



Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians, Inc.
Freedom For All Ireland
2023-24 Christmas Appeal Report



Sisters,

The 2023-24 Christmas Appeal was a huge success thanks to the Divisions, County and State Boards who have worked to get the word out and raise funds for this program. Together we raised over \$44,000 this year and with the money that the committee rolled over last year we were able to allocate \$54,000 to groups in the north of Ireland.

In April, President Madigan and myself along with National Secretary Sandi Swift, National Legal Counsel Ann Durkan Fischer, and several FFAI Committee members and FFAI state chairs traveled to Ireland to distribute the Christmas Appeal grants and meet with each of the groups in Newry, Belfast, Derry and Dungannon. Grants were distributed to the Ardoyne Youth Club, Ballymurphy Massacre Committee, Belfast National Graves Association, Bloody Sunday Trust, Bogside Artists, Bridges Beyond Boxing, Ti Chulainn, Ealu, Eileen Hickey Irish Republican History Museum, Greater New Lodge Cultural Society Green Cross, Jim O'Neill & Robert Allsopp Memorial Flute Band, Passionist Peace and Reconciliation Office Peace Players International-Northern Ireland, Relatives for Justice, St. Patrick's Visitor's Centre, Martin McGuinness Peace Foundation, The Witness Project, Tyrone National Graves Association Ireland's Future, Irish Republican Felons Association for the Bobby Sands Statue.

Each group was very thankful, letting us know that our contributions and support for their programs mean so much to them. In addition, the Legacy Amnesty bill implemented in May of this year makes the need for these programs even greater. The strain on mental health services, justice groups and community support groups are greater now due to the impact of this legislation aimed at preventing the truth from coming out. With our donations, we are providing justice groups with the support they need to take steps to have this legislation scrapped. Our contribution to community groups will help bring hope to underfunded areas through sports and mental health programs. Collectively, these programs work to provide for a successful future that will inevitably result in an improved community and progress in making a United Ireland something achievable in our lifetime.

While in Ireland, we also visited several shrines and sacred areas dedicated to our patron saint, St. Brigid. These included the St. Brigid's Shrine in Monascreebe, Dundalk, the grave of St Brigid at the St Patrick's Centre Downpatrick, the Solas Bhride Centre, and the St Brigid's Cathedral in Kildare. It was a truly inspiring trip for us all.

Many thanks to all of you for your generous donations to the Christmas Appeal. Without the work being done at the division, county, and state levels for FFAI support we would not have this amazing and impactful program. The following entities donated \$1,000 or more: Florida State Board, Baltimore City Md

Division 1, Catherine Reinholdt - Md, Michigan State Board, Suffolk NY Division 7, Albany NY JFK Division 1, Schenectady NY JFK Division 1, NYS Board, Ohio State Board, Ohio Our Lady of the Rosary 5&10, Mary Ellen Everett PA Div 1 Bucks County, Pennsylvania State Board, Mary Ryan Division 1 VA, Sheila O'Hara Gray – Ohio and an anonymous donor.

If you have any questions on the FFAI program, please go to our website page for FFAI and check out the information on the landing page as well as the links at the bottom of the page where you can find more information. <https://ladiesaoh.com/freedom-for-all-ireland/>.

The FFAI financial reports for this year including specifics on the donations collected and grants awarded can be found on the members only page: <https://ladiesaoh.com/membersonly/>.

For the latest FFAI news 'Like' and 'Follow' us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/LAOHFFAI32>. As always, feel free to contact me directly at: laohnationalffai@gmail.com.

Donations are collected year-round so please mail your **donations directly to me at the following address: Dolores Desch, 20 Arlene Ave, Albany, NY 12203**

Please include the following:

1. a check **payable to LAOH, Inc**
2. Whether you want the money earmarked for a particular group(s) (please refer to the groups listed earlier in this notification)
3. The **name of the entity** (Division name, county, State, or Individual) making the donation. (for example: 'JFK Division 1, Albany County NY')
4. A **contact name**, mailing address and email address.

From our FFAI Committee - thank you for your unwavering support for the FFAI Christmas Appeal and for making a difference in the lives of so many.

Le meas,

Dolores Desch

LAOH National FFAI Chairperson - laohnationalffai@gmail.com

Kathleen Savage – MA

Catherine Reinholdt – MD

Nancy Ann Tindall-Sponsel – IN

Joan Moore - NY,

Rita O'Hara – OH

Louise Sullivan – FL

Kathleen Varady – PA

Patti Johnston – LA

Sandy Merrell – MO

Kathy Twohig-Hamelin – DE

Margaret Morin - TX