Community Regeneration Projects, North Belfast



With the support of The Flax Trust ABC 'shared' community education, health, leisure and arts center is now completed. It is deemed as a transformative project for North Belfast - another turning point for this community as was Flax Trust in 1977.



The Flax Trust and Fr Myles Kavanagh's insight to much-needed social housing saw the old Flax Centre as a viable site. The third phase is under way providing 45 new homes. The development will be named "Kavanagh Court", agreed by Belfast City Council.

North Belfast Cross Community Youth Programme focuses on community engagement, cultural exchange and personal development, with visits to New York City and Washington DC supported by Flax Trust. In New York visits included **BRAG** which supports young men and women affected by gang involvement and community violence; a guided walk through the **Bronx** community; **Arches Community Justice Centre**, provided an insight into the youth justice system and approaches to rehabilitation and restorative justice. Cultural experiences included – **9/11 Memorial; Empire State Building;** the **Edge; Brooklyn Bridge** and the **Statue of Liberty**.



In Washington DC, the focus shifted toward understanding homelessness. At **DC Central Kitchen** the group worked alongside staff and volunteers gaining an understanding of the scale of need and the importance of community- driven solutions.



Visits included the **Whitehouse, Capitol Hill** and the **Supreme Court**, providing insight into the political structures. Support from acquaintances now living and working in the United States demonstrated that stepping beyond one's comfort zone can lead to life-changing opportunities and realise full potential.

Flax Trust Music Bursary Awards 2026
Bridging the Divide through Music





Cross Community concert at Holy Cross Church, North Belfast, in aid of Northern Ireland Children's Hospice; Master of ceremonies James McGinn, MBE. Performances included: City of Belfast Youth Orchestra; Megan Mooney (Soprano) Holy Cross Girls Primary School and the Flax Trust Ensemble.

Flax Trust Conductor's CBYO Award



Azelia Robinson received the Flax Trust Conductor's Award from Conductor Paul McBride.

Azelia is currently studying Chemistry, Maths, English Literature and French, alongside A2 Music A-Level. Now working on diplomas, ATCL piano and LTCL violin, Azelia is leader of her School Senior Orchestra, a member of the Trad group, Jazz ensemble and leads the senior string quartet and accompanies school choirs. She is a member of the Ulster Youth Orchestra.

The **Spring Concert** was hosted by the Lady Chief Justice, Dame Siobhan Keegan OBE, KC in collaboration with the Bar of Northern Ireland; City of Belfast Youth Orchestra and Advanced Chamber Ensemble **at the Royal Courts of Justice, Belfast**.



Laura King BL, Chair of the Bar Charity Committee, Mark Robinson KC. Conor O'Kane, Senior Partnership Manager at Marie Curie, Dr Naill Catney, Conductor ACE, Paul McBride, conductor CBYO, Lady Chief Justice Dame Siobhan Keegan OBE, KC, Sr Mary Turley.



CBYO with Conductor Paul McBride

The School for Social Enterprises in Ireland (SSEI) is a Flax Trust / Ulster University Alliance (2005) devoted exclusively to leadership, management and business development for the social economy sector.

The School for Social Enterprises in Ireland (SSEI) launched the Ulster University accredited **Mini MBA in Social Enterprise Development in 2025**, with the continuing support of Flax Trust Bursaries. On June 25th at a ceremony in Ulster University participants were presented with their Mini MBA by Vice Chancellor Paul Bartholomew.

Fusing the strands of social enterprise and environmental sustainability, the **TRANSFORM / MINI MBA** programme combines leading edge professional development with accredited academic credentials providing participants with the opportunity to:

- Access to global thinkers and leaders in both social enterprise and sustainability as part of a professional development programme such as Sustain Exchange & The MLN Leadership Conference
- Access to contemporary and complimentary academic studies at MBA level.
- Access to networking both within the programme and across multiple platforms

The programme is designed to maximise the application of learning back into each applicant's everyday business through work-based assignments and business modelling including an end of programme public presentation of their business plan.



TRANSFORM at The MLN Leadership Summit with key speaker Mary Robinson former President of Ireland, Prof. Ken O'Neill Chair, SSEI and Bill Manson, Director, Podiem



Participants with key note speaker Lord Deben, former Minister of State, John Gummer.



Sportsman, author and philanthropist Alan Kerrins shares his experiences of working in multiple social enterprise projects in Ireland and across the world.



Private session with author and broadcaster Mick Kelly founder of the 'Grow it Yourself' Social Enterprise following the conference

Welcome to the Thirty Sixth Annual

FLAX TRUST WASHINGTON DC EVENT

Guests of Honor

John Hanley
Senior Managing Director Multifamily Origination
AFL-CIO Housing Investment Trust ("HIT")

Paul Kane
Senior Congressional Correspondent
Washington Post

Rev. James R. Van Dyke, S.J.
President Georgetown Preparatory School

CHAIRPERSONS

James M. Boland
Chairman and CEO, Boland
Chairman Flax Trust / America

Michael D. McCurry
Former White House Press Secretary
Director Flax Trust / America

Tuesday, November 24th, 2026

Hay Adams, The Rooftop Terrace
Across from The White House

Champagne Reception/Breakfast: 8:00a.m. - 9:30a.m.
Business Attire



The Flax Trust,
333 Crumlin Road,
Belfast BT14 7EA
Tel:+44 (028) 9074 5241
Fax:+44 (028) 90748023
maria@flaxtrust.com
www.flaxtrust.com
Charity No. XN 48703

Flax Trust/America
c/o Mutual of America
6th Floor, 320 Park Ave,
New York, NY 10022
Tel: 212 224 1208
501© 3
Charitable Organisation

Enrichment Through Respect for Difference

We are very grateful to Mutual of America for this invaluable facility.

Paul Kane
Senior Congressional Correspondent
The Washington Post



Paul Kane covers Congress and the intersection of politics and policy for NOTUS.

He has covered Congress full-time since 2000, when he started at Roll Call with a beat focused on the Senate. He joined The Washington Post in 2007, covering the 2008 financial crisis and the Obama-Republican fiscal wars. He began writing a regular column, @PKCapitol, on Congress in 2017. His columns have covered Washington's response to the global pandemic, the Jan. 6 attack on the Capitol, two impeachments and the Biden and Trump administrations' legislative agenda on Capitol Hill.

In addition, Kane worked with reporting teams in 2021 that won the Pulitzer Prize's gold medal for Public Service in reconstructing the Jan. 6 attack, and in 2023 worked with the team that won the Pulitzer Prize for national reporting for "American Icon," a series about the rise of the AR-15 rifle and its prominence in mass shootings.

His honors also include the 2005 Dirksen Award for Distinguished Reporting of Congress, along with being part of the team that won the 2022 George Polk award and 2022 Toner Prize.

He attended the University of Delaware and grew up outside Philadelphia in Maple Glen, PA. His early reporting days included stints at the Daily Local News in West Chester, PA, and at a regional wire service, States News Service, covering Washington for small to midsize newspapers.



The Flax Trust as a registered, charity, formed in Belfast in 1977, has as its mission the reduction and, if possible, the elimination of community tensions and religious prejudices by creative engagement in economic and social development, education and training with inter-community activities including culture, the Arts, sport, health, social programmes and personal development.

John Hanley
Senior Managing Director Multifamily Origination
AFL-CIO Housing Investment Trust ("HIT")



John Hanley serves as the Senior Managing Director Multifamily Origination for the AFL-CIO Housing Investment Trust ("HIT"), a $7.4 billion fund, where he leads the origination and the underwriting of multifamily investments nationwide.

In this role, he advances HIT's mission to deliver competitive returns for union pension funds while also supporting transformative housing as well as economic development initiatives, including the creation and preservation of affordable and workforce housing.

The portfolio currently includes approximately 40 projects under construction across the United States.

With more than 35 years of experience, John has deployed union pension capital across commercial real estate through both debt and equity investments. He previously held senior leadership roles at the AFL-CIO Investment Trust Corporation and later served as Director of Investments at National Real Estate Advisors, advisor to the National Electrical Benefit Fund (NEBF).

He is an active member of HIT's Investment, Portfolio Management, and Valuation Committees.

John's first visit to Belfast, was part of a delegation visiting Northern Ireland and to participate in Flax Trust's Community Economic Investment Conference in 1996. The delegation included the late Steve Coyle, CEO, AFL-CIO Pension Investment Programme; Jim Campbell, Chief Investment Officer, AFL-CIO; Ron Grzywinski, Chair, Shorebank Corporation; Brendan Daniels, President, Economic Investment, Boston.

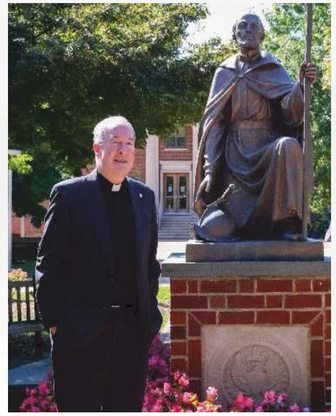
The conference examined both the work of existing financial institutions and the key issues associated with a community investment fund.

Ulster Community Investment Trust and Community Finance Ireland (UCIT) today continue to contribute capacity to the social economic sector.

John holds a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration and Finance from Villanova University, as well as an MBA in Real Estate and Urban Development from American University.

AFL-CIO HIT | HOUSING INVESTMENT TRUST

Rev. James R. Van Dyke, S.J.
President
Georgetown Preparatory School



Since July 2018, Father James Van Dyke, S.J., has served as the 20th President of Georgetown Preparatory School in North Bethesda, Maryland.

Before assuming the presidency at Georgetown Prep, Father Van Dyke brought a wealth of Jesuit leadership experience to the role. He served as the rector of the Jesuit Community at St. Ignatius in New York City for five years and was the founding principal at Cristo Rey Atlanta Jesuit High School. In addition to these leadership roles, he directed Ignatian Programs and Faculty and Staff Faith Formation at Xavier High School in New York City and Canisius High School in Buffalo, New York. He has also served on the Boards of Trustees at Fordham Prep, Regis High School, and the Holocaust Resource Center of Buffalo, New York.

In the classroom, Father Van Dyke has taught English and occasionally theology at Canisius High School (Buffalo, New York), Xavier High School (New York City), Fordham Prep (Bronx, New York), McQuaid Jesuit High School (Rochester, New York), and Regis High School (New York City), where he also served as chaplain. In addition to moderating many activities at these schools, he also has extensive experience as a crew coach at Canisius and McQuaid. Fr. Van Dyke has always enjoyed supply duty at the local parishes where he has lived and worked.

A graduate of Canisius High School, Father Van Dyke earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from the University of Virginia. He holds M.Div. and Th.M. degrees from the Weston School of Theology and a Master of Arts in Liberal Arts (MALA) from St. John's College in Annapolis, Maryland.

The son of Patricia Lyons Van Dyke and James R. Van Dyke Sr. of Buffalo, New York, he entered the Society of Jesus in 1981, was ordained in 1993, and pronounced his Final Vows in 2005.

Founded in 1789, Georgetown Preparatory School is America's oldest Catholic boarding and day school for young men in grades 9 through 12, and the only Jesuit boarding school in the country.
Situated on 90 acres in suburban Washington, D.C., Prep's mission is to form men of competence, conscience, courage and compassion; men of faith and men for others.

The 35th Flax Trust / America Washington DC Banquet Breakfast
The Hay Adams, Rooftop Terrace, across from the White House



Honorees, Catherine Lucey, Whitehouse Correspondent for Bloomberg News; Prof. Paul Bartholomew, President & Vice Chancellor Ulster University; Rev. Joseph Lingan S.J., President Gonzaga College High School; Hon. Geraldine Byrne Nason, Ambassador of Ireland to the United States with Flax Trust Directors – Mike McCurry; Jim Boland Chair, Jim Quinn President, Sr Mary Turley; Mike O'Neil and John Feehery.

The 35th Flax Trust / America New York Banquet
The 'Links' 36 East 62nd Street



Jim Quinn, President Emeritus Tiffany & Co., President Flax Trust / America; Honoree Dan Barry, Reporter and Columnist, New York Times, Sr Mary Turley, Trustee, Chair Flax Trust. Honoree Alison Metcalfe, Executive Vice President, Head of North America and Australia/New Zealand Tourism Ireland, Sr Mary Turley. Honoree Peter McGuire, Ambassador Sovereign Order of Malta to the United Nations, Founder, Chairman, President and CEO Xchange Benefit, Sr Mary Turley, Tom O' Brien, President & Chief Executive BCB Bancorp Inc., Vice President Flax Trust/America.

Washington DC Honoree Co-Chairs

Stacey Allen
Brian Boland
Jim Boland
Sean Boland
Sean Boland Jr.
Oakley Brooks
Michael Clark
Hon. Joe Crowley
Brian Darmody
Dr. Susan Davis
Hon. Paula Dobriansky
Robert Dormer
Laura Faul
John Feehery
Cheryl Marquis
Jeff Finkle
John Finucane
Fr. Seamus Finn
Tony Cully-Foster
Marie Fusco
John Hanley
Sarah Heitkemper
Tom Healey
James Hickey
Chyanne Holmes
Lisa Kardell
Prof. Ross Lewin
Sr. Mary Turley
Maura Lundy
Peter McArdle
Mike McCurry
Angela Moore
Hon. Bruce Morrison
Nathan Ohle
Mike O'Neil
Pres. Pat O' Shea
John Patterson
Prof. Sandra Quinn
Larry Reeves
Steve Saxon
Matt Shay
Prof. Stephen Thomas
Mark Tuohey III
Hon. James Walsh
John Collins