



# Clonard Youth Ministry News



The Clonard Youth Ministry Team, Brendan, Margarita & Patrice, meeting with Belfast Lord Mayor, Naomi Long at the 'Up Against The Wall' event.

May you be filled with Joy and Happiness during this Advent and Christmas season!



## Taking a Step Back! Time to Retreat.

Every so often it is important to take time out and see how we are doing in life. Our school Retreat program provides a unique opportunity for young people to do this. Our aim is to provide a variety of activities that help raise the self-esteem of the participants. We explore issues of spirituality, relationships and building community. We discuss justice and social problems of our world. We give the young people the opportunity to reflect, meditate and pray in new and different ways.

We want to say a word of thanks for all the young people who have come here on Retreat to Clonard since September; over 1000 young people from year 11-14. We've had some wonderful experiences as a team engaging with these young people. Without the support and partnership of teachers and school chaplains, none of these days would be possible. Thank you to them also.



We are looking forward to 2010 and meeting all the young people on Retreat days in the coming months.



ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS!

### **CLONARD YOUTH OUTREACH**

Clonard Youth Outreach is an active citizenship program for young people aged 16+ who volunteer to serve the community through social action, such as area clean-ups, running community events and peer outreach.

Volunteers organise various events throughout the year, especially during summer and winter. The young people come together as a group and take ownership of these hugely popular events. To be involved in Outreach is more than just meeting the needs of the community, it instills in the young people a sense of belonging and an

appreciation of the act of service. Great friendships have been formed as well as memories made and also an opportunity to share their faith in a new and open way. The young people have also participated in an OCN cross-community project of cultural diversity and mutual understanding with young people from the Church of Ireland in Tigers Bay. Some members of the group have recently completed an OCN level 2 in an introduction to youth work. They are currently planning the annual christmas party for the children of the clonard area.



Outreach Volunteer, Colm McCurdy, receiving his OCN certificate from Bishop Noel Trainor



### **UP AGAINST THE WALL**

On the 9th of November 2009, young people from Clonard took part in a gathering at the peace wall in West Belfast close to the Monastery to mark the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. The young



people were joined by others from both sides of the interface. The group made some noise with the gathering drum workshop at the infamous wall. It was a different beat to the one normally heard in the area and was part of the 'Up Against The Wall' initiative that helps young people living in interface communities have a voice on the future of the barriers that divide and occasionally protect them. They were also joined by Belfast Lord Mayor, Naomi Long MLA. The Lord Mayor said at the event, "The walls were a symptom of the division and fear that remained between the two traditions that

dominate the city". But she said that this did not always have to be the way! "When you have got young people that have this sort of hope, imagination and courage to tackle very difficult issues, you can't help but have hope for the future". The young people from Clonard have been part of this project for almost a year and will continue to engage in dialogue about the serious issues of the Belfast Peace Walls.

### **CLONARD LOURDES YOUTH TEAM**

2009 was another great year for the clonard youth team on the annual pilgrimage to Lourdes. The young people showed tremendous enthusiasm and energy throughout the 6 days at the Marian Shrine in France.

**We are now taking bookings for 2010/11, if you would like your school to experience a Retreat day with the Clonard Youth Ministry Team or would like some information about our other work, please feel free to contact us:**

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