

Special Olympics Ireland 30th Anniversary To Be Marked At UL

Over 350 people will gather in the National University of Limerick Arena this Wednesday evening to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the founding of Special Olympics Ireland.

Ennis, Clare, IRL, 2008-06-03 15:28:08 (IndiaPRwire.com)

Special Olympics Ireland CEO Mary Davis will attend the event, which is being hosted by the County Limerick Sports Partnership and Limerick County Council.

The event will feature a parade of athletes with the Olympic Torch, a DVD presentation entitled '30 Years of Special Olympics', gymnastics routine by Special Olympics Lisnagry, a rendition of the Olympic anthem by the Limerick County Choir, and an exhibition hockey match between Special Olympics athletes and members of the Limerick Senior Hurling Team.

Special Olympics Ireland is a charity organisation with 11,000 athletes participating in 12 sports in 409 clubs across the island of Ireland. It is one of Ireland's largest community and voluntary organisations and reaches 33% of the 34,000 people with intellectual disabilities in Ireland.

In addition to providing sports training and competition, Special Olympics Ireland also incorporates the Athlete Leadership Programme (ALPs), the Family Support Programme, Healthy Athlete and Volunteer Programme.

Cllr. Kevin Sheahan, Cathaoirleach of Limerick County Council, said that the upcoming ceremony would celebrate an organisation that continues to generate hope for thousands and inspiration for millions.

'Special Olympics Ireland is much more than just a sporting organisation. It empowers individuals with intellectual disabilities to become physically fit, productive and respected members of society through sports training and competition. In County Limerick alone, hundreds of individuals and their families have benefited from the organisation's expansive support and training structure', Cllr Sheahan stated.

The Cathaoirleach said that Special Olympics Ireland was also about engendering volunteerism and community spirit.

He continued, 'The organisation at local, national and international level would not exist today without the time, energy, commitment and enthusiasm of its 18,000 volunteers. The hosting of the 2003 Special Olympics World Games in Ireland created a wonderful sense of community spirit across Limerick. The town-hosting programme was a huge success because of the goodwill shown by local communities. The contribution of members of the public to the overall success of the 2003 Games is testament to the fact that the spirit of volunteerism is alive and well in Ireland. It will go down in history as one of those very special occasions when all Irish people united for a common cause.'

Cllr. Sheahan commented that the organisation continued to bring hope to many thousands of individuals across Ireland.

'Globally, the organisation supports 2.5 million people with intellectual disabilities in more than 200 Programs in over 180 countries. This represents a phenomenal contribution to society. The Special Olympics organisation promotes the message that 'anything is possible if you have hope'. The organisation instils a sense of hope in everyone it comes into contact with and helps replace stigma and rejection with an emphasis on potential, ability and acceptance. Such support is invaluable', the Cathaoirleach said.

Cllr. Sheahan said the upcoming event would celebrate County Limerick's contribution to the development of Special Olympics Ireland.

'Across County Limerick, support for the organisation has always existed and I am confident that it will continue well into the future. I also know that the County Limerick Sports Partnership, along with Limerick County Council, will continue to support Special Olympics Ireland', the Cathaoirleach concluded.

For more on Special Olympics Ireland visit www.specialolympics.ie.

- END -

'Enhancing reputations-Increasing exposure-Increasing understanding'

Founded in 2006, **Dunphy Public Relations** is a communications group led by Mark Dunphy from County Clare. Mr. Dunphy previously held the position of 'Head of News and Current Affairs' in Clare FM Radio.

Dunphy Public Relations has secured extensive local, national and international media coverage for clients including Clare County Council; Supply Network Shannon; The Atlantis Holiday Group; Shannon Town Council; Cliffs of Moher New Visitor Experience; Clare Museum; Digino Marketing; Renewable Energy Skillsnet; Magico.ie; Kilrush Town Council; Clonlara Wholesale; Minister for Labour Affairs, Tony Killeen; Clare County Library; and Ennis Town Council.

For more information, Please contact:

Mark Dunphy

Director - Dunphy Public Relations
00353868534900

You can also visit www.dunphypr.com for more information.