

BETWEEN THE BRIDGES PRESS RELEASE

Thursday 8th January 2009

LOCAL SPORTING HEROES SIGN UP TO WESTLINK CHARITY RUN

Well known sporting personalities joined the Minister for Regional Development, Conor Murphy, in a "signing up" launch at the Park Centre in Belfast (Thursday 8th January). Paralympic Gold Medallist Michael McKillop, Olympic Bronze Medallist Paddy Barnes, boxer and actor Martin Rogan, Camogie All Star 2008 Jane Adams, Camogie College All Star Fionnula Carr, Linfield FCís Michael Gault and Paul Mc Areavy, Cliftonville FCís Barry Johnston and Connor Downey, and actress Olivia Nash pledged their support for the 10k run and 5k fun run in aid of Northern Ireland Hospice. The run will start and finish at the Park Centre car park, opposite Broadway roundabout.

Minister Murphy encouraged people to consider taking part saying:

"The start of the New Year is always a good time to consider keeping fit and healthy, and I would really encourage everyone to register now to take part. This community event will allow people the unique opportunity to run on the M1 and Westlink, one of the largest road projects in the North and all for a worthy cause. I will be taking part myself and I encourage everyone to find their running and walking shoes and sign up to what promises to be a great event for people of all abilities, from young to old, and experienced runners and novices."

Actress Olivia Nash attended in her role as Vice President of Northern Ireland Hospice and is delighted that the charity will be benefiting from the event. "This event will be a huge boost to Northern Ireland Hospice. I have heard so many people talk about it but now we need them to put words into action and enter the event. Registration for the 10k costs £10 and the 5k costs £5 and all the money will go directly to Northern Ireland Hospice to support their childrenís and adult services. I intend to walk the 5K route and look forward to meeting lots of friendly and familiar faces on the motorway."

Organiser Dougie Adams from Cumann Spóirt an Phobail welcomed the support from the Minister and all those in attendance. "This event is much more than a run, it's a one off opportunity and open to runners, joggers, walkers and families who can all take part. It is a community day out, so why not come and join the sports personalities who have already signed up. Everyone who takes part will also receive a t-shirt and medal to commemorate an historic day. This event highlights the need for sports, health and fitness and cross community initiatives made possible with the support and assistance of DRD, Sport Northern Ireland, Belfast City Council and many other stakeholders and volunteers. The motivation behind this event is the Hospice. Most of us know the devastation that cancer and other life limiting conditions can bring to families and loved ones. Northern Ireland Hospice provides care for people of all ages and here is an opportunity for us to give something back, raise much needed funds and get off that couch, get active and have fun - eight weeks to go, so sign up today."

Eamonn McCartan, Chief Executive of Sport Northern Ireland, also welcomed this new event in the local sporting calendar: "As the lead agency for developing sport in Northern Ireland we welcome new events that provide an opportunity for more people to participate in sport and physical recreation. I look forward to seeing many people taking part on the 8th March."

Stakeholders and supporters for the 10k Run, 5k Fun Run and Walk for the Northern Ireland Hospice are the Department for Regional Development, Sport Northern Ireland, Belfast City Council, Cumann Spóirt an Phobail or pick up an application form at your local leisure centre, Northern Ireland Hospice, Sport Northern Ireland and other supporting outlets.

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