

Compassion City Belfast, December 2016 to November 2017

Symposium: Compassion a Universal Value

In May 2017, we collaborated with Queens University to host a symposium entitled, "Compassion a Universal Value", in the Glass House at Stormont. The keynote speaker at the event was the notable religious academic, Karen Armstrong. Karen Armstrong's prize winning TED talk gave rise to the creation of the Charter for Compassion. Other speakers included Professor John Brewer, Professor Stephen Williams of QUB and Ryushin Paul Haller former Abbot of San Francisco Zen Centre. Following the presentations there were round table discussions and Q and A on various aspects of compassion. In total 70 people attended the event.

Garden of Compassion – Poetry Picnic

We continued to meet on a monthly basis with the Crescent Community exploring ways of developing the park. These meetings included Belfast City Council representatives. In 16/17, we were successful in an application for a grant to hold a Poetry Picnic in the garden. Our aims were to educate the local community on the advantages of poetry, increase good relations with community groups, local businesses and faith based organisations, increases usage of Lower Crescent green space. Through promotion on social media, 300 people attended the event. Many families brought children to avail of the entertainment available. The work continues and the initiative continues to grow.

Mountcharles Mindfulness Group - the emotional heart of compassion

CCB Mindfulness weekly group continued to flourish and weekly discussions are encouraged at looking at ways of expressing compassion. The group takes inspiration from the work of the Charter. The group met weekly throughout the year and was attended by an average of 15 people per week. Due to the high numbers of people attending this group on a weekly basis it has been a great vehicle to promote the practise of compassion in daily life.

Links with the Global Charter for Compassion and Compassionate Cities Movement

We hosted Marilyn Turkovich, Charter for Compassion Director, on a visit to Belfast from the United States. She was in town to promote and support the work of the Charter including the Compassion City Movement. We had a fruitful meeting with Marilyn who was able to make many suggestions regarding promoting compassion and linking up with other Compassionate City Initiatives.