

# Post-Standard Letter

Saturday, August 01, 2009

## Enjoyed hosting child from Northern Ireland

To the Editor:

This summer, our family had a wonderful experience here in Central New York. We chose to share our home with a child from Northern Ireland for the past four weeks. As a Project Children host family, we had a 10-year-old girl stay with us and take part in our family's summer activities.

Grace, from Belfast, left recently with lots of hugs and a few tears shed. She was one of 43 children from Northern Ireland who stayed in Central New York - more than anywhere else in the country where Project Children operates. Despite the difficult economy, they had more families participating this year. Our community should be proud.

Hosting Grace opened our eyes to many things we take for granted, and gave us some great new family experiences. Day trips to the State Museum, the Sterling Renaissance Festival, Howe Caverns and Sandy Beach were terrific, as were Girl Scout Camp, Irish Night at the Chiefs, the MOST and going berry-picking. Our children have a new appreciation for life in our country, and the experience helped us connect stronger with our Irish roots.

Thanks to Syracuse program coordinator Kathleen Kelly and the others who volunteer to run this fantastic program. On their behalf, I'd like to thank all the other host families who opened their homes and hearts to these children. Thanks to all the local businesses who supported Project Children, who allowed us to show the children an even better time.

Grace: Molly and Noah miss their new sister.

Ellen and Mark Kotzin

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