



IRISH AMERICAN HERITAGE MUSEUM

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NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**THE IRISH AMERICAN HERITAGE MUSEUM ANNOUNCES
2026 TRADITIONAL IRISH CULTURE / ARTS SCHOLARSHIPS**

*IAHM to Continue Program to Recruit
Regional Irish Cultural Ambassadors
To Partake in Rich, Regionally Diverse Irish Heritage Experiences*

ALBANY, N.Y. (May 28, 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 explore the broad regional impact of the Irish in America and Canada through music and arts education.

Thanks to generous donations from members of the IAHM community, the Museum is pleased to announce four 2026 IAHM Regional Irish Cultural Ambassador scholarship opportunities:

- One IAHM Regional Irish Cultural Ambassador scholarship is offered to a resident of New York State who wishes to attend **Leahy Music Camp**, which takes place from July 5-9, 2026 at Lakefield College School in Lakefield, Ontario (Canada). For two decades, the

Leahy Music Camp has the reputation for being a major source of inspiration and instruction for people of all ages and abilities. Leahy Music Camp offers classes in fiddle, piano, step-dancing, singing, guitar, bass, drums, mandolin, accordion, music technology, songwriting, composing, and more. This year's stellar offerings include Riverdance's Noel Spillane (Irish dancing) and Marty Barry (guitar/tenor banjo). Criteria for this scholarship [here](#), and online application form [here](#).

- Two IAHM Regional Irish Cultural Ambassador scholarships are offered to alumni of **O'Flaherty's Irish Music Retreat / Traditional Irish Music Education Society** in Texas, who wishes to attend the pre-eminent **Catskills Irish Arts Week**, which takes place in upstate New York State from July 13–18, 2026. Celebrating its 32nd year, Catskills Irish Arts Week (CIAW) educates and delights participants - through classes, presentations, concerts, nightly céilís and sessions - given by an esteemed roster of instructors from Ireland and the United States who teach and perform at the highest level of traditional Irish culture, music and dance. Criteria for these scholarships [here](#), and online application form [here](#).
- One IAHM Regional Irish Cultural Ambassador scholarship is offered 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. Criteria for this scholarship [here](#), and online application form [here](#).

IAHM's Executive Director Michael C. Clarke states: "I regularly communicate with IAHM's three 2025 Regional Irish Cultural Ambassadors, and am thrilled at how well they continue to represent the Irish American Heritage Museum throughout the United States. Each continues to share their IAHM Ambassador experiences with their respective arts communities. Leahy Music Camp, CIAW and Celtic Week of the Swannanoa Gathering are ideal experiences for IAHM's new Ambassadors, and those wishing to totally immerse themselves in their Irish heritage and to live - for at least one week - both the great impact and rich diversity of Irish culture in America."

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 each of the four IAHM's 2026 Regional Irish Cultural Ambassador scholarship awards and application process are provided by following this [IAHM link](#).

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 general requirements for the 2026 IAHM Regional Irish Cultural Ambassador Scholarship Program's applicants (CIAW) are:

- Applicant must be eighteen (18) years of age, or older.
- 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 classes and activities at the destination Irish cultural/heritage/arts camp.
- Must agree to notify the Irish American Heritage Museum immediately if for whatever reason it is determined the applicant/Ambassador is unable to attend the destination Irish cultural/heritage/arts camp.

Additional details for each Ambassador opportunity are detailed at this this **[IAHM link](#)**. Each IAHM Regional Irish Cultural Ambassador Scholarship includes:

- Reimbursement for one (1) Student tuition to the the destination Irish cultural/heritage/arts camp.
- 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!).

Applications will be accepted until COB June 7, 2026.

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.

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, follow IAHM on [Facebook](#), and see programming on [IAHM Eventbrite](#).

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