Young people lead new heritage research project

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Thanks to a £24,300 Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) grant announced today, young people will learn a host of new skills in order to explore the heritage of Laurencetown from 1850 to the present day.

The ‘Rings of Time’ project was devised by the young people after the old Horse Chestnut tree in the grounds of the community centre, which was previously the National School and dates to the Famine years, was felled. The tree played a significant part in the lives of generations of the local community and using the growth rings of the tree as a stimulus, the group will record the oral histories of members of the community to create a lasting legacy of the village’s unique social and cultural heritage.

Working in partnership with Tullylish Historical Society and a local genealogist the young people will learn a range of new skills including how to carry out historical research, accessing and assessing primary and secondary source materials, event management, interview techniques and financial management. The young people will each receive a certificate to commemorate their participation in the project and their contribution to recording the village’s history as well as an opportunity to achieve an accredited OCN certificate in cultural diversity and good community relations.

The oral histories which will be collected from family, friends and the wider community will be stored in a new archive to create a permanent record of the heritage, and alongside the production of a website and DVD, will help to share the young people’s findings with new and wider audiences. A new community logo, which will be designed as part of the project, will be carved into the tree’s remaining stump and unveiled during a community celebration street-party event.

Funding for the project was awarded to Laurencetown, Lenaderg and Tullylish Community Association through HLF’s Young Roots scheme, which provides grants of up to £25,000 to enable young people aged between 13 and 25 to become involved in heritage projects that matter to them.

Commenting on the award, Head of HLF Northern Ireland, Paul Mullan, said: “We are delighted to support this local heritage project that has been devised and will be delivered by a group of enthusiastic young people who wish to learn more about their heritage and where they live. Through their participation in the project the young people will create a lasting record of this heritage for current and future generations to learn from, as well as learning a range of new skills, and we hope they enjoy taking part.”

Anne Murphy, Project Coordinator with Laurencetown, Lenaderg and Tullylish Community Association, added: “This funding is wonderful news and we are grateful to HLF for their generous support. We are very fortunate to have young people who are so enthusiastic about their heritage. The group were surprised to learn that we had a railway station in Laurencetown and that our geographical location inspired the linen industry in which many of their ancestors worked.

“The group intends to organise a community festival in late March, early April 2012 and we are planning events which will suit the entire community, including an historical lecture, storytelling for tiny ones, a street festival and a 10k road run.

“It’s an exciting project and the young people are really enjoying it. The Heritage Lottery Fund has given these young people an opportunity to discover their heritage and know their community.”

Further information

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