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Message from CEO, Rosemary Keogh

CEO Rosemary Keogh provides an update on IWA key developments

Welcome to the winter edition of SpokeOut. Our cover image features Abby Segrave-Daly and Dublin Fire Brigade trainee Mary Kelly who assisted IWA with the launch of our national fundraising campaign Angels. Collections all over Ireland took place on Thursday 8th and Friday 9th November, with hundreds of local members, volunteers, community groups and schools demonstrating their support for IWA by selling Angels Pins and Products. I would like to thank DPD Ireland and ALDI for their continued assistance with the Angels Campaign. I am delighted that a fantastic €300,000 has been raised so far this year.

I would like to congratulate the 30 brave individuals who took on the ultimate fundraising challenge this October by abseiling from the Hogan Stand, Croke Park Stadium. Pictures from the day are included on page six.

Earlier this year, IWA secured funding from Pobal through the Ability Programme to create a national employment support project for young adults with physical disabilities. This project aims to provide young adults between the age of 18-29 with physical disabilities with holistic, person-centred coaching that will support each person to become an independent job-seeker, or employee, with a clearly developed career plan. Read more about this exciting opportunity on page eighteen.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to wish each of you a very Merry Christmas and joyful New Year.
On Friday the 2nd November 2018, Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA) was joined by Dublin Fire Brigade Training Officer Brendan Carroll, Dublin Fire Brigade recruits, Junior IWA member Abby Segrave-Daly and Social Media Influencer Paddy Smyth to officially launch our national fundraising campaign Angels. The event took place at the Dublin Fire Brigade Training Centre in Marino with Abby who kick-started the campaign by presenting IWA's newest pin the Firefighter Angels Pin which was sold by hundreds of volunteers nationwide on Thursday 8th and Friday 9th November 2018.

November was particularly busy for IWA as the organisation, which supports 20,000 members throughout Ireland prepared for our national fundraising campaign, Angels. The Angels Campaign is the largest fundraising campaign in IWA’s calendar and enables us to generate the funds necessary to continue to maintain the level of essential services provided by IWA to people with physical disabilities and their families throughout Ireland.
CEO of Irish Wheelchair Association Rosemary Keogh expressed her gratitude to everyone involved in the campaign. “On behalf of IWA I would like to say a huge thank you to Abby Segrave-Daly and her family, to Paddy Smyth and to everyone at Dublin Fire Brigade for being involved in this year’s very successful launch. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all the many volunteers, members and supporters who make Angels possible. IWA also greatly appreciates the support of DPD, who distributed our angel products, and Aldi, Dunnes Stores and the various shopping centres nationwide who gave us permission to sell outside of their stores”.

IWA Angels Pins and other Angels products, including Christmas Cards and Christmas Decorations were sold nationwide and all the monies raised help fund essential services provided to people with physical disabilities in their own homes and communities.

Social Media Influencer, TV Personality and Disability Activist Paddy Smyth explained why he got involved in the Angels Campaign this year: “I am so excited to be part of the Angels Campaign 2018, as a person who has a physical disability, who has faced barriers all my life, from people thinking that I wouldn’t do much with my life because of my disability - this moment is to show them that they were wrong. What I hope to bring to the Angels Campaign, in my role as official ambassador in 2018 is a social media awareness and a louder voice to get the message out to a young generation and for those who are disabled, never to stop fighting for what you want in life”.

Speaking at the Launch Brendan Carroll Dublin Fire Brigade Training Officer said “The Dublin Fire Brigade is delighted be involved in this year’s Angel Campaign and we are honoured that IWA have created a Fireman Angel as their Angel pin of 2018. The work that Irish Wheelchair Association do on behalf of people with physical disabilities is of vital importance for people across the country and having the opportunity to host the 2018 national launch and support them as Ambassadors is our pleasure”.

DPD representative Aoife Kearney supporting Angels 2018

Paddy Smyth, Rosemary Keogh and Abby Seagrave-Daly help launch Angels 2018

Paddy Smyth and a Dublin Firefighter at the launch of Angels 2018
Local Angels Launches

In the lead up to the Angels Campaign, which took place throughout the month of November, many IWA Centres nationwide held launches to celebrate the Angels Campaign in their local towns and communities.

Clontarf

Athlone

Cork

Galway

Waterford
Aspiring Writers from Irish Wheelchair Association showcase a selection of work as part of Writers in Residency Programme with the Irish Writers Centre

Twelve aspiring writers and authors from Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA) took to the stage of the Project Arts Centre to perform a collection of short stories, poems and monologues on Friday, 17th August 2018. This once-off showcase event was the culmination of weeks of hard work, effort and creativity for the small group who worked alongside playwright and Irish Times columnist Rosaleen McDonagh as part of the Irish Writers Centre, Community Writers in Residence Programme for 2018.

As part of an evolving community engagement programme, the Irish Writers Centre partnered with Irish Wheelchair Association to deliver a comprehensive community Writer-in-Residence (CWIR) which was funded by Dublin City Council. Writers with physical disabilities from all over Ireland took part in the programme which provided a platform for participants to learn writing and editing tools, techniques and skills.
Speaking at the showcase event, *Anita Matthews*, IWA Communications Manager explained: “Irish Wheelchair Association is Ireland’s leading representative organisation for people with physical disabilities. We represent 20,000 people from all over Ireland and we are a collective voice for people with physical disabilities. Through the Writers in Residence Programme, writers with disabilities from all over Ireland have had the opportunity to share their voice, express their personal experiences and to demonstrate their talents and skills”.

During the performance which took place in the Project Arts Centre, Templebar, Dublin 2 each of the writers read or performed a piece of work which they had written during the Writers-in-Residence programme and the showcase event included a variety of poems, short stories, songs, essays and monologues which were enjoyed by an audience of family, friends and supporters.

Following the showcase event, *Kate Cunningham*, Irish Writers Centre said: ‘The Irish Writers Centre is delighted to have facilitated this partnership between Rosaleen McDonagh and the talented writers from IWA. We are based in a wheelchair inaccessible Georgian building in the city centre but this Community WIR with Irish Wheelchair Association has allowed us to ‘break out of the building’ and bring our services to a group of writers who we otherwise would not have connected with. Supporting writers from diverse backgrounds and with diverse needs is a key part of our strategy and we’ve been blown away by the talent and standard of writing that this project has produced’.

IWA member, *Georgina Lubek* from Limerick, was one of the 12 individuals to be selected to take part in this ten week programme, “Once we were finished the ten weeks I started to really look forward to the showcase. On the night, I took to the stage and I read out my story ‘Raine in the summer’. I felt it went very smoothly,” she explained “I didn’t have any nervous feeling. I felt I read it confidently and at a decent pace”.

In the final minutes of the showcase, I took to the stage once again with my song, ‘Branches’. It was really well received by the audience, so much so that one young woman come up to me at the end of the show and told me she has finally found a song she’ll be playing on repeat in her office at work.

It was a rollercoaster of a journey where I have made new friends which will hopefully last a lifetime. If this course ever comes up again, I highly recommend it to any budding writer”.
Thirty people bravely abseiled 100ft from the roof of the Hogan Stand in Croke Park on Saturday the 6th of October in support of Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA). The abseil participants included IWA’s very own CEO Rosemary Keogh, IWA staff, organisations such as OCS, KLM & KBD and individuals from all over Ireland.

IWA’s abseil participants worked diligently fundraising through sponsorship cards and preparing themselves mentally for the 100ft drop over two months. Their bravery was then put to the test on Saturday the 6th October as they climbed to the top of Croke Park’s Hogan Stand and stood looking down at the stadium, the heart of Irish GAA. They put their trust in the ropes and stepped off the Hogan Stand and abseiled down towards the pitch.
Speaking at the IWA Abseil Challenge in Croke Park, CEO of Irish Wheelchair Association Rosemary Keogh said: “With 20,000 members throughout Ireland, IWA is the leading representative organisation and service provider for people with physical disabilities. On an annual basis, IWA provides over 2 million hours of services to people in their own homes or communities. We also provide social, sporting and recreational opportunities, many of which are only made possible due to the efforts of our volunteers, donors and the public. On behalf of IWA, I would like to thank all participants who took part in the Abseil Challenge and who have shown limitless bravery and limitless hard work by fundraising and bravely stepping off the Hogan Stand in support of IWA.

Speaking at the IWA Abseil Challenge brave participant Mal Convery The Panel Marketing Chief said: “The Abseil in Croke Park was such a wonderful experience, not only was I able to help fundraise for Irish Wheelchair Association, to support their amazing work across the country, but the abseil was also a personal challenge for me as I learned to step out of my comfort zone and take a leap of faith.”
Make Way Day 2018

People from all over the country took part in “Make Way Day” a national campaign which aims to highlight obstacles blocking the footpath and the challenges they pose for people with physical disabilities.

Across Ireland, people with disabilities or limited mobility are confronted by physical barriers which limit their ability to move around local footpaths – and consequently impact on their ability to participate equally in their communities. In September ‘Make Way Day,’ took place for the second year and saw organisations from across the country, led by the Disability Federation of Ireland (DFI), come together to highlight these access issues.

The aim of Make Way Day was to raise awareness of how everyday actions such as leaving wheelie bins on footpaths, or cafes placing sandwich boards outside their premises can impact the lives of people with disabilities. Footpath obstacles have consistently been one of the key problems identified during access audits conducted by IWA in towns and communities nationwide. People with disabilities want to lead fully independent lives and rightfully expect to be able to participate in all aspects of society and community life, in the same way as their family, neighbours and friends.

“Obstacles such as parked cars on footpaths, overgrown hedges, bicycles chained to poles or railings and wheelie bins that are blocking the path have significant impact on people with disabilities”.

IWA Arklow member Paula Holt demonstrating how overgrown hedgerows can cause difficulties for wheelchair users.

Make Way Day sticker showing how wheelie bins can obstruct pathways for people with physical disabilities.
Megan Fitzsimons, IWA Communications Coordinator reports that “Make Way Day was officially made a national day in Ireland due to the phenomenal success of Make Way Day 2017 and of course this year was just as successful. Make Way Day 2018 clearly communicated that IWA members don’t want villages, towns and cities to be obstacle courses. Obstacles such as parked cars on footpaths, overgrown hedges, bicycles chained to poles or railings and wheelie bins that are blocking the path have a significant effect on people with disabilities. Make Way Day aimed to address this issue by positively educating the public on how everyday actions such as leaving wheelie bins on the path have an impact and encourages people to reconsider their choices which may affect their family, friends and neighbours with disabilities.”

Together with DFI, Irish Wheelchair Association and our members throughout Ireland supported the campaign by traveling within their local towns and communities taking photographs of the obstacle blocking their path with a “Make Way Day” logo/ sticker and sharing it on social media using the hashtag #MakeWayDay. The campaign succeeded in raising awareness beyond the disability community and involving the wider public. The hashtag #MakeWayDay trended at number 1 on social media on the campaign launch day and was published in both local and National newspapers. We hope that Make Way Day 2019 will be our most successful yet.
Cuisle is Ireland’s leading provider of wheelchair accessible accommodation and Irish Wheelchair Association’s (IWA) National Holiday Centre, offering unique holiday experiences in a warm and caring atmosphere.

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Cuisle Accessible Holiday Resort
Donamon, Co Roscommon
Tel: (090) 666 2277 | Email: cuisle@iwa.ie

For updates visit www.cuisle.ie
There are currently almost, 75,000 Disabled Drivers Parking Permits in circulation in Ireland. The availability of wheelchair accessible parking spaces is an essential lifeline for motorists with disabilities.

Unfortunately, far too often these spaces are occupied by able bodied drivers and this issue has become an increasing problem. This year Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA) launched the ‘Back in 5’ Campaign which aimed to highlight the significant impact parking in an accessible space can have on a person with a disability even if it is just for ‘5 minutes’.

With the increased volume of traffic throughout Ireland an unfortunate consequence has been an upsurge in motorists illegally parking in disabled parking bays. Accessible parking spots are very
important to people with disabilities due to their size and access to amenities and facilities.

IWA Service Coordinator Monica Hughes explained: “The name of IWA’s campaign originates from the throw away statement that people with disabilities hear on an all too regular basis when they confront a driver who has inadvertently parked in an accessible parking bay, “only running to the bank/shop, will be back in five minutes”. Accessible parking bays are located near amenities in order for people with disabilities to access; work, education, post office, shops, bank and social events. There is no excuse for using an accessible parking bay without a disability parking permit. IWA members have heard many different excuses and today we want to highlight to all drivers throughout the Midlands that this is not acceptable”.

The organisations involved in the ‘Back in 5’ campaign are also reminding motorists that it is an offence to park in a disabled parking space without an official Disabled Drivers Parking Permit. The offence is dealt with by way of a fixed charge notice for €80, rising to €120 if not paid in the first 28 days. Alongside this, the misuse of an accessible parking bay can have a significant impact on a driver with a disability who genuinely needs to access the space.

Joining the “Back in 5” campaign in Athlone Minister Kevin “Boxer” Moran said, “I am delighted to be involved in the “Back in 5” campaign and to support IWA and people with disabilities in my local constituency. This is an important initiative which aims to highlight the challenges experienced by motorists and passengers with disabilities. It is an issue that is often raised by people with disabilities and their families during my weekly clinics. And as such, it is essential that motorists understand the vital importance of respecting accessible parking bays.”
Local members of Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA) Lucan were joined by staff from Microsoft on 20th November to celebrate the launch of a new accessible bus which will provide a vital service to people with disabilities living in Lucan and the South Dublin area. IWA purchased a new accessible bus with the financial assistance of Microsoft who also support IWA’s busy Community Centre, located on the Newcastle Road, Lucan.

Transport is key to people with physical disabilities realising their independence as unfortunately, Ireland still does not have a fully accessible public transport system or taxi service. In this context, IWA’s nationwide fleet of accessible buses is vital to many Irish communities, providing door-to-door transport for people with disabilities who might otherwise be confined to their homes.

Microsoft – Bus Launch

Lucan Community Centre launches new accessible bus with the help of Microsoft
The new accessible bus was specifically adapted to meet the needs and requirements of people with physical disabilities and is a critical resource that enables IWA members to participate in the range of services and supports which IWA provides to people with physical disabilities on a weekly basis.

Speaking about the new accessible bus, IWA Service Coordinator, Ciaran McLoughlin explained: “IWA’s fleet of accessible buses are one of our most critical assets. The increased demand on our bus fleet alongside ageing vehicles means replacing and regenerating our transport fleet is an area of increasing challenge and focus. IWA buses can be seen in every corner of the country, transporting our members to and from a wide range of IWA and community activities. On the road 24/7, whether transporting young athletes to training, older members on a shopping outing, or young friends heading to a concert, in many cases the IWA bus is a lifeline, without which people would be isolated and confined to their homes”.

Marking the launch of the IWA service, was Noelle Walsh-Elwell, Corporate Vice President for Microsoft Cloud Operations and Innovation, and she said: “At Microsoft, we are committed to helping every person and organisation across the world achieve more. In living out our mission, we’re delighted to support the Irish Wheelchair Association by purchasing a new accessible bus that will enhance the quality of life for people with disabilities in the Dublin area. By providing inclusive mobility options, the IWA can achieve the full inclusion and integration of those with disabilities in our society.”
Introducing IWA’s Ability Program
Supporting Young Job Seekers

Are you a young person with a physical disability between the age of 18-29, looking to get closer to the jobs market? Do you need support navigating your journey to employment? Learn more about the new Ability program here.

Irish Wheelchair Association Ability Programme is an exciting new project that focuses on bringing young people with disabilities closer to employment and will be available across Ireland. A team of three Job Coaches and one Programme Coordinator will provide enthusiastic young individuals between the age of 18 – 29 with a range of services such as one to one career coaching, CV writing, interview skills, confidence building and much more.

The Ability Programme is about providing person-centred and holistic coaching to people with physical disabilities. IWA understands that the young people who will avail of this service each require different supports and no two people have the same goals, employment history, education, backgrounds and skills. We understand that while one person may be looking to discover what their skills and abilities are, another might want to find their ultimate, dream job. A person may even want to discuss further education and training options in their region to help them on their career journey. The three Job Coaches will work with participants nationwide.

The role of the Job Coach is to provide one to one coaching to enable programme participants to become an independent job seeker or employee. The development and progression that participants will have on the programme will be completely different for everyone, that’s the beauty of the Ability programme.

If you are interested in getting involved, please contact your local Job Coach using contact information on pages 19 & 20 or you can visit www.iwa.ie/ability.

*Ability is co-financed by the Irish Government and the European Social Fund as part of the ESF Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning 2014-2020.*
Anne is the Ability Programme Job Coach for the Eastern region, she is based in the IWA office in Kells, Co. Meath. The counties she covers are Dublin, Meath, Kildare, Offaly, Laois, Westmeath, Cavan, Kildare, Longford and Monaghan.

Anne has a wealth of experience from her previous work with Employability and hopes to use her skills to the best of her ability as a Job Coach. Ann hopes to focus on delivering a person centre approach while broadening her own knowledge and understanding around people with physical disability and how best to support them. Ann also hopes to build a network of inclusive employers throughout the East of Ireland raising awareness of inclusiveness in the workplace with employers and employees.

‘The Ability Programme is very exciting, this is a brand-new program to Irish Wheelchair Association and it is great to be involved right from the beginning. I am looking forward to working together as a team and meeting the participants. Most importantly I am looking forward to making this programme as successful as possible for all eligible 18-29 year olds in the regions.’

Jennifer is the Ability Programme Manager for Irish Wheelchair Association. She is based in the IWA office in Castlebar, Co. Mayo.

‘I feel very honoured and excited to be a part of the Ability Programme. Everyone should have the right to work. And I really feel that the more diverse and inclusive the Irish workforce is, the better it will be for everyone.’

Email: jenniferv.murray@iwa.ie
Mobile: 087 718 6294
Base Location: IWA Castlebar

Jennifer Murray
Programme Coordinator

Anne Hopkins
Job Coach East

Anne is the Ability Programme Job Coach for the Eastern region, she is based in the IWA office in Kells, Co. Meath. The counties she covers are Dublin, Meath, Kildare, Offaly, Laois, Westmeath, Cavan, Kildare, Longford and Monaghan.

Anne has a wealth of experience from her previous work with Employability and hopes to use her skills to the best of her ability as a Job Coach. Ann hopes to focus on delivering a person centre approach while broadening her own knowledge and understanding around people with physical disability and how best to support them. Ann also hopes to build a network of inclusive employers throughout the East of Ireland raising awareness of inclusiveness in the workplace with employers and employees.

‘The Ability Programme is very exciting, this is a brand-new program to Irish Wheelchair Association and it is great to be involved right from the beginning. I am looking forward to working together as a team and meeting the participants. Most importantly I am looking forward to making this programme as successful as possible for all eligible 18-29 year olds in the regions.’

Email: anne.hopkins@iwa.ie
Mobile: 087 381 5815
Base Location: IWA Cavan
Job Coach for: Dublin, Meath, Kildare, Offaly, Laois, Westmeath, Cavan, Kildare, Longford, Monaghan

Meet the Ability Team
Sarah is the Ability Job Coach for the West of Ireland, she is based in the IWA centre in Tuam, Co. Galway and Sarah is the Job Coach for the counties; Mayo, Galway, Clare, Sligo, Leitrim, Roscommon and Donegal.

Sarah previously worked as an Occupational Therapist and is enthusiastic about her new role as an Ability Job Coach. She believes that every person deserves the right to choose how they live their life, regardless of illness, injury, disability or challenging life circumstances. The role of a Job Coach enables people to do just that – choose and do what they want to do.

‘I am very excited to be a part of The Ability Programme. I love how the young people who will avail of the service will be directing all aspects the service, deciding the type and level of support which we as Job Coaches will provide. Our role is simply to support these young people to choose what they want to do and advise them on how they can accomplish their employment goal – be it training, education, volunteering or paid employment. I’m so happy to be a part of the Ability Programme and know it will genuinely serve those whom it is created for.’

Email: sarah.chalke@iwa.ie
Mobile: 087 331 0255
Base Location: IWA Tuam
Job Coach for: Galway, Mayo, Clare, Roscommon, Sligo, Leitrim, Donegal
IWA at Home would like to take this opportunity in wishing you a Happy Christmas and Joyful New Year!

Our mission is to promote independence, dignity and an enhanced quality of life, through partnership with our customers and their loved ones, within their own homes and communities.

We hope we are achieving these goals for you, with the support of our team of highly trained, highly motivated and naturally compassionate professional Personal Assistants.

Looking forward to supporting you and our community in 2019.

The IWA at Home Team

“Delivering unrivalled tailored personal assistance in the home, community, school or workplace so that our customers can lead independent, active and fulfilling lives.”
**For Sale:**

2012 Wheelchair accessible
Vauxhall Combo 1.3L Diesel. Automatic.

**Price:** €6,500 negotiable

**Contact:** Niall Whelan

**Mobile:** 087 679 7767

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**For Sale:**

Shoprider Powerchair controlled by a joystick. Maximum distance on a fully charged battery is 24 Kilometers /15 miles. The chair can be separated into 5 parts to transport or left as one. Maximum weight it can carry is 130Kilogram/21stone. In perfect condition.

**Price:** €950 negotiable

**Contact:** Michael ODonoghue

**Mobile:** 087 220 9737

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**For Sale:**

Battery-powered wheelchair for sale, made by Invacare, model 2NG. Fitted with a “Powerstroll” powerpack which comes with a charger. Purchased from the Wheelchair Association in May 2017. Only used on about 4 occasions.

**Contact:** Mary Mac Dermott • **Mobile:** 086 4095617

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**For Sale:**

Smartdrive for sale. Never used. Comes with 6 different wrist straps, charger, bracket to fit on wheelchair. Bought for €6000. Can send photos on request

**Price:** Negotiable

**Contact:** Susan Flaherty

**Mobile:** 087 799 3778

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**For Sale:**

3 x handi move fixed / mobile hoists
1 x. Car hoist for lifting wheelchairs into estate car
1 x Stairlift
1 x through floor lift

**Photos Available**

**Price:** Negotiable.

**Contact:** Jim Keelan

**Mobile:** 087 259 6878

**Email:** jim@keelanchemicals.com