

## Dominican High School Ventures to Ireland

By: Jessie Bazan

After months of intense fundraising and eager anticipation, 29 Dominican High School students and six chaperones departed from O'Hare airport on June 17<sup>th</sup> for the trip of a lifetime. The group, lead by DHS English teacher Mr. Christian Tomsey, spent eight days and seven nights across the Atlantic in Ireland.

The eight hour flight from Chicago to Dublin seemed to take forever in the eyes of anxious teenagers. Recently graduated DHS alum Molly Brauer said of the trip, "The flight on the way there was okay. I was just so anxious and excited...ready to be there."

Once they arrived in Dublin, the group immediately set out to tour the countryside. Traveling by bus from place to place, the group was able to see much of the Irish countryside and also make stops in major cities like Dublin, Dingle and Galway throughout the trip.

They toured historical sites such as the Glendalough Monastic Settlement and St. Patrick's Cathedral, and made their way to popular natural attractions like the Cliffs of Moher and the Dingle Beach along the Atlantic Ocean coastline. A group of six brave students and one teacher even went swimming in the ocean despite frigid temperatures.

While each student enjoyed different aspects of the trip, one place that seemed to be a favorite of everyone was the Aran Islands. After taking a ferry to get to the island, the group rented bicycles and biked along the stunning coastline and eventually ended up at Dun Aengus, a set of cliffs towering out around the island.

Senior Lauren Koszuta called the Aran Islands her favorite place, saying "biking around the island was beautiful!" And referring to Dun Aengus, she said, "I could have easily laid at the top of that cliff for hours, just watching the water and taking it all in. I loved it!"

Molly Brauer especially enjoyed going to the Aran Islands as well. She said she also really liked the city of Dublin because it was "very busy, there was lots to do and it was just fun to be a part of."

After staying in hostels for the first six nights of the trip, the group was treated to a stay in the four-star, 400 year old Cabra Castle in County Sligo on the last night of their journey.

"Staying in Cabra Castle was great," describes senior Lizzie Fons. "It was a once-in-a-lifetime chance and I'm so glad we had the opportunity to stay there. The architecture, furniture, and stories about the castle were all very interesting."

She added, “I really enjoyed playing Cops and Robbers and Capture the Flag on the golf course lawn outside the castle. And of course, I loved that we had a breakfast of something other than toast the morning we spent there!”

Overall, the trip to Ireland provided these Dominican students and teachers with great cultural lessons and summer memories to last a lifetime. Many can not wait to go back to the rolling hills and amazing countryside of Ireland someday!

