


George J. Mitchell Peace Scholarship Exchange with Ireland

Partner Institutions:



he George J. Mitchell Peace Scholarship Exchange with Ireland provides opportunities for students from the Maine Community College System to study at the Cork Institute of Technology (CIT) in Cork, Ireland. The Scholarship honors Senator Mitchell and the Northern Ireland peace accord he brokered between the governments and peoples of Ireland and the United Kingdom.

This year, as the George J. Mitchell Peace Scholarship Exchange enters its nineteenth year and its longtime administrator, Dorry French, prepares to retire, we wanted to document the impact of the program on the Maine community college students who have studied for a semester at CIT.

The Mitchell Scholars we were able to reach wrote heartfelt reflections on their experience and the effect the Exchange has had on their lives. To a person, they are grateful for having had the opportunity to study and live in a different country and culture. For many, the experience gave them the confidence to embark on additional adventures, through both travel and self-exploration.

Especially in the early years of the exchange, which began in 1999, few MCCS students had traveled abroad. The opportunity to immerse themselves in Irish life has made it possible for many of the scholars to see themselves and the world in new ways.

This volume also includes messages from the two newest Exchange participants. Max Lorber and Michael Marino, both students at Southern Maine Community College, will travel to Ireland in the coming year to represent the MCCS at CIT. We are confident that they will be strong ambassadors for our schools and our state and that, like those who have gone before them on the Exchange, they will carry forward Senator Mitchell's legacy of respect, friendship, and cooperation among nations.



Central Maine Community College, Auburn



Eastern Maine Community College, Bangor



Kennebec Valley Community College, Fairfield/Hinckley



Northern Maine Community College, Presque Isle



Southern Maine Community College, South Portland/Brunswick



Washington County Community College, Calais



York County Community College, Wells



MCCS George J. Mitchell Scholars

2017-2018 Max Lorber, SMCC
Michael Marino, SMCC

2016-2017 Anna Dore, EMCC
Jonathan Knight, CMCC

2015-2016 Brianna Crosby, CMCC
Christopher Hunt, SMCC

2014-2015 Kaitlyn Kinsey, EMCC
Amber Powell, SMCC

2013-2014 Kori Kinney, EMCC
Beth Walker, YCCC

2012-2013 Cody Hand, EMCC
Shawn Veasey, SMCC

2011-2012 John Eder, SMCC
Nichole Rackliff, EMCC

2010-2011 Lacy McMoarn, SMCC
Morgan Talty, EMCC

2009-2010 Kathryn Harlan, EMCC
Christopher Young, EMCC

2008-2009 Lucas Ireland, NMCC
Tracy London, SMCC

2007-2008 Joshua Beaulé, CMCC
Eric Spaulding, CMCC

2006-2007 Jonathan Fellis, EMCC
Bethany Peterson, YCCC

2005-2006 Richard Giustra, SMCC
Eric Wilson, CMCC

2004-2005 Kent Corey, NMCC
Rebecca Libby, KVCC

2003-2004 Michelle Tinkham, KVCC
Caroline Ward, CMCC

2002-2003 Eric Clark, EMCC
Barbara Haskell, EMCC

2001-2002 Jill McGlaughlin, NMCC
Tommy Ngo, CMCC

2000-2001 Eben Mann, CMCC
Ognjen Nikolic, SMCC

1999-2000 Tessa Lewis, SMCC
Darren Winham, EMCC

**19 years : 38 MCCS
Mitchell Scholars to CIT**



Max Lorber



George J. Mitchell Scholars 2017-2018



This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that I am so excited to take advantage of. I believe this exchange will benefit me academically, professionally, and personally. The experience of living and studying in a foreign country will be challenging, rewarding, and most of all, incredibly fun.

I hope to confront the challenge of integrating into this new society, to learn as much as I can about myself and the culture of Ireland, and to use this experience to expand my perspective on the world. Such an expansion of perspective will surely influence the rest of my life and my future career. The more one sees, the wiser one becomes.

Michael Marino



I believe studying in Ireland will not only help me grow in an educational sense by learning in a totally new environment, but will also help me grow in my understanding of the world. I'm thrilled to represent the MCCS abroad as well as the construction programs within it.

I hope to learn everything I possibly can in my semester abroad. On a smaller scale, I hope to bring back useful knowledge about the construction trade that I may not have otherwise known. I believe the best way to learn something is to learn it one way and then be shown a completely different way to think about it or look at it.

Jonathan Knight

MCCS Mitchell Scholar  CIT Spring 2017

Hi, Jonathan Knight here. I am one of the recipients of the George J. Mitchell Peace Scholarship. I am attending Cork Institute of Technology for the spring of the 2016–2017 academic year and studying business and hospitality management. Yes, I am typing this in Cork, and as many college students know, the sleepless nights are a regular thing. It's 5:00 a.m. and I just finished one of my big projects, which I have been working on since I started my semester. Luckily, the hardest part is finished and is due today. The rest is due in another couple of weeks. The part that is due today is a big presentation as well as a big competition among three other colleges in Ireland and is to be judged by food distributors throughout the country. Guess you can say I'm a bit nervous.

It's tough to pick just one big effect or result of my experience as a George Mitchell Scholar. There have been many things that have impacted me during my time in Ireland. Even though not every moment has been perfect, easy, or even enjoyable, I can say without a doubt I would not take this experience back. It has been a big revelation and has really gotten me out of my box. It has challenged me in ways I didn't think possible, as well as in ways in which I thought I was ok, but realized I had more to learn.

I want to thank Senator Mitchell for giving me this opportunity. I would not change a thing. I have learned a lot about myself and the world. It has been an amazing experience for me. I will definitely come back to Ireland.



Off to the CIT Ball

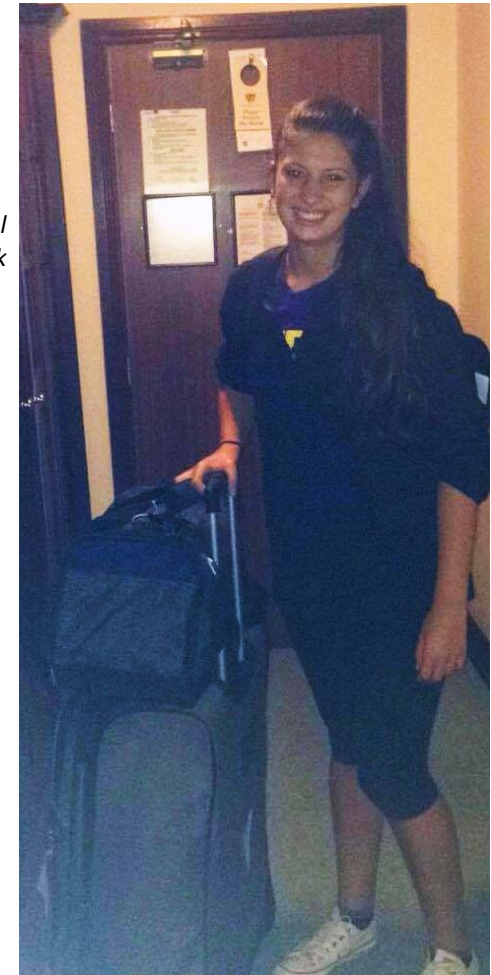


Anna and friends in Ireland

Anna Dore

MCCS Mitchell Scholar  CIT Fall 2016

*After 20 hours of travel
and 20 minutes in Cork*



I am currently studying at the University of Maine in Orono, but will be transferring to the University of Maine at Fort Kent in the fall of 2017 for the nursing program.

Since I've returned from my semester abroad, I've been trying to devise a plan on how to travel back! You really do miss it a lot more than you think you will. In all seriousness, I have been very busy with school at UMaine and just adjusting to being back in the States. I've joined a competitive trivia team and also an intramural volleyball team. In addition to school, I've made plans to travel this summer with a few friends around the USA.

It's so hard to explain just how beneficial this opportunity was. I know every scholar has a different experience while they are over there, but I think we can all agree that it changes you in the best ways possible. It has definitely taught me things I never knew about myself. It forced me to expand my comfort zone and to not take things so seriously, like most of us tend to do. It's definitely opened my eyes to the world around me and has given me a new outlook on life as a whole.



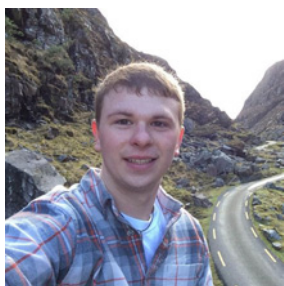
Brianna Crosby

MCCS Mitchell Scholar  CIT Spring 2016

I am currently a supervisor at a Starbucks near Washington, D.C. It is a very fulfilling position that allows for personal enrichment. I am studying to become a Starbucks Coffee Master, a certification that will strengthen my hospitality degree. I am also planning to take online classes from Johnson & Wales University this fall to go toward my bachelor's degree in business.

The biggest effect the scholarship had on me is the ability to witness cultural diversity first hand. We call the U.S. a melting pot, but I had never met so many cultures and nationalities as I did during my time in Cork. Taking international business classes with Erasmus students made the experience much more meaningful to me.

I truly appreciate everything I was able to do and continue to experience because of the scholarship.



*Travels and friends
in Ireland*



*Carrick-a-Rede
Rope Bridge
near the
Giant's Causeway,
Northern Ireland*

Currently, I'm living in upstate New York and working two jobs while trying to save for my next endeavor, which I haven't exactly figured out. I've recently started going over a few options to get a teaching certification in order to travel to other countries and teach English. I'm hoping to make a year out of combining two of my biggest passions, helping others and traveling. If for some reason this doesn't come full circle, I hope

Christopher Hunt

MCCS Mitchell Scholar  CIT Fall 2015

to be entering the police academy back in Maine in 2018. My brother has just joined the Marines and leaves the beginning of October, so I'm hoping to spend as much time with him and my family as I can over the summer.

Since I returned from CIT, I took a little break from school to work and save up money, while trying to figure out exactly what I want to do with my life. Studying at CIT combined with living in Ireland truly turned my world upside down, which has put me in a position where I keep debating what is the right move, where do I want to be career-wise? What is the best path for me to take my passions in life and combine them into a career?

The biggest effect of my experience as a George Mitchell Scholar is difficult to say, because there are so many ways in which this experience has changed my life: from the way my horizon has opened up so broadly—growing up in a small town, never experiencing much diversity—to living in another country and traveling. Experiencing so many unique and beautiful cultures has truly expanded my mind. Meeting and connecting with so many individuals who share many of the same interests and passions that I have makes me even more passionate about getting out in the world. I want to connect with as many people as possible, to learn from them and have a better understanding of other cultures and use those experiences to make myself a better person, while trying to influence others around me in the same way. At the end of the day, when I look at myself, I am more proud, confident, empathetic, and optimistic than I ever was before. This truly has had a big impact on me day-to-day, which I'm starting to see is making me more successful in all areas of my life.



Kaitlyn Kinsey

MCCS Mitchell  Scholar CIT Fall 2014

ow, almost three years after my semester in Ireland, I have a wonderful career in the field of medical imaging. I am currently working at Maine Medical Center as a radiologic technologist. The field I work in is extremely interesting and rewarding. I am fortunate to have a job doing what I love. Starting in July of this summer (2017), I will be embarking on a new adventure. I have been selected to participate in an exchange program for young professionals, the Congress Bundestag Youth Exchange (CBYX). This is a one-year exchange program between the U.S. and Germany. I will be spending one year learning the German language and culture, taking classes in my radiography field, and participating in a five-month internship, also in my field. My love of traveling and international exchange was triggered thanks to the George Mitchell Peace Scholarship. I can only thank my time

during the peace exchange for most of my opportunities and experiences since then!

On a personal note, I have a boyfriend who lives in Europe. His name is Antara, and we actually met during my semester in Ireland, as we were both doing a semester abroad at CIT. Since then, we have traveled together, going back and forth between Europe and the U.S. I hope one day we will be on the same continent, wherever that may be! We are very happy together and are so thankful for such an adventurous relationship.

Since my semester at CIT, I have been very busy. I completed my bachelor's degree in health sciences at the University of Southern Maine. I have traveled—Germany, France, Belgium, Norway, a road trip through Canada, Niagara Falls, Washington D.C., New York City, and Boston, to name a few places. I have worked at Maine Medical Center for two years. And most recently, I have been selected as one of 75 participants in the CBYX program. These successes are very rewarding after lots of hard work, and some things would never have happened, had it not been for the Mitchell Exchange program. I am grateful every day for what a memorable and truly life-changing experience it was!

One thing I know for sure, especially after the Mitchell Exchange, is that I must travel. I know I will always need to travel, and experience other cultures and ways of living. For me, this is one of the most humbling experiences one can have. I feel that the more understanding I have of other cultures, the more I can understand where I belong and know my own culture and heritage, as well as appreciate everybody's place in the world. My semester abroad in Ireland has opened doors for me that would have been unfathomable before. Personally, I feel more independent, confident, cultured, and well-rounded.

Senator Mitchell, I cannot thank you enough for making this experience, and arguably all my experiences thereafter, possible. Without your work on the unification and peace between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, this exchange scholarship would never have been possible. Subsequently, I would never have had these life-changing experiences. And for that I thank you. (Of course, all your work in the world is highly respected and admirable!) Because of you and this scholarship exchange program, my life has been forever altered. Thank you for making possible such a wonderful opportunity! The George Mitchell Peace Exchange has truly shaped me as a person, and I will be forever grateful.

*In Ireland with
Kait Kinsey (left)
and Verena,
their CIT friend
from Germany*



I am graduating college this spring: May 21, 2017! After the Mitchell scholarship, I began to look at schools that offered international relations. I was offered a full-tuition scholarship to Mount Holyoke College in South Hadley, MA, and will soon have my bachelor of arts in international relations! I am now exploring career paths in which I can use my degree. I hope to work for a large non-governmental or state organization that deals in disaster relief or humanitarian aid.

I have been busy with work and school, but I also had time to visit some of the friends I made in Ireland last year when we all met up in Oslo, Norway, for a reunion. Kait Kinsey was there too!

The biggest effect that the Mitchell Scholarship had on my life was the confidence it gave me to try new things and be daring. I don't think that I would have attempted to apply to Mount Holyoke without the experiences I had in Ireland. It helped me see that there are many ways to look at life and helped me see a new environment as a fun challenge, rather than something to be intimidated by. That's

Amber Powell

MCCS Mitchell Scholar  CIT Fall 2014



*By the Statue of Freedom in the
U.S. Capitol for a leadership
development and networking
conference in Washington, D.C.,
through Mount Holyoke*

also why I chose to study international relations, because the more you know about other cultures and people, the better you can understand and navigate the world.



Fota Wildlife Park in Cork



*After competing in a horse show in Kilkenny with the CIT Equestrian Team
(Kori, third from left; Beth Walker, second from right)*

Kori Kinney

MCCS Mitchell Scholar  CIT Fall 2013

After returning from Ireland, I accepted a job as an X-ray technologist at Penobscot Valley Hospital in Lincoln and have been working full time there for the past three years. I am continuing my studies part time, working toward a bachelor's degree in business with a minor in accounting—building off the credits I earned at CIT. Eventually, I would like to use my degree to pursue a career in management or accounting.

Since my semester at CIT, I have been continuing my education, working full time, and have remained involved in my true passions: harness racing and horseback riding. I still love traveling and do so whenever possible, and I plan to make it back to Ireland as soon as I can!

The George Mitchell Scholarship not only gave me the opportunity to continue my education and the chance to visit a different country, it opened my eyes to the possibility of traveling the world and gave me the confidence to do so. I made many new friends from many different places whom I still stay in touch with. It made me want to see and explore new places and gave me a love of traveling, even if everything doesn't always go as planned! I have traveled to Iceland, England, Malta, and Germany since my semester in Ireland, and can't wait to plan more trips.



At the Cliffs of Moher



With CIT faculty, Gale Cotter Buckley



With Kori Kinney in Kinsale

Beth Walker

MCCS Mitchell Scholar  CIT Fall 2013

Currently, I have a farm in Bethel, Maine. I'm working toward making it a country venue for weddings and gatherings. We grow and raise our own food and continue to move toward sustainability in the food movement.

I've done a bit of everything since being back from Ireland, but much of my paying work has been in hospitality. I've worked in an Irish Pub, and met some incredible people from Ireland there as well! I've operated a little local diner, which offered up so many opportunities and allowed us to develop relationships we might not otherwise have had! I've worked for Sunday River in hospitality and will be starting back there as soon as the season begins again here in Bethel. I'm very active outside and took full advantage of this year's snow totals. As seasons change, my community involvement changes as well! This time of year, local hiking trails need grooming, and the community here is very active. It's a very small example of what a community can accomplish when focused on a project. I'm thrilled to be a part of it.

The exchange affected and changed me immensely! I believe all for the better. I made the most amazing life-long friendships while I was there. I learned a great deal about life and the actual pursuit of happiness. Ireland and the people there are magical! I know that sounds cliché and corny, but I honestly do believe that. I loved Ireland the moment I stepped foot on the ground, and I was so lucky to have had the opportunity to go, because of Senator Mitchell and the scholarship. It was such an honor to be chosen, and I still take immense pride that I was a Mitchell Scholar.



Exploring in Iceland



Lacy McMoarn

MCCS Mitchell Scholar  CIT Spring 2011

I am currently working at a public accounting firm in Portland and studying for my CPA.

Shortly after my incredible semester in Ireland, I transferred and completed my BS at St. Joseph's College of Maine, then continued on, completing my master's degree in accountancy while working full time at a public accounting firm in Portland.

Ireland was my first time traveling, and I credit it for awakening my insatiable wanderlust. Since my semester abroad in 2011, I have traveled to and throughout Scotland, England, France, Iceland, Jamaica, Mexico, Belize, Honduras, California, Nevada, Utah, and Arizona. I have since introduced my younger sister to travel, and we have a domestic trip planned for the end of this month. Also in September, I am planning on traveling back to Ireland for two weeks with my boyfriend to introduce him to the Green Isle.

I am not exaggerating when I say that my experience as a George Mitchell Scholar was life-changing. The George Mitchell Peace Exchange gave me opportunities I otherwise never would have had.

Back when I boarded my (first-ever) flight to Cork, I was a naïve, shy, and insecure young woman. It was my first time away from home and first time doing anything significant by myself.

Through my experience I was introduced to a world outside of Saco, Maine. My time in Ireland provided me with confidence, worldly experience, and overall self-growth at a very pivotal and turbulent time in my life. I can't convey the impact this experience had on me. To this day I credit applying for the George Mitchell Peace Exchange Scholarship as one of the best decisions of my life.



*Morgan and Jorden, married
May 6, 2017*



Morgan Talty

MCCS Mitchell Scholar  CIT Fall 2010

I'm currently attending the University of Southern Maine's graduate program, the Stonecoast MFA in fiction. My hopes are to write and teach writing.

After graduating from EMCC, I transferred to Dartmouth College and spent four years there. I just graduated last May (2016) with a BA in Native American studies.

Since my CIT semester, I've been writing, writing, rewriting, and more rewriting! I've been trying to start my literary career. I've had a few publications so far. I'm still writing! I have a short story coming out soon and another coming out in the fall. Very excited!

I knew I had a traveling bug before I applied for the George Mitchell Scholarship, but it wasn't until I studied and stayed for a long period of time in Ireland that I came to appreciate and value what we call "place," as well as all that originates from it. As a result of the scholarship, I have a greater appreciation for people and their homes, their place.

After I graduate from my MFA (January 2019... I think) I'm going after a teaching position somewhere at a college in the area. (I just have to build up more of a publishing record.)

The Mitchell Scholarship is such a special experience, and one for which I'll always be grateful.

Hiking Pilot Mountain in the Appalachians



Master's degree and mascot, University of South Florida



I am currently a supervisor at ReliaQuest, a rapidly growing cyber security company that specializes in co-managed SIEM (Security Information Event Monitor) services. The company was a start-up in 2007. Two weeks after returning from Ireland, I moved to Tampa, FL. Since then, I have completed six degrees

Eric Spaulding

MCCS Mitchell Scholar  CIT Spring 2008

(four associate, one bachelor's, and one master's), including various specializations within IT security. My bachelor's degree is in technology development and management from Saint Petersburg College, and my master's is in cyber security, specializing in cyber intelligence, from the University of South Florida. I have also earned several certifications for specific skills required for IT security. I paid only for the first associate degree, then Verizon hired me and paid for the rest. I left Verizon to join ReliaQuest in 2016.

I have accomplished several personal victories, completing a marathon, six half-marathons, and the Dopey Challenge (48.6 miles) in the last two years. I'm currently starting Iron Man training. I volunteer at Habitat for Humanity and the Salvation Army when I can.

I have a goal-achieving mindset. I saw myself at a desk at Cork Institute of Technology back in 2007 while writing my Mitchell Exchange essay. I also saw myself completing my master's, finishing a marathon, buying a house at 23, and accomplishing several other goals. I now see myself writing a book, hiking the Appalachian Mountains, assisting Third World countries, helping recent high school graduates, and changing the world with my contributions, skills, words, determination, and motivation. I want to die knowing I left the world better than I found it. As for Senator George Mitchell, I believe the world is a better place because of the work he has done. I want to thank everyone involved for the opportunity to study abroad.

The biggest effects of my experience in Ireland were pushing my comfort zone, experiencing a new culture, sparking a desire to see and assist in other parts of the world, and knowing I can do anything I put my mind to.

Kent,
Kristin,
and Noah



Since September 2016, I have been working as the coordinator of student life/student government, activities, and leadership development at the University of Maine at Augusta, Bangor Campus. My wife, Kristen, and I live in Brewer, Maine. We have been married almost four years. In 2015, we welcomed our first child, Noah Austin Corey. We are excited that Lilly June Corey will be joining our family this summer... can't wait!!

Since my time at CIT in 2004, I was able to complete my bachelor's degree in sports management at Husson University ('07). I was given the Distinguished Student Award for the department that year, based on GPA. During the summers of 2004-2007, I worked at Camp Roosevelt as the program director/assistant camp director for the Boy Scout camp. After that, I moved back up north to my hometown for almost a year working as a supervisor for a third-party call center. That was until June of 2008, when I was able to get into the career I was looking for as the director of athletics and recreation/resident director at Eastern Maine Community College (EMCC). During my almost eight years at EMCC, I was able to develop a better understanding of how athletics and co-curricular activity as a whole can impact the success of a college student. I also had an opportunity to share my experience as a Mitchell Scholar with many community college students—most notably, Mitchell Scholars Morgan Talty and Kaitlyn Kinsey, who I knew would be great representatives.

Kent Corey

MCCS Mitchell Scholar  CIT Fall 2004

In September 2015, with the birth of our son, my wife and I decided to make a change. I accepted a position as a general manager for a college housing property in Orono, Maine. While I will always remember the experiences I had and some lessons learned, the live-in position was not right for my young family, so I was excited when the opportunity came to get back into a student-life position at UMA-Bangor.

The biggest result of my experience at CIT was being able to open my mind to viewpoints from other parts of the world. Having the opportunity to leave Aroostook County and expand your knowledge of cultures from around the world is priceless. The same can be said about the friendships and bonds that I have made from those who were in the CIT International Society, had classes with, or lived with at Edenhall—again, priceless!!!

Professionally, that was the start of my desire to focus my goal of a sports management career around an education setting. Before that, I wanted to work in the office of a professional sports team. I now have a better understanding of student development as a whole, which I hope will help me for the remainder of my career. I can't explain how proud I am to be a Mitchell Scholar. I appreciate the opportunity, and I would not be able to thank Senator George Mitchell enough. I highly doubt that Senator Mitchell would remember this, with all the people he meets, but in July 2008, I was able to thank him in person. I was staying a night at the Marriott at Sable Oaks for a conference, and was just walking in the lobby. I looked into the restaurant area and found George Mitchell and Red Sox legend David Ortiz sitting together. It was awesome to be able to thank Senator Mitchell for the experience I had in Ireland and also be able to meet one of my favorite baseball players. Can't beat that!!

*Ella Rose, Barb,
Rhonda, and
Nicholas*



*At the hospital
and in Ireland*




Barbara Haskell

MCCS Mitchell Scholar  CIT Spring 2003

two children—Ella Rose, 1.5, and Nicholas, 4 years old—and reside in Blue Hill, ME. I was born in Blue Hill Hospital and am the third generation of my family to work here. My grandmother was an LPN; my mother was an RNC: certified in maternity.

I worked as a baker in a restaurant and retirement community for the summer and fall after returning to Maine. I began my work in the kitchen of Blue Hill Memorial Hospital in January of 2004 and have been here ever since. I started as a kitchen aide and worked my way around the kitchen as cafeteria cook, catering, patient cook, and team lead before assuming the management position in 2009. Through the hard work of my team, our food service program has recently been ranked in the top 4% in the nation for quality of food, compared to hospitals our size. We pride ourselves on creating a quality, welcoming, local, and sustainable food service program, breaking from hospital food's dismal reputation. Very exciting work!

Ireland lived up to its reputation of world-class hospitality. Above all else, the experience during the exchange exposed me to a culture of service. Making folks feel genuinely welcome is an environment that was modeled for me during my stay. I will never forget the kindness and warmth that I felt while away from my family. I am forever grateful for the opportunity given to me by Senator Mitchell and the Maine Community College System. I keep in contact with friends made during my stay even 14 years later. A sincere thank you to you all!

 am currently the food service director at Blue Hill Memorial Hospital. I received an AAS in culinary arts from Eastern Maine Community College and went on to become a Certified Dietary Manager, Certified Food Protection Professional. My wife, Rhonda Connor Haskell, is an Irish girl from Maine. We have

I help clients increase online sales and develop mobile apps for their brands. I founded OGO Sense about 10 years ago and we now have 13 employees in Maine and south-east Europe. Outside work, I am usually with my family and friends. On weekends, we enjoy visiting new towns and



spending time outdoors. And there is always something new! Next month I will be giving a high school graduation speech to a group of high school students at the Rotary Club of Boothbay Harbor.

In short, I've accomplished my educational goals and have successfully run my business for the past 10 years. I've graduated with my associate degree in electronics technology from Southern Maine Community College and later earned my bachelor's degree in electrical engineering from the University of Maine in Orono. I've started and grown our digital marketing

agency over the past 10 years and I still enjoy every moment of it.

Ognjen (Ogy) Nikolic

MCCS Mitchell Scholar  CIT Fall 2000

The biggest result of the exchange was that I was able to accomplish my educational goals. When I applied for the George J. Mitchell Peace Scholarship, I almost ran out of money. Without the scholarship, I would not have been able to finish SMCC. I would not have been able to get a student loan because I was an international student. Then later, when I applied for a four-year program at the University of Maine, the director of international admissions remembered listening to my speech at the George J. Mitchell Award Ceremony in Portland a couple of years earlier. I'm sure it's one of the critical moments that helped me secure a four-year scholarship for international students at the University of Maine.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the program coordinator, Dorry French, the Board of Trustees of the Maine Community College System, and former Senator George J. Mitchell for making such a positive impact on my life and the people around me.



Ogy and Sanja, married in Banja Luca in their native Bosnia



For me, Ireland was a wonderland of new ideas, sassy attitudes and—as is the collegiate nature—carefree vibrancy. This was almost two decades

ago and the Irish friends with whom I was cavorting were the first generation in which the norm was to attend college, the first generation that really had *choices*. The Celtic Tiger was in full roar, and the future for graduates was white-hot and wide open.

The best part for me was the energy—the optimism that everyone seemed to have. Days were for classes (sometimes) and pickup football (read: soccer). “Let’s go have a kick, boi” meant playing football in a parking lot with flatmates and neighbors. Nights almost always meant a bus ride into Cork City and finding pubs in the early evening and clubs as it got later. After that, *le deluge*....

Because I was one of the first to go, nobody really knew how much of a stipend (read: spending money) to provide, and—lucky for me—it was gobs more than I needed. I was frugal with my staples and thus had largesse for other pursuits. I never used my own money and was able to rent a car every weekend and saw in detail the entire country, usually with a clutch of willing companions.

Darren Winham

MCCS Mitchell Scholar  CIT Spring 2000

I kept an almost daily journal and plan on making a book of it when I’m able. The working title, by the way, is “A Maine Yankee in St. Patrick’s Root Cellar”—a tribute, of course, to Mark Twain.

Please understand that while the institutional education was good, the value, the real learning, came from unfettered immersion into the Irish culture at the dawn of the 21st Century.

I have had two lifetimes of successful careers, much of it owing to the prestige of the exchange. To wit:

- Business Development Specialist, State of Maine
- Chief of Economic Development and Housing, Lassen County, California
- Industry Lead, Employment and Training, U.S. Department of Labor, Washington D.C.
- Executive Director, Barre Area Development Corporation, Barre, Vermont
- Owner, DarWin Dynamic Solutions—Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine (current)
- Economic Development Director, Exeter, New Hampshire (current)

I live in Exeter with my wife, Vivian, and daughters, Jasmine (8) and Catalina (5).

From their evaluation of their semester in Cork

Christopher Young

MCCS Mitchell Scholar, CIT Fall 2009



The thing I will remember most about the exchange will be the friends I made. By the end of the short amount of time I was in Ireland, I had gained five brothers. These five guys became my closest friends in Ireland, and I shared a

lot of amazing memories with them. It is those memories that I cherish and will keep for a lifetime.

I think the experience did change how I look at the world, by helping give me a much greater understanding. Before the exchange, I thought that the people from different countries would be very different from me. But after spending four months with them, I have realized that we are all the same. It doesn't matter if you are from Greece, Cameroon, Germany, or Ireland, we all share common interests in music, love, life, and happiness. I have learned that we are all connected in more ways than I ever dreamed was possible. This truly is the opportunity of a lifetime.

Joshua Beaulé

MCCS Mitchell Scholar, CIT Fall 2007

The most beneficial part of the exchange for me was forming personal relationships with many of my friends and really being able to have the time to get to know someone from another country. This is the part of the exchange that was most rewarding because these friends are people I'm going to know for the rest of my life. This experience helped me to realize how big this world actually is and how much is happening out there.

The exchange has led me to see that there is in fact more than one way to do things. It has also led me to realize that the United States as a whole is also doing things to tarnish its own image, and that motivates me to help make change. This experience has also helped me to have an open mind and has made me proud and grateful for where I come from.

Caroline Ward

MCCS Mitchell Scholar, CIT Fall 2003

Leaving Ireland was the most difficult part. I admit I was homesick when I first arrived, but I got over it in a few days and started to fall in love with the country, the city, and the people. Before I went, I felt a faint connection to Ireland through my heritage, but now I feel like Ireland is my home. Maine is, too, but there's something special and indescribable about Ireland. The friends I made there are a part of that feeling because I do miss them a lot, but there's a deeper connection as well that (I know this may sound strange) I feel in my bones. I will never regret this experience and I am forever grateful for the opportunity.



Road to Cork City 



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