

Here are the Letterman top ten reasons kids should do the Ulster Project/attributed to Jeff Byers, Ulster Board Member, Greenville, NC

10. Good excuse to have someone stay over every night for a month that isn't a nerd.

9. Get to do some traveling without mom and dad.

8. You may get to go to NI next summer to visit your new friend.

7. Girls.....Boys.....(the Irish accent is a magnet.)

6. Instant term paper topic. If asked to write about a real life experience, now you have one.

5. Will look good on college applications and you get in to the college of your choice.

4. You may learn something you don't already know. (Hard to believe!)

3. You will have at least three friends who will say, "I wish I'd done that!"

2. If you're in a little bit of trouble at home (like grades or denting the car), this may get you off the hook.

1. For the first time in your life you've done something for peace in a world that sorely needs it.

Host Family Orientation I

Thinking Ahead

Your teen is coming to your home to be a member of your family and community. Do not try to turn your teen into an American or try to convince him/her that this is a better way. Rather, expose the teen to situations in which he/she can participate and learn.

To ensure a productive experience for both your family and your teen, it is necessary to establish certain procedures and rules. Health and happiness are our concern, so we must be advised of any change in your family's circumstances, which might affect the environment in which we originally placed your teen.

First Day

Your teen should live as a family member sharing equally in the pleasures and duties of family life. You have the same authority that you have over your own children and the responsibility to give understanding and love.

The teens will arrive tired and insecure. The best ways to help their insecurity vanish and to make them feel comfortable are:

- 1) Moms and Dads: Tell them what to call you. This may seem like an insignificant thing, but it could make the teen feel very uncomfortable to not call you anything at all. Try to reach a mutually agreeable title right away.
- 2) Show the teen the entire house as a family.
- 3) Explain to the teen where things are and how they work. The teens may not have a shower at home (and if they do, it will probably operate different from yours). Don't take for granted that they are familiar with anything. **Note:** Garbage Disposal - They do not have these in NI. Please show teens how it works and that it needs running water to use.
- 4) Explain what the teen is free to use, (stereo, telephone, toothpaste, etc). And what is off limits. Either obtain a phone card for NI calls or contact phone company for special rate.
- 5) Remember the Northern Irish teen is not only your guest, but also a member of your family for the month. Please treat him/her as your own child, including helping with household chores.

Language Difficulties

Even though we all supposedly speak the same language, you might wonder sometimes during your Northern Irish teen's stay! Remember, your Northern Irish teen may be having just as much trouble understanding American English as you are understanding Northern Irish! Speak slowly for a few days and you will fall in love with their beautiful Irish brogue.

Remember, a word may mean one thing to us and something entirely different to your teen. Here are just a few examples:

Mail	Post	Lake	Lough	Lawn	Garden
Chips	Crisps	Fun	Craic	Lunch	Dinner
Fries	Chips	4:30	Half Four	Expensive	Dear

Food

One of the most asked questions is “What do they like to eat?” As with people everywhere, each teen has his/her own preferences. Here are some guidelines:

Meats: Roast beef, ham, chicken, sausage (pork links), bacon (their breakfast bacon is more like Canadian bacon or thinly sliced ham), lamb, fried or broiled fish (Long John Silver’s is always a favorite).

Pizza: Becoming very commonplace in Northern Ireland.

Spicy Foods: Not as common in Northern Ireland (Mexican, Italian, etc). Curry is enjoyed by NI in their oriental food whereas ours is not quite the same. Encourage your teen to try new foods, as this is a part of the experience of travel.

Refrigerators: Most refrigerators in Northern Ireland are dorm sized, don’t be surprised if they think yours is huge.

Drinks: Most love Coke and Kool-Aid. They are used to little or no ice in their drinks. Please encourage them to drink plenty of liquids as they are not used to our heat and dehydration can easily become a real problem.

A word about iced tea—the Northern Irish think that putting ice in your tea is an abomination! However, your teen may very well drink hot tea and coffee.

Most of the teens enjoy French Fries (chips). However, if you go to a Burger King in Northern Ireland they give you a packet of vinegar instead of Catsup! We have found many of the teens like the salt and vinegar potato chips (crisps).

If you are having a hard time getting your teen to eat, show him/her where the breakfast and sandwich ingredients are and let them help themselves. They usually do not care for “salad” (lettuce and tomatoes) on their sandwiches. They will probably put butter or margarine on their sandwich, not Mayonnaise. Don’t over worry about eating—we haven’t lost a teen to starvation yet!

Homesickness

Homesickness is natural and should pass. If your teen seems very depressed and homesick, be sure to contact one of the Northern Irish Counselors. Remember the first few days they will be experiencing Jet Lag, which can be confused with homesickness. Encourage them to get plenty of rest. Also, encourage them to write or e-mail home right away. Be sure to use airmail if you decide to “post” a letter. We do not encourage calling home for “homesickness”, as this seems to only compound the problem.

Religion

It goes without saying that you should respect your teen’s beliefs and they should respect yours. Families must realize that this is not an evangelical project. That is living your religion is in, arguing your religion is out! Church worship in Northern Ireland is, for the most part, very formal. Your teen may be unaccustomed to finding any form of social life in a House of Worship. All family members are asked to attend the Catholic and Protestant Services. This is a wonderful opportunity to show the teens how open we really are to one another’s religions. The services are mandatory for teen participants. Also when attending these services, we ask that you sit together as a family and that the teens follow the UP Dress Code.

Jobs

U.S. Government Immigration regulations prohibit the Northern Irish teens from accepting any form of paid employment.

Sun and Heat

The Northern Irish teens have very fair skin and are unaccustomed to the heat of Greenville in July. The average temperature in Northern Ireland in the summer is about 65 degrees and very rainy. About 40 inches of rain fall yearly in the lowlands. Remember that your teen will burn very easily and sunstroke is always a possibility. Try not to let your teen overdo it when it is extremely hot.

SUNSCREEN IS A NECESSITY! We cannot overstate the importance of this. They may resist sunscreen so that they can take home a tan, but they do not realize the dangers of severe sunburn. Most have never had sunburn of any kind, and do not realize how much they hurt. Please keep a good supply of high SPF and waterproof sunscreen on hand and apply it liberally. There is plenty of time to tan, don't let your teen try to get it all in the first week. **Note:** Sunscreen bought in NI the SPF is half the strength of ours. Their 16 would be comparable to our 8 (even though their product says 16), so they will tend to burn easier with their sunscreen.

Money

The teens arrive with spending money for gifts and souvenirs. If they should arrive with British currency or British Travelers Checks, please contact your bank or host family committee for the best way to exchange them. In a delicate way, please ask your teen how much money they have brought for the month. Due to the various backgrounds of the teens, the amount may vary greatly. Please help your teen budget accordingly. If the N.I. teen has less than \$100.00 for the month please discretely contact the host family committee.

Please note that if you take your family out for a meal or entertainment, you are expected to pick up the check for the Northern Irish Teen.

Travel

You are permitted to travel with the N. I. Teen as long as a Counselor and/or Host Family Committee may reach you by telephone. Please do not leave early or return late from Free Time on the Calendar, as it will conflict with the Project schedule. The Northern Irish Teens may not travel independently.

Baggage

The Project limits the Northern Irish teens to one suitcase and one carry-on bag. Please keep this in mind when buying souvenirs. Your teen may want to buy jeans while they are here as they are generally much less expensive—the same goes for tennis shoes. Just remember that it all has to fit in the suitcase! Also, a word of caution-- Please be sensitive to higher security measures when packing for the return flights!

Activities outside the Project

You may find yourself uncomfortable with a decision to allow your Northern Irish teen to participate in activities not scheduled by the Project. If you allow your teen to do something, please feel comfortable allowing your Northern Irish Teen to do the same. If in doubt, contact one of the Northern Irish Counselors. Also, remember you are the parents! Say **NO** if you don't want them to do something. They will try to do as much as possible, but they need rest and quiet time as well. Also remember that when more than four teens gather, a counselor or host parent must be present.

Family Time

Throughout the month, you will see Family Time Blocked off on the calendar. One of the biggest complaints that we have had from past host families is that there is no time to do things as a family. Hopefully, this scheduled Family Time will correct this. Please do not let your teen plan other activities during these times. This is time for them to just hang out with their own family.

Illness & Accidents

When medical care is needed for a Northern Irish teen, the Northern Irish counselors must be notified to contact the 24 hour NI helpline prior to being seen by any medical US personnel also contact Malcolm Hewitt at malhew62@hotmail.com, 24 hour medical assistance 44(0)2077480021, claims line 44(0)2077480022

Advice

Experience has taught us many things. If you relax and be yourself, we know that you will enjoy your experience. By meeting and getting to know each other, and observing the alternatives available in a pluralistic society, the Northern Irish teens will be able to learn that peaceful, coexistence is a reality. The Project continues to be enriching for hundreds of host families. Your perception of the world and your place in it may change because of your hosting experience. You will influence the ideas and values of a young person during the most important stage of his/her development.

