

## Dear Readers,

Welcome to the summer edition of The Spark, which shares the stories of some of the incredible beneficiaries of National Lottery funding, who are changing the everyday lives of people and communities through their work.

The countdown for the 2016 Olympics and Paralympic Games is well underway and we catch up with two of Ireland's most promising talents who are bound for Rio. World record holder in athletics, Michael McKillop, and swimming sensation, Ellen Keane, discuss their preparations for the 2016 Paralympic Games with **Paralympics Ireland**.

**The Circle of Friends Cancer Support Centre** in Co. Tipperary is a volunteer-led community service that supports cancer patients and those affected by the disease in Limerick and Tipperary. The Circle of Friends Founder, Jennifer Jones Hickey speaks about their work in the community and plans to create a purpose-built support centre in Tipperary by 2018.

**The Alzheimer Society of Ireland** has been supporting and advocating for the rights and needs of all people living with dementia in Ireland since 1982. Collette Kelleher, Chief Executive Officer of the Alzheimer Society of Ireland, highlights the crucial role her organisation play in the 120 countrywide dementia-specific services, which are vital to those living with dementia and their carers.

In this edition, we also look at a remarkable community-based service provider in Drogheda, Co. Louth. Founded in 1970, **Drogheda Community Services** has ensured an improvement to the quality of life in their community by providing a range of social and professional services to the people of Drogheda Town.

We hope you enjoy this issue of the Spark. For more information about other projects supported by National Lottery good cause funding please visit [www.lottery.ie](http://www.lottery.ie) and click on the Good Causes & Winners tab.

**Dermot Griffin**  
Chief Executive Officer

## Paralympics Ireland Athletes Eye Gold in Rio 2016

The 2016 Paralympic Games in Rio de Janeiro starts on 7<sup>th</sup> September and it is all systems go for the athletes and staff of Paralympics Ireland, who are looking ahead to what will hopefully be yet another successful Games.

Paralympics Ireland's Chef de Mission for the 2016 Games, Denis Toomey, recently unveiled the names of the athletes who will be representing their country in Brazil. Team Ireland will consist of approximately 45 athletes across 10 different sports, and Performance Director, Dave Malone, is hoping that the squad will bring home at least eight medals, coupled with a host of Lifetime Bests and fantastic performances.

Ahead of the Games, we caught up with three-time Paralympic gold medallist, Michael McKillop, and swimmer, Ellen Keane, who outlined how National Lottery funding - through Sport Ireland - has allowed them to focus on competing and has helped them on the road to Rio 2016.

Antrim's Michael McKillop, who currently holds the World Record

for both the T37 800m and 1,500m, stated:

**"National Lottery and Sport Ireland funding gives me the opportunity to be a full-time athlete. Not only am I being funded as an elite athlete, I am funded as a Paralympic athlete and that for me is key - we are funded the same as able-bodied people. My ambition is to see Paralympic sport become bigger and more ambitious for many years to come,"** he said.

World Championship bronze medallist, Ellen Keane, also spoke about the importance of funding for her career as an athlete.

**"The funding that the National Lottery supplies through Sport Ireland has helped me amazingly over the years and throughout my swimming career. I wouldn't have been able to do it without them."**

In 2015, 17 Paralympics Ireland athletes were awarded funding through the Sport Ireland International Carding Scheme, including 11 who received the maximum 'podium' amount for all elite Olympic and Paralympic athletes. For more information on Paralympics Ireland, visit: [www.paralympics.ie](http://www.paralympics.ie)



World record holder in athletics, Michael McKillop.



Paralympics Ireland Swimming star, Ellen Keane.

## Ambitious Expansion Plans for Circle of Friends Cancer Support Centre

The Circle of Friends Cancer Support Centre in Tipperary Town is a community-based organisation, which provides therapies and an invaluable support network to people in Limerick and Tipperary who are struggling with a cancer diagnosis, or simply trying to find ways of managing the effects of their treatment. The aim of the group is to offer support to people affected by cancer and their families who are struggling to deal with the disease. The centre also offers a range of complementary therapies to deal with the effects of cancer and cancer treatment, with reflexology, reiki, massage, acupuncture and meditation available to help combat stress, anxiety and fatigue.

Having secured a green field site from Tipperary Cashel Municipal

District Council, the Circle of Friends Cancer Support Centre has unveiled ambitious plans to create a purpose built cancer support centre for the areas of Limerick and Tipperary by 2018.



Circle of Friends Founder, Jennifer Jones Hickey (centre) launches last June's 'Circle of Friends' 5K Fun Run.

Circle of Friends Founder, Jennifer Jones Hickey said,

**"The HSE National Lottery funding we receive helps us to provide much needed assistance and support to**

**people who are dealing with cancer. All of our supports and therapies are provided free of charge, thanks to the continuing generosity of our supporters. I believe the reason why Circle of Friends has become so successful it is now the Heart of our community, social support is so important in communities it makes people feel cared for, loved, esteemed and valued, it plays such a big part in so many people's lives. Everyone wants to help and in helping they feel part of the centre and the love it shows to everyone"**

Further details on the Circle of Friends Cancer Support Centre can be found by visiting:

[www.circleoffriendscancersupport.com](http://www.circleoffriendscancersupport.com)

## Alzheimer Society of Ireland Take the Lead with Vital Services for Dementia Care

The Alzheimer Society of Ireland (ASI) is the leading dementia-specific service provider in Ireland. The ASI works across the country in the heart of local communities, providing dementia-specific services and supports and advocating for the rights and needs of all people living with dementia and their carers.

A national non-profit organisation, which was founded in 1982, the ASI is person-centric, rights-based and grassroots led, with the voice of the person with dementia and their carer at its core. There are currently 55,000 people living with dementia in Ireland, a number expected to treble in a decade.

Alzheimer Society of Ireland Chief Executive Officer, Collette Kelleher said,

**‘The Alzheimer Society of Ireland has, since it was founded, campaigned on behalf of people with dementia and their carers to improve the lives of all those affected by dementia. Fundraising is an extremely important source of revenue for our services and takes place locally across Ireland as well as through national events and campaigns. The funding we receive from the National Lottery Grant Scheme through the HSE & Department of Health allow us to help improve the lives of all those affected by dementia.’**

The ASI’s network includes over 120 dementia-specific services such as day care centres, home care services, carer support groups, social clubs, Alzheimer cafés and two respite centres. The ASI also operates the Alzheimer National Helpline Service, offering information and support to anyone affected by Alzheimer’s or dementia on 1800 341 341.

For further details on the Alzheimer Society of Ireland, please visit: [www.alzheimer.ie](http://www.alzheimer.ie)



Alzheimer Society of Ireland Chief Executive Officer, Collette Kelleher (Centre) helps launch the ASI pre-budget submission last June.

## Drogheda’s Community Spirit Shines Bright

Drogheda Community Services was founded in 1969 as a collective initiative to co-ordinate various community and charitable bodies in the Drogheda area.

From humble beginnings, the Drogheda Community Services now operates a state-of-the-art, modern, day care facility for older people from its premises. Known as the ‘Dermot Kierans Centre’ at Scarlet Crescent, Drogheda, the centre provides meals, hairdressing, bathing, chiropody, holistic therapies, art, physical exercises and social activities on a daily basis. Free transport to and from the centre is provided to all clients. The Centre provides other voluntary services to the public including, bereavement counselling, addiction counselling, mediation, legal advice and civil legal aid.

Speaking about the support required to deliver a vast range of services for their clients, Margaret McCullen, Manager of the Drogheda Community Services said,

**‘The support of the National Lottery, through the Department of Health and Department of Justice and Equality has been invaluable and has enabled us to improve our facilities and the services offered.’**

The centre also operates the Drogheda & District Charity Chest, which was set up in 1985 with the purpose of raising funds to support local services.

The centre relies on a dedicated staff of professional employees, community employment participants, volunteers, job initiative employees, as well as continuous support from the Health Service Executive and Tulsa, Child and Family Agency.

More details for on Drogheda Community Services can be found on: [www.droghedacsc.net](http://www.droghedacsc.net)



Florrie Maher and Elsie Tracey at the Dermot Kierans Centre in Drogheda.

### National Lottery - Good Causes

- In 2015 the National Lottery raised €188 million for good causes in Ireland.
- Approx. 30 cent from each €1 spent on all National Lottery games goes towards good causes.