



Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians, Inc.
National Board
Established 1894

Freedom For All Ireland Committee
Committee Chair Dolores Desch

August 1, 2020

Sisters,

It is an honor to be serving as the Freedom for All Ireland Chair for the next two years. I am a member of JFK Division 1 Albany, NY where I am the Division FFAI chair and have previously served at the State Board level as FFAI Chair. I look forward to working with all of you to bring the issues and challenges faced by the those living in the North of Ireland to our membership. I will be working with an ad-hoc committee to review and address the resolutions which were passed at the Convention and we will work to bring the latest work being done by the groups that we sponsor as part of the FFAI Christmas Appeal.

The Freedom for All Ireland Christmas Appeal provides a way for us to contribute to reinforcing the peace that was brought to the North of Ireland with the Good Friday Agreement over 20 years ago. Having been on several FFAI tours, I can attest to the need that the Christmas Appeal fills for the groups that we sponsor. Victim advocacy groups such as Relatives for Justice and the Pat Finucane Center help families deal with social justice and trauma. Groups like Belfast National Graves, Cairde and Coiste work to honor loved ones killed in the conflict and those that are working to have a better life. Omagh Thunder Basketball Club, The Houben Center – Holy Cross and the St. Patrick's Center work to heal the wounds of the past and provide a safe, healthy and cross-community space for all. These recipients play a vital role in reinforcing peace and providing a sense of community. On the tour while meeting with these groups, we witnessed the pain as well as the resilience in each one of them. We saw their strength and their love for their community. Everywhere we went, we heard a similar sentiment - that the funds we give them through the Christmas Appeal are very much appreciated, however even more valuable is that the Hibernians are present in their community standing shoulder to shoulder with them and helping them move forward.

I will be scheduling quarterly Zoom meetings which are open to all interested members. Please email me at laohnationalffai@gmail.com so that I can add you to the distribution list for FFAI news and Zoom meetings. I will be posting the latest FFAI News on our new FFAI Facebook Page - **LAOH Freedom for All Ireland** and in the National Newsletter. I am looking to highlight the work that is done by our members so please let me know of plans for FFAI Events that you are working on so that we can help publicize them. I wish to express my thanks to President Keane for appointing me to this position and I look forward to working with all of you.

In Our Motto,

Dolores Desch