

Boston to Belfast Youth Empowerment Program

“Skills for Ice, Skills for Life”

As an outgrowth of Boston’s sister city agreement with Belfast, Northern Ireland, and in connection with the 4th annual Friendship Four US college hockey tournament in Belfast, Boston civic leaders have engaged three youth-serving organizations in South Boston to collaborate on an innovative leadership development program for select Boston youth in the Fall of 2018. The South Boston Leadership Initiative, South Boston Neighborhood House and South Boston Youth Hockey have teamed up to deliver the Boston to Belfast Youth Empowerment Program, an initiative designed to promote leadership skills, cross-cultural awareness, civic engagement, community service, friendship and respect between and among Boston and Belfast youth. In addition to several impactful team building, educational, leadership development and life skills trainings, the program highlight will be a weeklong cultural and educational excursion to Belfast in November, including exhibition hockey matches with Belfast youth during the Friendship Four tournament.

Program highlights for Boston youth participants include:

- Kick-off gathering/information night for participants and parents/families – Sept 2018
- Pre-Trip team building, educational, leadership development and life skills workshops & trainings – Sept-Nov
 - Module I – Intentional Team Building Activities
 - Module II – Educational Program – understanding the background on Northern Irish conflict as well as the cultural and historic similarities between Boston and Belfast
 - Module III – Facilitated Leadership Development & Life Skills Workshops
- Weeklong trip to Belfast, NI for 8 Boston teens aged 13-15, chaperoned by 4 adult coaches/leaders – Nov 2018
 - Cross-cultural educational opportunities with Belfast youth in schools and teen centers
 - Civic engagement opportunities with top City of Belfast and US diplomatic officials
 - Interaction with student-athletes from Boston University, Yale University, Union College and UCONN
 - Supervised excursions to top cultural attractions in Belfast and Northern Ireland coast
 - Participation in exhibition ice hockey matches alongside Belfast youth during the Friendship Four
 - Maintaining daily Journal of observations and experiences in Belfast
- Post-trip celebratory gathering – Dec 2018
- Community-building/social action group project in Boston – Dec 2018

Educational, Cultural and Civic Activities & Excursions in Northern Ireland are tentatively scheduled to include:

- Tour of Peace Walls in sectarian Belfast neighborhoods; First person-perspective of the conflict in Belfast
- Visits to Belfast schools and youth centers
- Private reception(s) with Lord Mayor of Belfast or US Consul General of Northern Ireland
- Participation in official Friendship Four tournament reception at historic Belfast City Hall
- W5 Science and Discovery Center
- Titanic Belfast Museum
- Excursion to Giants Causeway and the Antrim Coast
- Special Thanksgiving dinner

For further information, please contact:

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