

For immediate release 5th November 2009.

Official Opening of Independent Living Apartments in Clontarf Irish Wheelchair Association

On Tuesday 10th November Mr. John Moloney T.D., Minister for Equality, Disability and Mental Health will officially open six Independent Living Apartments in the Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA) complex in Clontarf at 12.00pm

In 2007 IWA successfully applied for funding from POBAL and together with a very generous benefactor were able to bring all six apartments up to the highest modern standards of accessibility and in doing so, provide modern, bright and comfortable living accommodation for members.

The apartments will be known as the *Leo Close Apartments* in memory of one our founding members Fr Leo Close. Fr Leo was renowned for his belief in the importance of independence for people with disabilities. This initiative is seen as the first step for residents in independent living. The residents are entitled to stay in their apartment for unto 18 months and then will hopefully move onto other independent residential accommodation equipped with the skills and confidence required to live independently.

Speaking about the apartments, CEO Kathleen McLoughlin commented,

“I am particularly excited about this development as I see our work in providing opportunities for members to develop independent living skills as vital. As we approach 2010 and our 50th anniversary it is particularly fitting that we be dedicating the apartments to the memory of Fr Leo Close, one of our founding members”

Six new residents will take up occupancy in the next few weeks and are looking forward to their new lifestyle. New resident Derek Houlihan from Raheny is really excited about learning to live independently. “I don’t really have any major concerns. I’m fairly tidy and I will take pride in having my own place”.

A SELECTION OF HIGH RESOLUTION PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE NEW TENANTS IN THE APARTMENTS ARE AVAILABLE.

For further press information contact Mairead Farquharson 087 277 3270 or email mairiad.farquharson@iwa.ie

Background Information

The Irish Wheelchair Association was founded in 1960 by a small group of wheelchair users committed to improving the lives of people with physical disabilities in Ireland. Almost 50 years on IWA provides services nationally, including sixty resource and outreach centres; personal assistant services; motoring advice, assessment and tuition; youth services; training and education; respite and holidays; wheelchair sales and rental; peer counseling and sport. We work to achieve greater independence, freedom and choice for people living with a disability.