I lived in Woodside my whole life and have 3 kids Aly, Noah and Renee with my wife Leni. My parents were always a big part of the community, volunteering for any events the neighborhood had. The pandemic has affected a lot of businesses in Woodside, but we are resilient! Woodside will be back better and stronger than ever! Woodside Strong!



Colm and Brogan Donston

During the Coronavirus Pandemic, how did your profession/job/volunteering work help others? We put aside personal safety to work as cashiers at the local market where many elderly residents get their groceries.

As a front line worker/volunteer, how did you cope during the pandemic? Apprehensive in the beginning because we didn't know much about the transmission when COVID-19 first started, it is much less stressful now to go to work. There are many safety protocols in place and we have become a close 'working family' as employees in our service to the community

Biography: Colm and Brogan are brothers, ages 20

and 16, who live in Hoboken with their parents, Bridget and Patrick.

Colm worked as a cashier at Kings Supermarket since high school. After he went to college in Boston, he cashiered on school breaks and summers. Then COVID hit, college shut down and Colm moved back home. He was called to work his first day back because Kings was short on employees. When Colm told Brogan that Kings needed workers, Brogan volunteered and was hired to supplement the staff shortage. Brogan is a high school student, who finishes his school day at 2pm and goes to work at 3pm.

These young men work at the local market where elderly residents get their groceries. By putting aside personal safety, they have helped their neighbors and served the community.



Dan Connor

Place of birth: Woodside New York

Company & position: Donovan's Pub of Woodside (Owner)

During the Coronavirus Pandemic, how did your profession/job/volunteering work help others? At Donovan's we were able to provide thousands of meals to healthcare heroes working on the front lines. We would visit several hospitals per week and drop off anywhere from 50-200 meals. This was funded by our own donations, donations from customers, family friends, and an incredible partnership with Feed the Front Lines NYC.

As a front-line worker/volunteer, how did you cope during the pandemic? Being able to assist those healthcare heroes, and seeing how great their spirits were, went an incredibly long way to my own ability to get through those really tough early months.

Biography: Woodside has been my home my entire life. I've always been heavily involved in the community, primarily through coaching youth sports at St. Sebastian. I have had the incredible honor of being named a distinguished graduate of St. Sebastian. Towards the end of 2012, my brother in law (James Jacobson) and I had the opportunity to save Woodside's Landmark Gathering place (Donovan's Pub) as it was about to be broken into multiple stores.



Katherine O'Flaherty

Place of birth: Boston

Company & position: I am currently Senior Lecturer and Lewis Faculty Fellow at Barrett, The Honors College at Arizona State University.

During the Coronavirus Pandemic, how did your profession/job/volunteering work help others? The pandemic was very disruptive for my students. Many are from out of state and had to pack their belongings and scramble to get home when the pandemic forced us to move classes online and closed residence halls etc. Not only were their classes and lives disrupted but so too were their plans. For example, students had planned study abroad, internships, apprenticeships, and trips, all of which were cancelled or put on hold.

I tried and I hope I was able to provide some stability to my students. In our Zoom classes in the first few weeks of the pandemic I knew the students were anxious and uncertain and so I and so many of my colleagues tried hard to create stability. Twice a week, every week, we met for class. It was somewhat reassuring for the students and I know they appreciated the community and the interaction even if it was via Zoom. I also designed a class about the pandemic and I taught it over seven weeks in May and June. It is a surreal experience to teach a class about the history of outbreaks, epidemics and pandemics in the midst of a pandemic but the class was a joy. All of the students appreciated the opportunity to think critically and read about past

pandemics and I think it provided them with a bit of perspective and distance from our current crisis so they could think through what was happening. Now in the fall semester I am again hopefully providing students with the space to learn and to reflect and we talk often in all of my classes about the pandemic and how it is shaping their experience. Many have noted they find this acknowledgement of our current situation helpful.

As a front-line worker/volunteer, how did you cope during the pandemic? I really don't know! I suppose I focused on work even more so as it was something, I knew I could count on and because I knew my students depended on me to be there each day on Zoom. I knew it was important to stay positive, optimistic, and progress oriented for them. I think teaching a class on the history of pandemics in May and June was as cathartic for me as it was for the students and in the same way I hope they developed some perspective from the class I know I gained perspective from our conversations.

Biography: Katherine M. O'Flaherty is Senior Lecturer and Lewis Honors Faculty Fellow at Barrett, The Honors College at Arizona State University. She trained as an historian earning a Ph.D. from the University of Maine in 2010. She teaches a range of courses on topics including community engagement, history, literature, and professional development. She is a recipient of the Barrett Annual Award for Excellence in Teaching, and Barrett Annual Award for Excellence in Service. Although she was born in Boston, Katherine spent her childhood in Camp, Kerry, where her family still lives. She spends her summers in Kerry every year.

The Irish Cultural Centre of New England
congratulates all the honorees of the Irish Echo Community Champion Awards especially
Steve Burke, Executive Director of the Irish Cultural Centre



**Celebrating our
30th year**

**The Irish Cultural Centre
of New England**

200 New Boston Drive,
Canton, MA 02021
781-821-8291
www.irishculture.org
info@irishculture.org
FB Irish Cultural Centre of New England

Check out our website
for information on upcoming
concerts, historical and literary
lectures and family events.
We host weekly Irish language, Music,
History, and Set Dancing classes.

Join us every Friday night
In the ICC Pub & Restaurant for great
food and drink and an open Irish
music session. All are welcome.

Be sure to visit us on
Facebook and Instagram.



Congratulations

to our Founding & Managing Partner

FIONA McENTEE

An Irish Echo
"Community Champion"



**Irish-Founded, Award Winning
U.S. Immigration Attorneys**



Services Include :

- Business Visas & Green Cards
- O-1 Extraordinary Visas
- Artist, Musician & Athlete Visas
- Family-Based Green Cards
- Fiancé(e) Visas
- U.S. & Irish Citizenship

info@mcenteelaw.com

(773) 828-9544



Lorraine Spiotta

Place of birth: Newark, NJ

During the Coronavirus Pandemic, how did your profession/job/volunteering work help others? As our normal lives changed overnight in March, my position as Community Liaison for Hospice of New Jersey I saw firsthand that not only were hospital workers HEROES but the staff at nursing homes, assisted living facilities and senior housing. My team and I thought ice cream would help bring some joy to those heroes and scheduled ice cream and Italian ice stops to those facilities. Throughout the fall we added hot coco and pretzels.

As a front-line worker/volunteer, how did you cope during the pandemic? I continued to work with families who could not visit their family in a facility and educated them on the possibility of

bringing their loved one home under Hospice benefits provided by Medicare.

As doctors offices started to open up again, I would bring baskets of snacks, donuts, bagels and coffee. Meeting them outside I would always have a smile on my face and a positive attitude offering to help their patients age with dignity.

Biography: In 1997, I founded Senior Long Term Care Insurance Brokerage, Inc. which took on the challenge of simplifying a difficult product and started selling directly to consumers and payroll deduction benefit platforms. Author/Publisher: Key Solutions For Caregivers 2016 - The perfect resource for people approaching retirement and/or caregivers. 2018 to present I educate the community of the benefits of Hospice and provide free seminars on a Free Living Will known as the Five Wishes. I also help families navigate care options for those caring for their loved ones. President of The Giblin Association & executive board member of Women of Irish.



Linda McLoughlin

Place of birth: Brooklyn, NY USA

Company & position: NYU Langone Brooklyn, Registered Nurse Interventional Services, NYU Rory Meyers College of Nursing, Clinical Adjunct Faculty.

During the Coronavirus Pandemic, how did your profession/job/volunteering work help others? As a veteran critical care registered nurse, my skills brought me through many different areas of the hospital that required assistance with patient care. During the pandemic, I worked in the Emergency Department, the COVID Intensive Care Unit and the Alert Team/Rapid Response Team. I was able to help patients during a very difficult and challenging time by helping them with their needs, comfort, and as a liaison with the medical team, the patients and their families.

As a front-line worker/volunteer, how did you cope during the pandemic? It was an incredibly challenging time for everyone. I am so very grateful for my very strong faith, family and friends.

My husband, Daniel is also a frontline worker as a member of the FDNY for over 20 years. We are the VERY proud parents of Isabelle (12), Daniel (10) and Julianna (8).

Biography: Linda Ann McLoughlin (McKee), born and raised in Bay Ridge Brooklyn. She is the youngest of three daughters of Nettie and James McKee. The product of Catholic Education in which life was always centered around Our Lady of Angels Parish, Bishop Kearney High School and Marist College where she earned a BA in Communications. After Marist Linda enrolled in Nursing School, employed at NYU Langone and is known around the hospital for her devotion to her patients and families but also for her outgoing, funny personality. As faculty at NYU College of Nursing, Linda is imparting her love of nursing.



Kevin Jackson

Place of birth: Atlantic City NJ

Company & position: President, Ancient Order of Hibernians Div 1 Atlantic County NJ Ofc. Thomas McMeekin Jr. Memorial Division

During the Coronavirus Pandemic, how did your profession/job/volunteering work help others? Beginning in March I was deployed to a local Shop Rite in New Jersey serving as a security staff member responsible for implementing and managing a new customer shopping behavior system. I ensured shoppers properly navigated in the store observing one-way aisle direction, spacing properly in checkout lines and answering questions related to PPE (personal protection equipment) for shopping and assisting

shoppers with other front-line related questions.

As a front-line worker/volunteer, how did you cope during the pandemic? By following all guidelines and protocols as set forth by national and state governments. Staying home unless I was called into work wearing a mask to protect myself and others.

Biography: I was born and raised in Atlantic City attending Our Lady Star the Sea graduating from Atlantic City High School. After which I started my life of service. First on the Atlantic City Beach Patrol and then joining the ACPD for 13 years. Was then employed by New Jersey Racing Commission where I retired in 1998. Joined the AOH in 1999 participating in all activities, Had the privilege to become President in 2017 of Div 1. This has afforded my brothers and I the opportunity to help the community. For which I am grateful.



Karen Kennedy

Place of birth: Staten Island

During the Coronavirus Pandemic, how did your profession/job/volunteering work help others? elp others? I was reassigned within our hospital to assist the Respiratory Therapists caring for the COVID-19 patient population.

As a front-line worker/volunteer, how did you cope during the pandemic? The continued support of my family and friends

helped me stay positive and sane during the very challenging times.

Biography: I received my Bachelor of Science degree from Lycoming College in 2003 and started working as a Bone Marrow Transplant Registered Nurse at Hackensack University Medical Center. I am OCN certified and hold an active ONS Chemotherapy and Biotherapy provider card. In 2010, I completed my Master of Science degree in Adult Health Nursing and an Advance Certification in Cultural Competence from the College of Staten Island

City University of New York. Subsequently, in 2015 I completed my additional credits at Mount Saint Mary College for a Post Master's Certificate: Adult Health – Nurse Practitioner and in 2016 successfully became an ANCC board certified Adult Nurse Practitioner. In June, 2017 I had left Hackensack to advance my career at White Plains Hospital: Center for Cancer Care as a Surgical Oncology Nurse Practitioner. I am currently enrolled in the DNP program online at Chamberlain University and will finish within the next two years.

Congratulations to
Shannon Eileen Faught
The Irish Echo's
"Irish Community of Champions"
Awardee for 2020



From all Your Friends & Family

Wayne & Eileen Faught
Margaret Burke
Joan Moody
Mary Jo Quinn
Elissa & Bill O'Brien
Allison & Gerry Mulvey
San Antonio, Texas

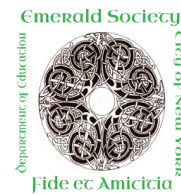
*Congratulations
and
Best Wishes*

to

Donna McGuire
on her recognition as
Community Champion
by the
Irish Echo

*Your friends and colleagues
at*

**THE NYC DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION EMERALD SOCIETY**



We are proud to support the
**Irish Echo 2020 Community
Champions** and salute all those
who serve and advance worthy
concerns and causes.

Congratulations to our own community
champion, CEO Mary Sugrue on this
wonderful recognition.



**IRISH AMERICAN
PARTNERSHIP**

*Honor your heritage while empowering the
children of Ireland.*

Join us at www.irishap.org.

Follow us @irishamericanpartnership



\$34M+
DONATED

500+
SCHOOLS + PROGRAMS

30,000+
IRELAND'S FUTURE LEADERS
SAY THANK YOU





Kayla Wilson

Place of birth: Teaneck, NJ USA
Company & position: Hackensack University Medical Center, Registered Nurse
During the Coronavirus Pandemic, how did your profession/job/volunteering work help others? During the Covid Pandemic, I worked (and still work) as a critical care nurse at Hackensack University Medical Center. My role is a critical care nurse on a rapid response team, in which we are the first to arrival, triage, assess, diagnose and treat a critically ill hospitalized patient. I found I was able to help the most in bringing the critical care team to the

patient, when there was simply no time or room or resources to bring the patient to the critical care unit (as is standard) and in serving as a point of contact between patients and families during a time when visitation was prohibited and patients made what was frequently their last phone call to loved ones. My goal of each patient encounter was to humanize what was a dehumanizing medical condition, sometimes in simply holding a patient's hand at a time when physical contact was feared, and using empathic and compassionate language at a time when facial expression was hidden by intimidating armor and PPE.

As a front-line worker/volunteer, how did

you cope during the pandemic? I relied heavily on the support of my team and I continue to show up every day and risk my life because of the trustworthy colleagues, teammates, and friends I have by my side to care for covid patients. Outside of work, I decompressed alongside my boyfriend, family and friends who essentially took care of me as I spent all my energy taking care of others through that initial covid surge.

Biography: Devoted Critical Care Nurse, motivated Doctor of Nursing Practice student, loving daughter/sister/aunt/girlfriend, and avid lover of the travel, the outdoors and any sport involving a board!



Hannah Cummins

Place of birth: United States
Company & position: NYC DOE; PS199 Frederick Wachtel Special Education teacher
During the Coronavirus Pandemic, how did your profession/job/volunteering work help others? I began teaching students remotely.

As a front-line worker/volunteer, how did you cope during the pandemic? It was difficult to teach students during the pandemic because this was something that was so unknown to educators and to our students. Even though it was difficult, I tried to always remember how important me being positive each day for my students was and so that is what I tried to be... positive.

Biography: I am 23 years old, I was born in New York and I have lived in Rockaway Beach since I was two years old. This is my third year as a teacher. I went to SUNY Cortland for my undergraduate degree in Special Education and I am currently attending Hunter College to get my masters in TESOL Education alongside working as a special education teacher at PS199 Frederick Wachtel.



Edmond Dowling

Company & position: The Padded Wagon Moving and Storage - Owner

During the Coronavirus Pandemic, how did your profession/job/volunteering work help others? During the COVID-19 Pandemic the Padded Wagon teamed with Meitheal and JAD Corp, we provided collection and delivery services of PPE and Cleaning supplies needed in NYC by the Hospitals dealing with the onslaught of patients.

Biography: Born in Morristown, NJ moved to Castleknock, Dublin as an infant, he attended Terenure College where he became a Chartered Accountant.

Married his wife, Aine in 1984 and the couple returned to New Jersey in 1986. They have 4 children and 3 grandchildren. In 1991 purchased The Padded Wagon, a local NYC moving company, under his ownership expanded the company with locations in Florida, California, New Jersey and Ireland. He is still very committed to his Irish Roots, Sponsor of the Dublin Football Club and treasurer for the IEDFC, Maynooth College.



Joan Henchy

Place of birth: USA
Company & position: Chairperson NY GAA

During the Coronavirus Pandemic, how did your profession/job/volunteering work help others? As Chairperson of the NY GAA I involved with Slainte 2020. This consisted of five of the largest Irish organizations coming together to raise funds, to help those in need during the lock down. Identifying the needs for the applicant, funds distributed was to be used for rent, food, and medical, also counseling for those who needed and any additional assistance each for the units could offer.

We as a group raised over a half a million dollars through donations and fundraising all of which was distributed to those that needed. It was a humbling experience, and could not have been accomplished without the Aisling Irish, Emerald Isle, New York Irish center, Untied Irish Counties and the NY GAA. The entire slainte committee have to be commended for their hard work during the lockdown and particular thanks to our association its officers, players, and members for their

support during this incredibly challenging time. The Irish and Irish American community are amazing, they dug deep to help each other out.

As a front-line worker/volunteer, how did you cope during the pandemic? As a volunteer with Slainte 2020. I was blessed to have the support of my own family, and friends, along with meeting and working with the most amazing people in Slainte 2020. (Virtual of course) That support system for me was a life line, it put things in perspective, no matter how hard a day was there was someone less fortunate, and having the means to assist make there lives a little easier made the hard day better.

Biography: Born in Yonkers to Dan and Mary (RIP) Kiely. Returned to Tarbert Co Kerry as a young Child where I remained to the age of 17. During late 80s Ireland was enduring one of the worst recessions to date, with no prospect of work Immigration was the only option. Married to Brendan, we have two daughters Tara, Shauna, son in law Sean. I got involved with Kerry GFC in 1999 and have been involved with the NY GAA, where I held numerous offices until elected as Chairperson Dec of 2019.



Jaclyn Costello

Place of birth: Staten Island, NY
Company & position: Forensic Biologist at the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner of NYC
During the Coronavirus Pandemic, how did your profession/job/volunteering work help others? I am currently employed as a Forensic Biologist at the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner of NYC. Up until the start of the pandemic, my interaction with the morgue operations was minimal. My work is focused on DNA evidence recovered from crime scenes

in NYC. With the rapidly increasing numbers of deceased individuals in NYC our morgue department was in need of assistance. I was deployed to the disaster morgue unit to help with the preservation, collection, and releasing to funeral homes of these deceased individuals. I was deployed there from March until early June.

As a front-line worker/volunteer, how did you cope during the pandemic? I leaned on my family during this difficult time. Their facetimes, calls, and text messages helped me stay grounded and calm. The people that I was deployed with kept me going everyday with

their encouragement and positive attitude.

Biography: My name is Jaclyn Costello. I have been employed by the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner of NYC for the last ten years. My current position is a Criminalist Level IV in the forensic biology division. We examine, analyze, and report DNA results from crime scenes from all 5 boroughs. I come from a close tight knit Irish Catholic family, that I love dearly. I recently moved to Hoboken, NJ with my boyfriend Jacob. In my free time I enjoy visiting with family, friends, playing golf, and traveling (looking forward to doing more of that in the future hopefully!).

Congratulations

to

Catherine Flood

and all 2020 Irish Echo Community Champions.

From the

Aisling Irish Center Ballad Group,

The Aisling Ceili Band

& Dawn Doherty Academy of Irish music & singing.



awn



**oherty
music**

“Where Words Fail, Music Speaks”



The Dawn Doherty Academy of Irish Music and Singing
www.DawnDohertyMusic.com

Congratulations

Catherine Flood

on a well-deserved honor as Community Champion.

Always happy doing so much and encouraging everyone
to stay fit and healthy

whether it's a “couch to 5K” or a “26.2 marathon”.

Loved by all in the community from

Mairéad, Sharon, Fiona, Sylvia and Elaine



Joan Cuddihy

Place of birth: Tramore, Co Waterford
During the Coronavirus Pandemic, how did your profession/job/volunteering work help others? When we hosted our two regularly scheduled Active Retirement Club events on Thursday, February 13th and Tuesday, February 25th, no one would have guessed they'd be the last ARC senior community get-togethers for some time to come. The monumental impact that the Coronavirus or COVID-19 would have on our lives was yet to be realized.

On March 6th the Irish Flag Raising ceremony at City Hall and the Grand Marshal's Dinner at the UICC were the only events to take place before it was announced that all St. Patrick's day festivities would be cancelled, including the traditional parade down Market Street. People were being encouraged to start practice 'social distancing' as the reality of a

Pandemic began to dawn.

The ARC's St. Patrick's Day Mass and luncheon, always one of the best attended events on the IIPC calendar, was scheduled to take place on Thursday, March 12th at the Basque Cultural center in South San Francisco. As it became clearer that the virus was easily transmitted in large group settings and that older adults were especially vulnerable, the IIPC Board cancelled the Mass and luncheon.

A week later, on March 16, shelter-in-place orders were issued by the City and County of San Francisco and five other Bay Area counties. The Cairde Café planned for Tuesday, March 24th at the UICC, was also cancelled. After Easter, a highly anticipated day trip to an estate and vineyard in the wine country was also cancelled.

Despite this turn of events, one of our first objectives was to preserve and maintain contact with our 503 clients who receive a letter from us every month. The first letter reassuring our clients that we had not been forgotten them went out on March 26th and included advice on staying safe and suggestions for mental and physical activities to prevent isolation and loneliness.

In April, it became clear that this "new normal" would have a significant impact on the planning of IIPC's programs and the delivery of its services, including the Active Retirement Club program. We reached out to other organizations to learn how they were adapting their programs and services during these changing times. This was a useful exercise because it underscored how important it was to stay in contact with our community.

A group of dedicated ARC Volunteers have always played a central role in the making

the Active Retirement Program one of the largest and most successful run by the IIPC. Frequently referred to as the "A-Team," it became clear that they would have a pivotal role to play in keeping the community connected when social distancing meant that we could no longer come together in the ways we once did.

As the weeks in lockdown rolled into months, volunteers noticed a shift in the things talked about, i.e. separation from family members came to the fore. Many missed seeing or being with their children, grandchildren and attending family gatherings. The passing away of friends during this time was especially difficult as people couldn't come together as a community at a Rosary, Mass or funeral to mourn.

With respect to attending Mass and other religious services, most of our clients seem to have adapted fairly well to participating via television, the internet and YouTube. As churches began opening up, our clients were split about 50/50 about returning to a normal routine. Many, still concerned about their health, felt too vulnerable to return Mass in person at this stage.

More recently, volunteers have noticed some signs of SIP "fatigue" setting in. The easing of some restrictions has been welcomed and many are eagerly awaiting when hairdressers and manicurists can reopen their salons. Volunteers regularly field questions about when the ARC's usual programs, including the Mass and lunch, will recommence and clients have expressed how much they miss social occasions like these.

At the end of May, as volunteers became more comfortable with clients and their call schedules, Volunteer Zoom meetings began to be held every other Tuesday. Volunteers have completed call logs since they began their calling routines and this is data yet to be captured and saved into a data base. From that, more detailed results and analyses will be possible.

Currently, we host the following events via an online platform: "You, Me & a Cup of Tea" every Tuesday morning is a virtual get together via Zoom that has replaced the Cairde Café previously held at the UICC. Guests participate in engaging conversations about the past, the present and whatever is on their minds. Guests have included, Robert O'Driscoll, Consul General in SF, and Elizabeth Creely, social historian.

As a front-line worker/volunteer, how did you cope during the pandemic?

Coping with the pandemic has not always been easy but I have been lucky to do the job I do and to have regular contact with the most wonderful group of Irish and Irish American older adults anyone could ask for. Chatting with one gentleman, originally from Co. Kilkenny and is turning 100 years old, can only make one feel better. His longevity sharply contrasts with the relative brevity and transient nature of the current situation. This too shall pass, and hopefully we will all emerge as a better and stronger community.

Biography: I have a B.Soc. Sc and a Master's degree from University College, Cork.

I worked in research positions in Dublin (Dublin Institute of Adult Education), London (Economic & Research Council) and Sydney (NSW Dept. of Health). I became an Australian citizen. In 1991, I won a Donnelly Visa and moved to live in San Francisco where I have been ever since with my husband Peter and four children, Jessica, Rebecca, David and Peter. I have been the IIPC's Active Retirement Coordinator since 2012. I am a huge baseball fan. Go Giants!!



Donna McGuire

Company and position: PS/IS 18 – The Park Terrace School, Assistant Principal

During the Coronavirus Pandemic, how did your profession/job/volunteering work help others? In February, I felt compelled to start discussions on the effects of the global pandemic in the various communities in which I am a member.

The conversations to bring awareness continued in our school, the school district, the union, and in educational leadership organizations and various Irish societies. It was imperative that we prepared on professional and personal levels. We mobilized within school, the district and organizations, to get the necessary computers and devices in the hands of students, to create access for families to food supplies, to provide virtual opportunities for physical and mental wellness, all while staying safe. In March, it became critical that educators collaborate with families and community leaders to determine the best way to continue the educational process moving forward. We worked together to remain connected remotely, especially as it pertained to education, self-care, and sharing inspiring messages.

On a weekly basis, I would send the educational community positive messages and a myriad of on-line tools, and would regularly communicate using the school's social media and online platforms. For students and families that were difficult to reach, I made it a daily routine to find ways to connect with them, direct them to the appropriate staff, check on their well-being, and get them the resources they needed. As a staff, we communicated using an on-line platform, aside from our

regular emails, as another way to reach out and share daily quotes, inspiration, and encouragement. Even though we were all working in a new remote way, the uncertainty of the situation and increased communication made us pull together, and, as a result, we became even closer as a learning community!

In addition, to reaching out to staff, students and their families, as the Chair of the Northern Manhattan's District 6 Leadership Team, I initiated monthly Zoom meetings. The team serves 22,000 students across forty schools in Washington Heights, NYC. Topics such as attendance, self-care and wellness, as well as providing devices and food for students and families were addressed.

As a front-line worker/volunteer, how did you cope during the pandemic? I realized in February that the pandemic would hit the U.S., and would most likely affect large cities first, the way it did overseas. To that end, I ensured that I had the necessary food and supplies to avoid unnecessary trips. I gathered the necessary files from work, so that I could work from home. By ensuring that I had the necessary tools and supplies to continue working, it better positioned me so that I could continue my work helping others.

Biography: Donna McGuire has worked as an educator for almost thirty years, with experience in rural, suburban and urban settings in New York State and in corporate training. For the past five years, Donna has been proudly serving the PS/IS 18 community, located in Washington Heights, as an Assistant Principal, and loving every minute of it! Donna has served the Washington Heights community for more than fifteen years. She strives to help the students and the staff at her school to achieve their personal and academic best, to work towards common instructional goals, and to motivate her staff to remember why they became teachers.

Donna earned a BS from SUNY Oneonta, a MS in Education from Fordham University, and began working for her alma mater, South Orangetown Central School District, as a homeschool teacher and instructional specialist for IBM in 1990. She continued to work for South Orangetown for another ten years, and parlayed her corporate training experience to KPMG, in one of the three national training

centers. The events of September 11, 2001 impacted Donna tremendously, and she decided that she would make a change, and follow through with what she set out to do – teach. Shortly after 9/11, she decided to move to New York City and worked as a middle school teacher in the Bronx, before taking an opportunity to become a Literacy Coach in a middle school in Washington Heights. Donna completed training at the NYC Leadership Academy, received a Master's in Educational Administration from Baruch College/CUNY, and has completed her course work in Doctoral Study in Urban Leadership from Fordham University.

In addition to education, Donna values service to community. She has been the Council of School Supervisors (CSA), Chair for District 6, for five years and was the Assistant Chair for five years prior. In addition, Donna is the CSA Political Liaison for her district. For the past five years, she has served the Washington Heights community as the Chair of the District Leadership Team (DLT). Donna is the President of the NYCDOE Emerald Society, the founding President of the CSA Irish Caucus, and a member of the Grand Council of the United Emeralds Societies. She has been a member of the New York Academy of Public Education and NYCDOE Emerald Society for almost fifteen years. She is also a proud member of the Association of Assistant Principals (AAP), School Administrators Association of New York State (SAANYS) and the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP). Donna has volunteered her time to The Bowery Mission Women's Center, her local block association, and has served as a committee member for fundraising activities for both organizations.

In 2018, Donna received the CSA – Ernest Logan Unionist of the Year award. In 2019, Donna received the honor of Irish Woman of the Year from the NYCDOE Emerald Society. In 2019, The Irish Echo named McGuire one of America's Irish Labor Ambassadors of the Year. Westchester County honored this educational union leader by officially naming September 13, 2019, as Donna McGuire Day. In 2019, The Daily News featured Donna as one of New York City's Hometown Heroes.

Congratulations Maureen

and all the 2020 Irish Echo Community Champion Honorees
Your continued commitment to our community
is an example for all of us to follow.



Your friends, **Breege, Sharon and Mary**

To our dear friend,

Maureen Lyons

Huge Congratulations on being honored as a
2020 Irish Community Champion.

Maureen has always been a wonderful friend, neighbor and community supporter
always lending a hand to those who needed one.

But 2020 has been an especially tough year for many.

Maureen recognized that hospital staff were feeling the brunt of the impact of the virus
and could use a pick me up.

She organized Grateful Givers which raised funds to provide meals for hospital staff.

She worked with local caterers and delis to provide tasty meals
and made the deliveries to the hospitals, nursing homes, etc.

All that training as a Na Fianna half-back – dropping back and going forward to help your teammates
translated well to community support efforts.

No one left on their own.

Thank you Maureen for your tireless contribution to our community.

You are a true friend.

We love you.

Na Fianna Oldies and Friends.



Edward T. Velinskie

Place of birth: Brooklyn, New York

Company & position: Ancient Order of Hibernians - Kings County President

During the Coronavirus Pandemic, how did your profession/job/volunteering work help others?

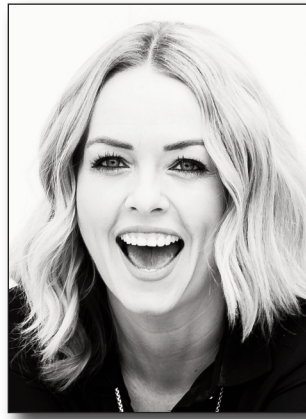
I volunteered 400 hours helping to feed 20,000 families 42,000 individuals at the Saint Thomas Aquinas Church Community Food Pantry - Brooklyn, New York.

As a front-line worker/volunteer, how did you cope during the pandemic? I coped with the pandemic by practicing proper safety precautions.

Biography: Eddie was born in Brooklyn, NY to Ingrid Connelly Velinskie & Edward A. Velinskie. Eddie's great grandparent's immigrated to the United States of America from County Clare, Ireland in the late 1800's.

Eddie has been a member of the AOH Kings County Division #35 for many years as well as the K of C - Columbus Council #126. Eddie is always volunteering & helping those in need & even volunteers at the Sean Casey Animal Rescue.

Thank you Steve Kiernan for nominating me for this community service recognition. In Our Motto!!!



Fiona McEntee

Place of birth: Dublin, Ireland

During the Coronavirus Pandemic, how did your profession/job/volunteering work help others? As an immigration lawyer, I've been advising people about the immigration and travel aspects of COVID-19. We have been proactively writing blogs, doing social media videos, hosting webinars and other events to keep people updated on all the various immigration and travel bans and the constantly changing nature of immigration. I've also been doing media interviews non-stop since March to speak out against the anti-immigrant policies that have been implemented under the guise of this pandemic.

Biography: Fiona McEntee is a nationally recognized immigration attorney and the Founder of McEntee Law Group. Fiona is a spokesperson for the American Immigration Lawyers Association and she regularly appears on national/international media including MSNBC, CNN, and RTÉ.

Fiona has particular expertise with the "extraordinary ability" O-1 visa and she counsels attorneys about leveraging the media to fiercely advocate for clients.

Fiona has published *Our American Dream* – an award-winning children's book on immigration. Along with her colleague, Carolina Solano, and her brother/colleague, Ray, Fiona has launched a podcast – *Immigration Revelation* – that amplifies the inspirational voices of immigrants.



Bridget Murphy

Place of birth: New York, New York

During the Coronavirus Pandemic, how did your profession/job/volunteering work help others?

As a Registered Nurse at Mount Sinai in Manhattan, I took care of critically ill patients in the intensive care unit during the coronavirus pandemic. I took care of patients who required intubation and mechanical ventilation, IV sedation and paralytics and mechanical circulatory assist devices among other treatment modalities. While taking care of these patients, it was equally as important to take care of their families, who were unable to be physically present. In order to keep families informed, I often facilitated FaceTime and Zoom meetings, sometimes even from my personal device. I formed a lot of strong relationships with some of my patient's families and helped them cope in the event the patient never made it out of the hospital.

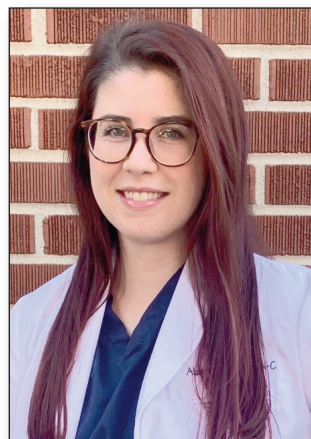
As a front-line worker/volunteer, how did you cope during the pandemic?

During the pandemic, I coped by leaning on others for support. Whether it was friends, families or coworkers, I never hesitated to reach out and ask for a listening ear or a *virtual* shoulder to cry on. I did a lot of research and educated myself on studies that were being published from China regarding interventions they found to be successful and tried to stay as involved as possible in the discussions the teams had regarding patient care. I also watched a lot of Netflix when I had a day off!

Biography: I am 25 years old and have been a nurse for 3 years. I was born and raised in New York but lived in Charlotte, North Carolina for two years after graduating from The College at Brockport in 2017. In Charlotte, I was trained in a cardiac surgery intensive care unit, taking care of patients after open heart procedures such as transplants, valve replacements and bypasses. I returned to New York at the end of 2019 to be closer to family and found myself in the US epicenter of Covid-19.

*Congratulations
to all the 2020
Community
Champions!*

**The
IrishEcho**



Alanna Kohler

Place of birth: Bronx, NY

Company & position: Surgical Physician Assistant, NewYork- Presbyterian Lower Manhattan Hospital

During the Coronavirus Pandemic, how did your profession/job/volunteering work help others?

Since all scheduled surgeries were cancelled, my colleagues and I were redeployed to the ICU to help with the alarmingly increasing number of ventilated patients. We had to learn an entirely different field of medicine within a very short period of time to help take care of these critical-

ly ill patients. I also coordinated donations of masks, hand creams and other items and handed them out to nurses in the ICU and ER.

As a front-line worker/volunteer, how did you cope during the pandemic? It was a whirlwind of emotions during the peak of the pandemic. I was unable to see my family for almost 6 months since I was constantly exposed to COVID at work. I found comfort in video chatting with family and friends and going on long walks in a nearby park.

Biography: I am a proud Irish American working as a Physician Assistant on a multi-specialty surgery team at a NYC hospital.



Alexis Fitzsimmons Totaro

Place of birth: Manhattan New York

Company & position: Administrative Director of Psychiatry and Behavioral Health Services for Hackensack Meridian Health. Advanced Practice Nurse with Board certification in Addiction as well as Women's Health

During the Coronavirus Pandemic, how did your profession/job/volunteering work help others?

Covid has taken quite an emotional toll on healthcare workers as well as the general public. I started rounding each morning on all nursing units to debrief

the staff and provide crisis intervention with the focus on building resilience during the pandemic. This grew to a network wide initiative that resulted in virtual support groups, welfare rooms and mental health services

As a front-line worker/volunteer, how did you cope during the pandemic? It was difficult especially since my daughter is also a nurse working on the front line. It helped me to support my staff and family. I practiced daily gratitude, journaling and exercise.

Congratulations

to our brother-in-law

Frank Brady

a man with a tremendous work ethic

Best Wishes from

Margaret, Pauric and Nicole Fowley

Mary and Johnny Clancy

Jimmy, Phil and Clancy Family

Jerry, Jackie Clancy and Family

Eddie Savage, Drumcliffe, Sligo, Ireland

Theresa McDermott (Bronx)

William Clancy (Queens)

Eugene, Kathleen Wynne and Family (Long Island)

Congratulations

to our fellow Leitrim man

Frank Brady

on been selected as an
Irish Community Champion
and to everyone
who contributed in making
SLÁINTE 2020
a resounding success.

From

Dessie & Beatrice McWeeney

Congratulations

On Your Community Award

Frank

Well-Deserved for your Charity Work and Determination
to help during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Congratulations also to **Catherine Flood**,

The Inspiration and driving force behind *Team Aisling*.

You lead by example and what you accomplished for
Team Aisling and **Slainte 2020** Is a credit to you **BOTH**.

Well done also to **Vivienne Murrhy, Stephen Reid**

And all 2020 Honorees

Seamus and Caitriona Clarke

J.P. Clarke's
New York

947 McLean Avenue, Yonkers, NY 10704 Tel: 914 237 0115

Congratulations

to our brother

Frank (Proinsias)

on being selected as a

Community Champion by the Irish Echo

Best Wishes from the Bunch:

Padraig & Noreen (Ballina)

Mary & Tom (Malahide)

John and Maureen (Longford)

Barbara & Richard (London)

Brian & Teresa (Lewes)

Gerard (Manorhamilton)

Attracta & Stephen (Sligo)

Anthony & Barbara (Cavan)

Paul & Martina (Manorhamilton)



Catherine Flood

Place of birth: NY

During the Coronavirus Pandemic, how did your profession/job/volunteering work help others? I am a Pediatric ICU nurse at Cohen's Children's Medical Center. Prior to my job here, I worked in the adult ER. During the Covid outbreak, I was able to pick up shifts in the Adult ICUs and makeshift ICUs at my hospital as it was an epicenter for Covid patients and treatment. I also pick up shifts in the adult ER as my prior experience made me eligible. As one of the area's largest teaching hospitals, we saw the sickest of the sick. We also had a no-visitor policy during the outbreak, so being able to take care of and help those

who couldn't have their loved ones closest made me feel like I was making a difference.

As a front-line worker/volunteer, how did you cope during the pandemic? Walks on the beach! And talking with Co-workers during lunch breaks. Sometimes being able to talk with people going through the same experience is the best medicine
Biography: I am a 27-year-old nurse who loves to stay active, travel, and be in the company of family and friends. I try to go somewhere new every year (and the last 2 years was able to incorporate seeing my family in Ireland!). I grew up playing sports, and throughout high school did various volunteer work that made me realize I wanted to be a nurse - a great profession for helping others and teamwork!



Michael James O'Hara

Place of birth: Brooklyn, NY- USA

During the Coronavirus Pandemic, how did your profession/job/volunteering work help others? Unable to attend morning Mass in Brooklyn I took the opportunity to assist the St Francis of Assisi Breadline team.

As a front-line worker/volunteer, how did you cope during the pandemic? Fortunately God blessed me with good health and enjoyed it very much. Met wonderful new friends.

Biography: Retired. Born and raised in Brooklyn. Had the gift of higher education and the blessings of attending St Joseph 's Seminary in Yonkers.

Worked for an electrical contractor as assistant counsel and later at a cemetery.



David Tuckman

Place of birth: Burbank, CA

During the Coronavirus Pandemic, how did your profession/job/volunteering work help others? As Captain of a Red Cross Disaster Action Team I led responders to go to the scene of residential and home fires providing help from our responders and caseworkers, hope and compassion. As a public information officer, I educate the Press/Media on the work Red Cross is doing during the pandemic and in response to the California wildfires.

As a front-line worker/volunteer, how did you cope during the pandemic? We cope by focusing on how we can help out communities and families during the pandemic and the multitude of some 26 wildfires across our state. For me, my coping involves staying focused as a Response Leader, Disaster Public Affairs Officer and taking time as a youth advisor to present at the virtual Regional Red Cross Youth Leadership Summit. Seeing disasters firsthand it was a relief to go home and hug my wife and play without city puppy Maya and in that moment it was like we're in a different world.. and the next day back on duty.

Biography: David has always loved helping people from an early age. From his early days in the Boy Scouts to earning Scouting highest rank of Eagle Scout - a role model, Captain of a Response Team to protecting our communities as a U.S. Federal Officer.

Whether mentoring youth or running a Shelter after a wildfire or Mass Care Team after a hurricane, David doesn't hesitate to step forward and lend a hand. David is a loving husband, puppy parent to a cute terrier and an inspirational to others.



Catherine Flood

Place of Birth: Co. Monaghan

Company & Position: Catherine Flood is the owner of Catherine Flood Recruiting & Consulting, a consultancy firm that specializes in personalized recruitment in the professional and home care services; non-profit organizations, fundraising and organizational development.

During the Coronavirus Pandemic, how did your profession/job/volunteering work help others? Catherine helped numerous Irish immigrants with employment advice and alternative employment during the shutdown in NYC. She donated many months of work fielding calls and advising people in the community on how best to navigate the stressful employment market. Additionally, Catherine established a fundraising campaign with Team Aisling running club at the Aisling Irish Center to raise much needed funds for laid-off workers. Through the "Slainte"

campaign, Team Aisling enlisted the help of hundreds of people in the Irish community to sign up for a month of virtual workout challenges, raising over \$78K in the month of May. To inspire and motivate the campaign, Catherine ran a virtual 26.2 marathon throughout the hills of Yonkers on the final day of the event on May 30th greeted at the finish line by Team Aisling captains and many in the community. Catherine's fundraising slogan is: "The community are the champions, as they always participate and donate".

As a front-line worker/volunteer, how did you cope during the pandemic? Catherine immediately jumped into volunteer mode to offer assistance to the many who needed a boost in employment and/or donations. She directly raised funds for people in the community who were ill, vulnerable, or simply needed a gift to lift their spirits. Many of Catherine's friends and candidates in her employment network supported her "Secret Santa" campaign.

Biography: Catherine Flood arrived in New York from Errigal Truagh, Co. Monaghan in 1991 and holds a BA in Business from Berkeley College in Manhattan. She enjoyed a successful sales and marketing career before developing her own recruitment agency in 2002, Eskra Personnel Inc. With a keen interest in helping immigrants, Catherine played an instrumental role in founding the Aisling Irish Community Center in 1996 and for 23 years served as a devoted board member, developing programs and fundraising for the center. Catherine has been involved with numerous organizations including the NY Ladies GAA, Project Children and the Monaghan Society. Catherine, who is an avid marathon runner, is the founder of Team Aisling, now an officially registered running club in the USA. Catherine is married to Galway native, Dermot O'Brien, who is employed with Brown Brothers Harriman & Co and they have three daughters, Siena, Stella and Michaela.

Congratulations to the 2020 Honorees

Leitrim Gaelic Football Club of N.Y.

would like to congratulate

our own

Frank Brady

on his *Community Champion Award*.

Well done Frank for what you achieved for **Team Aisling** and **Slainte 2020**.

Frank has been a community champion for Leitrim GAA in New York for many years.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank him for all the work he has done for the club.



Leitrim Gaelic Football Club of New York

CLG - LIATROMA



Congratulations to

Frank Brady

on his Irish Community Award.

Leitrim County Board would also like to thank Frank for his work in the USA during the launch of our Leitrim Wall fundraising initiative which was such an outstanding success.

Leitrim County Board

ACTIVE RETIREMENT CLUB VIRTUAL PROGRAMMING

- YOU, ME & A CUP OF TEA
- ONLINE BINGO
- MONTHLY MUSIC HOUR
- WELLNESS OUTREACH CALLS
- BIRTHDAY CLUB
- MONTHLY MAILED NEWSLETTER



Our Active Retirement Club creates a supportive network for the Irish Senior Community, providing opportunities to socialize, share information, renew old acquaintances and form new friendships. ARC keeps us safe and connected. Until it is safe to gather in person, we will ensure that our seniors are supported virtually.



5340 Geary Boulevard, Suite 206, San Francisco, CA 94121
Tel: 415.752.6006 | www.sfipc.org



THE BOARD AND STAFF OF THE
IRISH IMMIGRATION PASTORAL CENTER, SAN FRANCISCO
WARMLY CONGRATULATE OUR
ACTIVE RETIREMENT CLUB COORDINATOR

JOAN CUDDIHY

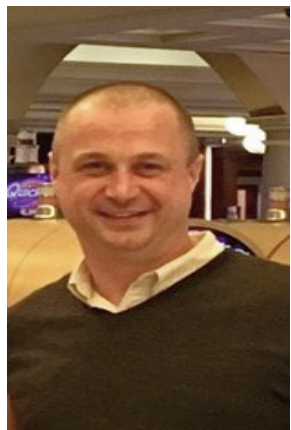
on her Irish Echo Community Champion Award
for her work to support and care for our San
Francisco older adults

Congratulations

to



**Vivienne
Murrihy**



**Stephen
Reid**



**Catherine
Flood**



**Frank
Brady**

as

2020 Irish Echo Community Champions!

From Sean and Paula James and family

CSA Salutes Irish Echo Community Champion **DONNA McGUIRE**

*Assistant Principal at Inwood's Park Terrace School
President of the CSA Irish Caucus, CSA District 6 Chair
NYCDOE Emerald Society President*



Great Schools Begin With Great Leaders!

**Council of School
Supervisors &
Administrators**

LOCAL 1: AMERICAN FEDERATION OF
SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS, AFL-CIO
40 RECTOR ST., 12TH FL., NY, NY 10006
Tel: 212 823 2020 | Fax: 212 962-6130

WWW.CSA-NYC.ORG

Mark Cannizzaro PRESIDENT | HENRY RUBIO EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT | ROSEMARIE SINCLAIR FIRST VICE PRESIDENT

Congratulations Maureen

and all the

2020 Irish Echo Community Champion honorees.

We're so proud of you.



Kieran Greene, Danny Doohan, Jim Lyons

**PRIVATE PARTY ROOMS
AVAILABLE**

KITCHEN OPEN LATE

DRINKS SPECIALS DAILY



www.gossipbarnyc.com



Frank Brady --- Community Champion

The Leitrim Guardian, the county's annual publication, is very pleased to be associated with the good wishes being extended to Frank Brady, as one of the Irish Echo Community Champions.

Our magazine was founded back in 1969 by a fellow townsman of Frank's, Michael Fox of Manorhamilton, with the aim of awakening a new pride in Leitrim, among the people of the county and its diaspora, scattered throughout the world, and particularly in the United States.

Frank Brady's name appears in practically every edition, whether as a noted contributor; the subject of articles dealing with his involvement in a very comprehensive list of organisations in both Leitrim and New York; his input into the GAA; his work with the Leitrim Society of New York and his willing participation in charitable causes on both sides of the Atlantic.

Frank's selection as Leitrim Guardian Person of the Year in 2015 was an acknowledgement of his voluntary endeavors for so many individuals, families, organizations and for those in need.

It is no surprise to our committee that Frank has been chosen as a Community Champion by the Irish Echo and we heartily endorse his selection. As well as his fund-raising efforts to assist those struck by the Corona Virus in 2020, he has found time to bring to the people of Leitrim and Ireland, first-hand accounts of the situation in New York, with special reference to Leitrim exiles in the city, through the pages of *The Leitrim Observer*, our county newspaper.

Congratulations Frank, we are so Proud of You.

Tommy Moran, Chairman

Fr John Sexton, Secretary

Dr Blaithean Gallagher, Editor

IrishEcho
COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS

IN ASSOCIATION WITH

WELLS OF LIFE |

WELLSOFLIFE.ORG

Congratulations to the 2020 Honorees

Christina Blum	Karen Kennedy
Frank Brady	Lorraine Spiotta
Marybeth Blakely	Alanna Kohler
Stephen Burke	Tracy Koutsoulidakis
Danny Connor	Bridget Murphy
Jaclyn Costello	Fiona McEntee
Michael Cremin	Donna McGuire
Joan Cuddihy	Sally McNally
Hannah Cummins	Joan Henchy
Tara Cummins	Maureen Lyons
Thomas Hanlon	Vivienne Murrihy
Colmcille Donston	Stephen Reid
Brogan Donston	Catherine Flood
Patrick Donston	Michael O'Hara
Siobhan Durand	Megan Ryan
Shannon Faught	Mary Sugrue
Alexis Fitzsimmons-Totaro	David Tuckman
Kayla Fitzsimmons-Wilson	Sr. Caroline Tweedy
Jimmy Jacobson	Edward Velinskie
Katherine O'Flaherty	Linda McLoughlin
Catherine Flood	Martin Griffin
Maureen Morstatt	Eddie Dowling
Kevin Jackson	Sophie Coglán
Nick Jordan	Brian McCabe