

# Friends Around the World

## A New Beginning

CALL IT A START, a new beginning toward sharing our surplus, toward giving that which we quite comfortably can do without.

The Right Sharing of World Resources program of the Friends World Committee, American Section, is growing. In the first three quarters of 1973, Friends contributions totalling \$23,320 have helped volunteers in El Salvador provide local people with the technical skills they need to improve the quality of their lives; to educate Kenyans in intermediate business skills; to give pre-school play and learning opportunities to refugee children in Jordan and to orphans in Vietnam; to assist Zambians improve their squatter housing; to explore the development of cooperatives

### Kate Cullinan-Volunteer

by Sam Passow

FRIENDS HAVE A SAYING, "If you speak to the good in people, you will get an answer." For Kate Cullinan, a young American volunteer working in Belfast, the answer has been one of acceptance.

"They do notice," said Kate. "They seem to have an image of Quakers as someone reasonable, willing to talk and being helpful. Sometimes it's a bit embarrassing because they think of Quakers as saints or something, and of course we're not."

But Kate isn't out to be canonized; if anything, it's usually a matter of getting caught in a cross-fire.

Dressed in jeans and a turtle-neck sweater, Kate scurries around the bleak, tension-ridden streets of Belfast in a white Quaker mini-bus, delivering a lunchtime "meals-on-wheels" to Catholic and Protestant pensioners living in dull red and grey brick tenements. For many it is the only hot meal they get.

In the afternoon, she uses her talents with the younger generation as she

*Editor's note: Sam Passow is a freelance journalist who went to Belfast in the spring of 1973 for a series of CBS radio news stories. Among the persons Sam met and interviewed were Quakers, and among the Quakers was Kate Cullinan.*

in Tanzania; and to establish an interracial program of rural training and development in Rhodesia.

The Friends World Committee for Consultation, at its Triennial Meeting this summer in Sydney, Australia, emphatically restated its support for the Right Sharing of World Resources program, calling it "a major concern," and asking Friends to "continue to strive for the greatest and most effective Quaker contribution."

The annual RSWR Consultation of the Friends World Committee, American Section, this fall endorsed this rededication, and we are moving enthusiastically ahead, hoping to help more and more Americans become aware of the incredible inequity in the present international distribution of resources, the inherent injustice of present world political and economic systems which augment the power of the power-

doubles as a volunteer play leader and youth group coordinator. Her "offices" are playgrounds surrounded by the rubble of once thriving businesses which are conspicuously decorated by an overabundance of graffiti, clearly spelling out the political conscience of the neighborhood.

Alternating between Catholic and Protestant communities each day, Kate uses games and community projects to show the young of both sides that there is something more to look forward to than the violence that preoccupies their parents.

"Being an American gives you immediate acceptance," said Kate. "But there is also immediate acceptance for almost anyone young who tries to help."

Kate has been in Belfast since February 1972, after enlisting as a volunteer under the joint sponsorship of the American Section of the Friends World Committee and the Ulster Friends Service Committee. She attributes her decision to the combination of "hearing about Belfast in the news back home, and growing up on the old Irish romanticism." (Her father's family comes from Waterford, Southern Ireland.)

"I didn't even know there were Quakers in Northern Ireland," she admitted when she first considered coming over. "But if there were, then they should be doing something because it was some sort of religious struggle . . .

ful at the expense of the powerless, and the innate reservoir of human potential waiting to be released from hearts and souls too tired now to look up.

We have barely begun. But even as we stand on the threshold, we can see how right sharing could be a new beginning for each and for all of us. We see potential for a new affirmation of our world citizenship; a new dedication to our stewardship of God's plenty; a new commitment to free resources under our care—goods, money, time, energy—for the betterment of lives not yet able to develop their own internal resources. We also see potential for ourselves to be free from unnecessary encumbrances, and to know that we are trying to walk in God's way.

We see the way. Now we look for the will of Friends to take the next step by contributing to Right Sharing of World Resources through yearly meeting RSWR committees or the World Committee, American Section.

and it was working with the Quakers in a situation like this that appealed to me."

Earlier Kate spent a year at an AFSC work camp in Mexico, worked at a boys reform school in Finland and at a mission in Liverpool, England.

She comes from a deeply committed Quaker family. Her mother, Floy, works for the New York Yearly Meeting, and her father Nathaniel, an advertising executive, puts out his own bi-weekly report entitled "Disarmament News and Views." Kate attended a Friends school in her hometown of Ridgeway, N.J., and completed a year at Earlham College.

While her background taught her to identify with her people, she ran into a little difficulty when she got to Ireland.

"It's funny, when you're back in the States and you have a grandfather who is Irish, you think you are Irish. But you come over here and you find you're a Yank!" she said.

That doesn't deter Kate in the least. As her newly acquired brogue grows thicker each day, her quiet modest manner slowly develops into an Irish mentality. On a foggy day, one might even say that she looks Irish.

However, there are certain things Kate finds more difficult to accept. One of them is the Ulster version of Quakerism. "It's more conservative (than the American)," according to Kate. "They would never think of going to

jail. They would never think of civil disobedience—at least for the moment.” But what bothers her most is their concept of pacifism.

“They are against the violence by the extremists,” she pointed out, “but I don’t know any Quakers who actually would want to see the army pulled out, which I find very disheartening. I don’t think you can be a Quaker and rely on your system to be upheld by having an army present.”

She explains the attitudes of the Ulster Friends as follows: “A lot of the Quakers here are English. Many of

them see the army as their boys and very much feel it when each soldier is shot, not just because it’s a human being shot, but also because it’s their army in a way.”

Accepting these philosophical differences, Kate enjoys her work and the company of the Ulster Friends and has asked to stay on another year.

Kate Cullinan is a living example of what the American Quaker, Rufus Jones, wrote nearly a half a century ago: “I pin my hopes to quiet processes and small circles in which vital and transforming events take place.”



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