

## Press Release

20<sup>th</sup> January 2010

### ***Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA) to host 50 birthday parties on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> February to celebrate its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.***

2010 marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA). The Association was founded in 1960 by a small group of wheelchair users committed to improving the lives of people with physical disabilities in Ireland.

From its modest beginnings in 1960 the Association has grown into a vibrant network of 20,000 members and over 2,000 staff, as well as many dedicated volunteers. The Association is today, as it was in 1960, focused on the needs of the individual and directed by its members.

The 50<sup>th</sup> celebrations will begin on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> February (the 50<sup>th</sup> day of 2010) as IWA birthday parties are held in 50 locations throughout the country. IWA is inviting any members, volunteers or fundraisers who have supported the organisation over the years to attend the events. Members of the local community who turn 50 in 2010 are also invited to join IWA in celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> birthday!

Speaking about the occasion, IWA CEO Kathleen McLoughlin commented:

*“IWA has centres in 68 communities throughout the country. Many people may not have had the opportunity to visit their local IWA centre in the past and find out more about what IWA does to support people with disabilities.*

*I extend an invitation to all the friends and members of IWA to join us in celebrating this important milestone in our history. It will be a very special event and the 50<sup>th</sup> birthday parties will be held throughout the country, so everyone can join in on the celebrations.”*

This event is part of a series of IWA 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary events that will take place nationally throughout 2010. To find out more about other IWA 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary events, please visit [www.iwa.ie/50th](http://www.iwa.ie/50th)

**Please add in your own local information at this point outlining your local services and details of the forthcoming party with following contact details etc.**

***For further information on your local event, please contact***

*Gillian Goulding on 045 861346 or by email [gillian.goulding@iwa.ie](mailto:gillian.goulding@iwa.ie) or Helen Martyn on 087 2415896 or email [helen.martyn@iwa.ie](mailto:helen.martyn@iwa.ie)*

### **Additional information**

The Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA) is a national organisation dedicated to the achievement of the full social, economic and educational integration of people with disabilities as equal, independent and participative members of the community.

Our Association is made up of a vibrant network of 20,000 members and over 2,000 staff, as well as many dedicated volunteers. Together we work to achieve greater independence, freedom and choice for people living with a disability.

IWA provides a wide range of services including Resource and Outreach Centres, Youth Services, Sport, Holiday Centres, and Assisted Living Services.