

CULTIVATING COMMUNITY THROUGH CULTURE & HISTORY: SERVICE-LEARNING IN BIRR, IRELAND

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CULTURAL & HISTORICAL IMMERSION

Birr

A center of scientific and technological advancement in a community of <6,000 people



Birr Castle

Home of the 3rd Earl of Rosse: an environmental and scientific time capsule

Clonmacnoise Monastery

6th century monastery founded by Saint Ciarán



LABOR OF LOVE: REBUILDING A COMMUNAL CENTER AND CULTURAL SPACE

- Rebuilt garden for use in educational programs
- Built a high cross to educate local children on the religious and cultural significance of the high crosses seen at monastic sites



TEACHING IRISH SCHOOL CHILDREN

Developed activity-based curriculum to help teach Irish schoolchildren early Irish history:

- 4 primary schools total
- Handmade costumes & dressed as historic characters
- Built family shields
- Drew high cross panels



SERVICE-LEARNING MISSION

- To encourage students of the CSUS Honors Program to be active participants in their own learning process through a service-learning experience and participation in a corresponding seminar.
- To engage in a reciprocal opportunity to acquire knowledge and develop skills while providing service and assistance to a community.



IRISH HERITAGE SCHOOL COMMUNITY PARTNER

- Discover and teach Irish heritage and history through archaeological excavation and research
- Partner with universities to develop projects which expand the worldview of the students and staff while enabling them to continue their educational mission



PROJECT IMPACT

On the community:

- Cultural & homestay programs brought people into community, which supports town economically (study abroad tourism)
- Helped rebuild a cultural space of gathering and education
- Constructed curriculum that empowered children to learn more and appreciate the local history of their community

On us:

- Enhanced our cultural knowledge through interactions with the children, staying with host families, and visiting local sites
- Strengthened team skills: strengths-based leadership, initiative, purpose-driven work ethic, social empathy



DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION

- Community cultivated through the uplifting of diversity of people, present and past
- Equity & Inclusion play critical role in the success of rebuilding a community and shared space



THE FUTURE STEPS

- GE Honors has worked with the Irish Heritage School on historical preservation and education multiple times, and will return in following years

