



## *Perspectives*

by Warren Muir, Chairman and Founder of Cyprus Friendship Program

Last Saturday (8 March) was CFP's 2014 Interview Day. Over 130 Cypriot teens and their parents gathered in the Neutral Zone in Nicosia meeting other teens and parents from the other community on the island. All the teens were there in the hope that they can participate in CFP this year. The coordinators conducting the interviews say that there are many well-qualified teen applicants. However, the number who can be accepted depends upon the number of U.S. host families and funds for their travel to their hosts. Please help us to bring teen pairs to the U.S. this summer by making a tax-deductible contribution or please consider hosting a pair of teens in July, if you live in or near Atlanta, GA; Maryland; New Hampshire; Northern Virginia; or Portland, OR. ([www.cyprusfriendship.org](http://www.cyprusfriendship.org))

Individual Contributions Goal = \$90,0000  
Funds Raised as of March 15, 2014 = \$41,605

CFP is based upon the Children's Friendship Project for Northern Ireland, Inc. (CFPNI), in which American families hosted more than 2,000 Protestant/Unionist and Roman Catholic/Republican teens in pairs from 1987-2007. (Many of you have heard me speak about Peggy Barrett, the founder of CFPNI. I will share more about her in a future perspective.) Several of CFP's US coordinators and host families were involved with CFPNI.

Over its 21 year history, Northern Ireland underwent an enormous transition from armed conflicts and bombings to peace between the two communities. In 1998, there was a formal peace agreement between the political leaders of the two communities, supported by the leaders of the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland. But the political agreement followed broad and growing support for peace by the individual members of the two

communities. While some tensions and hurt still remain in both communities, Northern Ireland's peace is firmer now than ever before, as relations between the two communities continue to improve.

I know of many CFPNI participants, now in positions of responsibility, who are still close friends with their partners and still in touch with their hosts. (I'm in touch with most of the thirty CFPNI teens whom my family hosted.) Other members of their families are also in touch with one another and their children are growing up without the prejudices of the past. They have played an important part in bringing peace to the province. That is the hope for CFP teens and their families in the future of Cyprus.

Political leaders of the two communities in Cyprus are currently involved in a new round of peace negotiations. As a complete outsider, I can only hope for success, but cannot judge its prospects. What I can confidently predict though is that no matter the outcome of the negotiations, there will be a need for CFP building personal links of trust, understanding, and friendship between the two communities in Cyprus for years to come. For example, CFPNI felt that it needed to continue hosting pairs of teens for another ten years after the peace agreement was signed in Northern Ireland. But, I'm sure that we all look forward to the days when CFP is no longer needed.

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This series of messages is intended to keep the Cyprus Friendship Program family around the world better informed about the activities of the program, to provide perspectives on its impacts, and to offer some reflections on its background and context. It is intended supplement and not substitute for the semi-annual newsletter and other communications by the program.

Please share these messages with others whom you think might be interested in them. A compilation of the messages are archived on the CFP website ([www.cyprusfriendship.org](http://www.cyprusfriendship.org).)

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