

Creating Friendships for Peace (CFP) - FAQ

Website - <https://friendships4peace.org>

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What is the Creating Friendships for Peace (CFP) organization?

Creating Friendships for Peace, Inc. (CFP) is a volunteer grassroots 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization based in the United States. American families host two teens—one from each side of a conflict—to share cultural experiences and participate in leadership workshops and trust building activities. Developing friendships in a neutral, supportive environment has the broader impact of peace building in their communities. CFP evolved from the Children’s Friendship Project for Northern Ireland (CFPNI). When CFPNI completed its mission in 2007, volunteers reorganized, first under the name of Cyprus Friendship Program, and then as Creating Friendships for Peace. CFP currently has student programs in Cyprus and Israel/Palestine. Since 1987, CFP has supported nearly 3,500 teens.

What is the CFP mission?

As intolerance, and conflicting social, political, and cultural agendas deepen in the U.S., we are reminded that finding peaceful solutions is difficult. The CFP team is dedicated to building peace through the patient erosion of stereotypes and fears prompted from an “us vs them” mentality. Our community-based teams in Cyprus and Israel/Palestine demonstrate how individuals and groups from divided communities can and do work together peacefully.

The CFP team believes strongly that lasting peace can be achieved in divided communities when it originates from the communities impacted. Our programs promote and strengthen bonds between teenagers from divided communities. Through dialogue and leadership development, program participants experience personal growth and build lasting relationships. The program teaches that one person can make a difference and that the first courageous step is critical to effect change.

What is CFPNI?

Peggy Barrett, supported by her husband, Jack, founded the Children’s Friendship Project for Northern Ireland (CFPNI) in 1987. They believed that the division in Northern Ireland could only be overcome by building understanding, trust, and friendships between the teenagers who would become future leaders in the two communities.

From 1987 to 2007, The all-volunteer peace building program sponsored more than 2,000 teens from Northern Ireland in 35 states in the U.S. and Canada. The program matched Catholic and Protestant teenagers, who over the summer of shared experiences, learned that they had more in common than their differences and that they could live together peacefully. CFPNI ended in 2007, because the Northern Ireland situation had improved to such a degree that bringing teens from the two communities to the U.S. was no longer needed for friendship building.

Why is 2023 a significant year for CFPNI?

In 2023, CFP honors the 21 years of successful CFPNI volunteer service and peace building and celebrates the 25th year of the Good Friday Agreement, the peace deal that helped to end decades of sectarian violence in Northern Ireland. CFP is hosting a CFPNI alumni reception in Belfast, Ireland, at Ulster University Atrium, October 7, 2023. Creating Friendships for Peace (CFP), the successor organization in the U.S., is hosting the event and launching an effort to locate the over 2,000 participants to reestablish relationships.

How is CFP different from a student exchange program?

CFP's approach provides teenagers from a divided community between the ages of 15-17 with a perspective on what living in a peaceful environment can look like. Two teens are matched and hosted during the summer by a U.S. family. Through shared routines and activities both the teens and host family are exposed to new experiences and cultures. The teens also develop life skills through structured activities and workshops on conflict resolution, leadership, and community service—activities designed to help connect people and develop empathy and understanding. Many of the program graduates continue their peace building initiatives as engaged alumni.

Where does CFP currently have programs?

CFP currently has student programs in Cyprus and Israel/Palestine. Each community-based team includes adults from both sides of divided communities demonstrating that they can work together. CFP supports the in-country team in solving challenges and managing their program.

[Cyprus Friendship Program](#)

Cyprus has been divided by a UN buffer zone since 1974, with Turkish-speaking Muslims on the north and Greek-speaking Christians on the south. In 2008, a group of CFPNI host families and U.S. coordinators organized the Cyprus Friendship Program under a pilot program with HasNa, Inc., a Washington-DC-based non-profit that promotes understanding and economic empowerment in culturally divided areas to encourage peaceful coexistence.

The Cyprus Friendship Program (CFP) launched in 2009. In addition to the home stays offered in the U.S., the program includes an active curriculum in Cyprus led by a Cypriot team of volunteers. The program brings together teenagers from both Cypriot communities to promote peaceful interaction and

understanding. It is a two-year peace building and leadership training program in Cyprus, with a four-week component in the U.S. during the summer.

Middle East Friendship Program

Launched in 2018, the CFP Middle East Friendship Program facilitates conflict resolution, promotes leadership skills, and offers opportunities for teenagers from all sides of the conflict to understand their future role in peace building. Israeli and Palestinian teens between the ages of 15-18, with at least one Israeli or Palestinian parent are eligible to apply for the program.

In-country coordinators work with the teens in workshops that develop cross-cultural experiences and understanding. During the summer program, the teens are hosted by American families. CFP's home stay experience offers the teens valuable time in a secure, neutral environment to have honest dialogue and develop a deeper understanding of other cultures.

How do American families benefit from the program?

By hosting teens from different cultures, everyone involved benefits from the experience by gaining insight on different cultures and global conflict and conflict resolution. The teens and host families often maintain life-long friendships, and they and their parents stay engaged by attending reunions and other local events.

By creating the opportunity to develop these bonds, CFP reinforces its global volunteer mission of peace building. It also demonstrates that volunteers from the U.S. are strongly committed to the mission of inspiring teamwork and peaceful efforts in conflict areas. Grassroots peacebuilding is about creating personal bonds. But more importantly it has a broader impact by helping to create an environment where communities can learn to coexist and work together peacefully.

How is CFP funded?

As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, CFP receives funding from individual donors, family foundations, Rotary Clubs, and supporters. To maintain its neutrality, CFP accepts no government funds.