



## IRISH AMERICAN HERITAGE MUSEUM

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## NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### THE IRISH AMERICAN HERITAGE MUSEUM ANNOUNCES 2026 TRADITIONAL IRISH CULTURE / ARTS SCHOLARSHIP

*IAHM to Continue Program to Recruit  
Regional Irish Cultural Ambassadors*

*To Partake in Rich, Regionally Diverse Irish Heritage Experiences*

ALBANY, N.Y. (May 29, 2026) - Following the 2025 successes of the Irish American Heritage Museum's (IAHM) Regional Irish Cultural Ambassador program, IAHM is proud to announce new scholarship opportunities in 2026, to further the Museum's cultural and heritage offerings. IAHM's Regional Cultural Ambassador Scholarship Program provides geographically diverse opportunities for selected individuals to participate in artistic, educational and heritage-based programs throughout the United States and Canada.

Recipients of this award are designated "Regional Irish Cultural Ambassadors" of the Irish American Heritage Museum, and are provided with an opportunity to share their Irish knowledge and arts with similarly interested groups/individuals in other regions of the United States and Canada with rich, unique Irish cultural traditions. Scholarship recipients:

- Share their own Irish cultural talents;
- Exchange styles, art, and tunes with other Irish artists;
- Immerse themselves in the "trad" heritage, culture and life of another region; and,
- Return home to share those experiences with their own communities.

Each IAHM Regional Irish Cultural Ambassador will be provided with opportunities to explore the broad regional impact of the Irish in America through music and arts education.

Thanks to generous donations from members of the IAHM community, the Museum is pleased to announce new IAHM Regional Irish Cultural Ambassador opportunities in 2026. One of these opportunities is open to a resident of New York State who wishes to attend **Celtic Week of the Swannanoa Gathering**, which takes place from July 19-25, 2026 at Warren Wilson College in Asheville, North Carolina. For over three decades, the Swannanoa Gathering has enrolled over

30,000 participants from across the United States and abroad, with programs offered by world class artists, as well as classes, céilís, concerts, sessions and dances.

IAHM's Executive Director Michael C. Clarke states: "I regularly communicate with IAHM's 2025 Regional Irish Cultural Ambassadors: each continues to share their Ambassador experiences with their respective arts communities. IAHM is delighted for this opportunity to exchange our shared heritage and culture with the prestigious Swannanoa Gathering's Celtic Week, through IAHM's Regional Irish Cultural Ambassador program."

"Irish arts and culture fills the air in the stunning Blue Ridge Mountains during this flagship week at Swannanoa Gathering," said Seán Gavin, Coordinator of Swannanoa Gathering's Celtic Week. "We are thrilled to partner with IAHM in this endeavor on this 35th anniversary of the Swannanoa Gathering, and look forward to welcoming our first IAHM Regional Irish Cultural Ambassador."

Assistant Director Hayden-Grace Francis states: "IAHM remains grateful for its supporters, and especially those that have contributed to the Regional Irish Cultural Ambassador program. These benefactors meaningfully foster our Irish heritage and culture. Their generous donations support beautifully the regional growth of the Irish American Heritage Museum's community."

IAHM's Regional Irish Cultural Ambassador Scholarships Program is fully funded by generous sponsors and donors, including the Crisafulli Family Foundation, Steve and Lisa Miller, Ronan Rooney, the Michael A. Flanagan Irish Music Heritage Inc., and several anonymous donors. 100% of donations made to this program go to heritage and cultural scholarship opportunities. Please consider donating, [here](#).

Details about IAHM's 2026 Regional Irish Cultural Ambassador scholarship award program and application process are provided, below.

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## **ABOUT IAHM'S REGIONAL IRISH CULTURAL AMBASSADOR SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM**

IAHM's Regional Irish Cultural Ambassador Scholarship Program is designed to expose recipients ("Ambassadors") to Irish arts, heritage, culture and communities in different regions of the United States and Canada. It is intended that IAHM Regional Irish Cultural Ambassadors - through the opportunities of learning and collaborations, and through the exchange of creative, Irish heritage-based educational programs - will return home and share their experiences with their own regional Irish cultural communities.

The requirements for the 2026 IAHM Regional Irish Cultural Ambassador Scholarship Program's applicants (Swannanoa Gathering's Celtic Week) are:

- Applicant must be eighteen (18) years of age, or older.
- Must be a resident of New York State.
- Must not have previously attended Swannanoa Gathering's Celtic Week as a student.
- Must submit a one hundred (100) word description of why the applicant believes they will be a suitable candidate to be an IAHM Regional Irish Cultural Ambassador.
- Must fully participate in Swannanoa Gathering's Celtic Week classes and activities.
- Must agree to notify the Irish American Heritage Museum immediately if for whatever reason it is determined the applicant can/will not attend Swannanoa Gathering's Celtic Week.

The IAHM Regional Irish Cultural Ambassador Scholarship includes:

- Reimbursement for one (1) full-time tuition to Swannanoa Gathering's Celtic Week, from July 19-25, 2026 (\$695 value).
- Stipend for transportation/lodging/other associated travel costs (\$300 value).
- Associate Membership to Irish American Heritage Museum (for IAHM Regional Irish Cultural Ambassador and family)(\$100 value).
- Guided tour of Irish American Heritage Museum (value: PRICELESS!).

New York State residents interested in applying for the Irish American Heritage Museum's Regional Irish Cultural Ambassador Scholarship to July 19-25, 2026 Swannanoa Gathering's Celtic Week need to complete the online application, [here](#). Applications will be accepted until COB June 7, 2026.

For Irish American Heritage Museum information, including exhibitions and events, click [here](#). For Swannanoa Gathering's Celtic Week information, click [here](#).

### **IAHM's 2025 REGIONAL IRISH CULTURAL AMBASSADORS**

In 2025, Katherine Kalinowski (Arlington TX) and Sean and Liam Bohan (Rivervale NJ) were named IAHM's first Regional Irish Cultural Ambassadors.

Katherine (Uilleann pipes) participated at New York's [Catskills Irish Arts Week](#), while Sean (fiddle) and Liam (keyboard) participated in [O'Flaherty's Irish Music Retreat's](#) cultural immersion program in Texas.

“Attending an Irish arts immersion week in another region of the United States was a great learning experience for me. I gained new perspectives into my instrument. I brought home to Texas a ‘fresh take’ on techniques and tunes from playing and learning in New York with some of the best traditional Irish musicians from Ireland and the Northeast US,” said Katherine. Katherine, who teaches middle and high school music and art, previously served on active duty in the United States Navy, and performed on clarinet in U.S. Navy fleet bands. Katherine discovered her passion for Irish music while she was stationed in Virginia, when she began learning the tin whistle and playing at traditional Irish music sessions. Since then, Katherine has

immersed herself in Irish music communities in Honolulu, Chicago, St. Louis, Minneapolis, and Dallas-Fort Worth.

“I am proud to be an IAHM Regional Irish Cultural Ambassador and IAHM Member, and I remain grateful to IAHM for this opportunity,” Sean Bohan stated. “It is a great privilege being an IAHM Ambassador, and I loved my musical experience at O’Flaherty’s in Texas. I have carried with me every day since that week the hospitality and unique cultural ‘deep-dive’ experience of O’Flaherty’s, where I played with and learned from folks from as far as Ireland, California, Texas and Boston.” Sean, who is currently studying Business Management at Babson College, remains very active in the northeast traditional Irish music scene.

Liam Bohan stated, “I have learned from several northeastern United States legends including Rose Flanagan, Margie Mulvihill, Patty Furlong and Kieran Flanagan. Considering that amazing foundation, it was a truly fantastic experience being fully immersed with Irish cultural legends from around the world, in Texas. I am so grateful to IAHM for this opportunity.” Liam is studying Nutrition and Business Management at Case Western Reserve University, and has played throughout the United States since attending O’Flaherty’s Irish Music Retreat in 2025.

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## **ABOUT THE IRISH AMERICAN HERITAGE MUSEUM**

The Irish American Heritage Museum (IAHM) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation founded by the New York State legislature in 1986 and permanently chartered in 1992 by the Board of Regents of New York as an educational institution. Through exhibitions, first-person narratives, and cultural programming, IAHM tells the story of Irish immigrants and their descendants - from U.S. presidents and cultural icons to nameless soldiers and factory workers.

In addition to exhibitions, IAHM hosts a robust series of programs, including traditional Irish music sessions and performances, lectures, cooking demonstrations, once a month traditional and folk (“Trad/Folk”) Irish performances, film screenings, and assorted one-person shows, plays, and busking experiences. To learn more, visit [www.irish-us.org](http://www.irish-us.org), follow IAHM on [Facebook](#), and see programming on [IAHM Eventbrite](#).

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