



June 2012

Coalition of Irish Immigration Centers Newsletter

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Dear Aileen,

Welcome to the June 2012 edition of the CIIC Newsletter.

This issue includes an update on the Irish Senior Connect Program, information about the arriving J1 Summer Students, information about collaboration between two Member Centers, as well as recognition of a leader in the community.

Please update me about the happenings of your Member Center or organization, so we can share your news and achievements with the community. Please also feel free to forward this Newsletter onto friends and colleagues by using the link at the bottom of this page.

Best,

Aileen Leonard Dibra
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Irish Senior Connect



The phones of Irish Senior Connect (ISC) are ringing! Irish and Irish American Seniors have started to call the listening line to talk, learn about local senior programming and hear a friendly voice on the other end of the phone.

Training for ISC volunteers is ongoing, and they are answering calls while supervised. ISC also began a major outreach drive with a direct mail initiative. Thanks to support from the Irish Pastoral Centre of Boston, the programs host center, ISC was able to mail informational brochures to 550 people, most of whom are Seniors as well as Senior service providers.

To view the latest print materials about the Irish Senior Connect, [click here](#), and please feel free to distribute amongst your constituents.

For more information on the work of Irish Pastoral Centre Boston, [click here](#).

For more information on the Irish Senior Connect program, contact Susan Doody at susan.doody@ciic-usa.org.

J1 Student Orientations

Members Centers are reporting on the many groups of arriving J1 Visa students across the country. Many Member Centers are hosting orientations for these students or have handbooks and other important local resources to share with them.

Some Member Centers have submitted information to share regarding their J1 experiences thus far this summer. For more information about the immigration centers featured below, please click on each center's name.

[Irish Immigration Pastoral Center, San Francisco](#)

The theme for success as a J1'er in San Francisco is to come early and come prepared. Of those who arrived in the first two weeks of June, most have found some work and now have options to look for something else if they are not satisfied. On the housing front, it has been a tougher year with fewer housing options and higher rents. Students have had to work harder, provide more documentation and pay more in rent and deposits to secure accommodation. Everybody has found something, or they are waiting it out in hostels as they continue to look.

Those who contacted the IIPC and put the time and energy into preparing their resumes and cover letters have had the best experience.

[Irish Outreach San Diego](#)

The J-1's in San Diego have had better success in finding accommodation

this year. The earlier arrivals did get the jobs and they seemed to be more serious than those who came later. In San Diego there are large events from May through Labor Day and J-1's fit well into the needs to fill jobs.

There seems to be more girls than guys, and overall most are employed, except a few who have applied for their S.S.# on their own and lack a permanent address to have the card sent.

[Ocean City Irish Outreach](#)

There are an estimated 500 J1'ers thus far in Ocean City Maryland. The Irish Outreach group continues to provide as much guidance and support as possible to the arriving students.

It seems that most are finding jobs, but that there are still issues with accommodations. Many of the students were staying in motels until other housing options open.

[Aisling Irish Community Center](#)

Since the J1 summer students started arriving from Ireland last month, we have assisted over 440 Irish students with their search for work and accommodation throughout New York. We understand a lot of them have found accommodation by now having spent days calling landlords and viewing apartments, but many have yet to secure a job. The time and effort it takes to secure a job seems to be the most overwhelming aspect of the experience for many, but also the most rewarding once they succeed in finding that job. Our internet café which can accommodate up to 10 people at a time is full of students researching job vacancies from about 11:00am onwards everyday.

We are happy to say the experience so far for most Irish students based here in Yonkers/Woodlawn has been positive with no horror stories of apartments being vandalized or of students getting into trouble with the law for drunk and disorderly behavior, and hopefully that will still be the case in September when their J1 visa experience will be coming to an end. The most shocking realization for some has been the cost of seeing a doctor when sick with many deciding to suffer the symptoms rather than hand over their hard earned money while we urge them not to neglect their health and well being.

We will be contacting all the students who came into the Aisling Irish Community Center this summer to establish where they found work so that we can build on our database of seasonal jobs for J1 visa students in the future, so we hope they will all respond with a view to paving the jobs path for summer students in the future.

[Emerald Isle Immigration Center\(s\) - Bronx and Queens](#)

This summer saw a somewhat higher than usual initial influx of J1 students to us in New York City which naturally drained a lot of the Center's early leads and resources relating to accommodation and jobs. So far we have helped hundreds of summer J1 arrivals stated EIIC staff. We are working through all and as many channels as possible to ensure we track all local leads.

The main and recurring concern has been the need for accommodation which is unfortunately an inherent difficulty given the nature of the 3 month J1 Visa and we are still making appeals for those still searching to finalize their summer options as hotels and hostels are only temporary and expensive choices. Our Queens J1 students have had better luck with job offers and our Bronx J1 students have fared better with accommodation, but we have some students still looking for both! Our thanks to those who have already helped with securing early apartments and jobs for so many. Overall the main issue has been a lack of preparation on the part of the J1s, who arrive and this is a growing concern that needs to be addressed.

[Chicago Irish Immigrant Support](#)

Chicago is witnessing record numbers of J1 students this summer with Chicago Irish Immigrant Support already registering and counting over 2300 students. If early indications are correct that number could be set to double as the majority of J1 students arrive in the coming weeks.

With such large numbers inevitable problems have already begun to surface: Issues relating to housing were first to appear as students found it difficult to source accommodation in a saturated market with increased competition. Many also fell foul to self-styled entrepreneurs who have charged hugely inflated prices for rentals in bad neighborhoods.

After the initial adjustment period students now report difficulty in finding employment. Those to arrive first were fortunate to secure work but the tail end of arrivals and any new students are experiencing fewer options. Chicago Irish Immigrant Support Executive Director has met with the Irish Consulate of Chicago to alert the DFA of the issues affecting students and has appeared on Galway Bay FM radio show to highlight the issue in Ireland.

[Click here](#) to locate a regional Member Center that you can refer incoming J1 students to for more information.

Please forward updates about your center's J1 experience this summer to Aileen Leonard Dibra at aileen.dibra@ciic-usa.org.

Press Release: Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade

Advice to Irish Students visiting the USA on J1 Programme

It is hoped that all Irish students taking part in the J1 Summer Work and Travel Programme will have a rewarding and successful visit to the USA. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade wishes to highlight some advice to those travelling this summer. Ambassador Michael Collins, in the Irish Embassy in Washington DC, said:

"I wish all J1 Summer Work and Travel participants from Ireland a rewarding and enjoyable visit to the USA this summer. However, in order that they make the most out of it, I would also urge Irish students to plan well for their visit and to stay safe throughout."

In particular, students should ensure before travelling that they will be able to secure accommodation at their end destination. Reports are already emerging that lack of accommodation has been a serious issue for some Irish J1 students in some traditional destinations such as Chicago.

Passports should be kept secure at all times and do not attempt to travel on a passport that was ever reported as lost or stolen. Ensure that you have enough funds to get up and running in the USA and to maintain yourself throughout your stay.

The Irish Embassy in Washington DC and Consulates General throughout the USA will be able to provide emergency consular assistance should it be needed, although they cannot organise accommodation or employment for students.

For further advice for Irish J1 students, please see the Department's website, www.dfa.ie, and the website of the Irish Embassy in Washington DC, www.embassyofireland.org, which also has contact details for each of the Irish Consulates General in the US. Travel advice updates are available on Twitter @DFATravel.

Press Office
08 June 2012

Seniors Travel from Philadelphia to New York

On June 27th a group of twenty-five Seniors from the Irish Immigration Center (IIC) in Philadelphia will make a day trip to visit the New York Irish Center (NYIC) in Long Island City. The two groups will participate in NYIC's Senior Lunch & Social Club, allowing them to share a meal and conversation, as well as exchange information on their heritage, experiences and the programming offered at both centers.

Leslie Alcock, the Director of Community Programs at IIC Philadelphia indicated that the trip "really accomplishes three purposes of the centers' Senior programming: socialization, education and strengthening cultural identity. It is an opportunity for our seniors to learn about the long standing and successful programming at NYIC, to exchange ideas with their peers in New York and perhaps form friendships that will continue into the future."

This exciting collaboration between IIC in Philadelphia and NYIC will hopefully create a bond between the two Senior groups that will lead to continued communication and perhaps more activities and visits together in the future.

For more information about the Irish Immigration Center in Philadelphia, [click here](#).

For more information about the New York Irish Center, [click here](#).

Sr. Lena Deevy Nominated for Leadership Award

Sr. Lena Deevy, Executive Director of Irish International Immigration Center (IIIC) and CIIC Board Member, was nominated for the Massachusetts Nonprofit Network's Excellence in Leadership Award. This award recognizes a nonprofit leader whose strategic vision, passion, perseverance and collaborative style have led to extraordinary organizational or programmatic results.

CIIC sends its congratulations to Sr. Lena on her nomination for this prestigious award, and is proud to recognize all the wonderful work that IIIC does to provide support to Irish immigrants and immigrants of other nationalities.

[Click here](#) to learn more about the work of IIIC.

ABOUT THE COALITION OF IRISH IMMIGRATION CENTERS

The Coalition of Irish Immigration Centers (CIIC) is a national umbrella group for all of the Irish Immigration Centers in the US. The CIIC was established in 1996 to promote the welfare of Irish immigrants in the US at a national level.

The mission of the CIIC is to represent immigrant organizations throughout the United States who are committed to providing services to Irish immigrants. The Coalition provides support and assistance to the various centers in their work through advocacy, education and the exchange of information. CIIC member organizations are located in California, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, Philadelphia, Washington and Wisconsin.

To learn more about CIIC visit, www.ciic-usa.org