

SUPP



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AUTUMN / WINTER 2025



AUTUMN/WINTER
giveaway
WIN a luxurious
TWO-NIGHT ESCAPE to

THE GRACE
WESTPORT ESTATE
SEE PAGE 53

40th
Service of
Remembrance
and Thanksgiving
Supplement
PAGES 35-46

Former Rugby Player Champions National Kidney Support Centre

Editorial



Welcome to our Autumn/Winter issue of SUPPORT.

Renovation work is proceeding on the National Kidney Support Centre (NKSC) at Beaumont Hospital. The underfloor heating is now in place, the new windows are installed so the next step is slabbing, plastering, second fix carpentry, mechanical and electrical and then installation of sanitary ware, painting and tiling. Interestingly, trade professionals are commenting on how well the building was designed, and it has really stood the test of time. It is a testament to the foresight and hard work of the people who originally made this Centre happen. One of these people, Liam Buttle, is, incredibly, still volunteering with the Irish Kidney Association (IKA), having been involved for over four decades. You can read his inspiring story on pages 56-57.

The €1.3 million we are spending now is upgrading the building to modern-day standards, which all buildings need after twenty years. It will also reduce the running costs.

As Dr. David Hickey states, "The building said out loud 'we are here for you'". You can see his full commentary on the building in the enclosed separate insert, which asks for your help to re-open the Centre.

Once the builder's finish, there will then be a fit-out. It is very

exciting to see the work progressing and we are still on course for a spring re-opening.

We had our first Branch Officers' Development Day since COVID-19 in October in Athlone with over 60 officers attending. It was a very lively and interesting day with plenty of feedback and discussion. See pages 10-11 for details.

We are also so grateful to our many committed fundraisers, from Branches to individuals, families, healthcare professionals and groups right across the country who work so hard to raise funds.

From marathons to coffee mornings and climbing mountains, you work so hard to support our community. Your dedication means we can continue to provide services, supports and advocacy for kidney patients, and raise awareness of organ donation. We really do appreciate and value all your support.

You can see some examples of our wonderful fundraisers on pages 24-27 from the McNeive Foundation to Martin Sherlock and Dr. Colm Henry, Chief Clinical Officer of the HSE, pages 58-59.

We were deeply saddened to lose our colleague Anne Spring who passed away suddenly. Although only with us a short time, it seemed she has worked here so much longer, because she settled in so well and was so popular with patients and staff. This is the second staff bereavement we have faced this year, having reported in



Irish Kidney Association CLG

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FRONT COVER

Former rugby player Brian O'Driscoll catches up with his old pal Michaela Morley and her mother Bridie, from Mayo, at the IKA's National Kidney Support Centre, under renovation.

Photo: Gareth Chaney

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the previous issue of *SUPPORT* about the unexpected passing of Lenny Ryan.

Ciara Edwards and Sinead Connell have now joined our staff to keep the office running.

Sadly, Mark Murphy, our former CEO, also died after a long illness bravely borne. You can read a tribute to Mark on page 9.

It is a great reflection on our staff commitment and dedication, that despite these bereavements, we had a very special and poignant 40th Service of Remembrance and Thanksgiving on Saturday, September 27th. It was very emotional and memorable, an event which showcases the best of our humanity. It was a privilege to meet old friends and supporters of the IKA from Lorraine Costello and Phyllis Cunningham, who both initiated this wonderful event, to Dr. David Hickey and Patricia Doherty, co-founder and first CEO of the IKA, and many transplant recipients and organ donor families. We have a full supplement on the Service on pages 35-46.

We have intensified our campaigning efforts, joining forces with the Irish Nephrology Society and the European Kidney Patient Alliance to formally write to the Minister for Health requesting chronic kidney disease be a priority for Ireland's upcoming EU Presidency in 2027. We have agreed three main asks which are:

- Renew and update the EU's commitment to kidney health.



Maeve Butler, Waterford Healing Arts; Sarah Buchanan, Deirdre Markey, Donor House; Kate Murphy, Visual Artist at the Branch Officer and Board Member Training Development and Strategy Day at the Sheraton Hotel, Athlone (see page 10-11).

- Improve prevention, screening, and early treatment.
- Achieve equitable access to high-quality treatments for kidney failure (this covers both dialysis and transplant).

We have also submitted a wide range of parliamentary questions on both national and local issues and have an update on solar panels on page 8.

We marked a very important milestone with the first meeting of the National Member Forum. It was terrific to see so many new faces with plenty of interesting ideas to improve patient lives. The National Member Forum will ensure that the lived experiences of kidney patients lay the foundation for everything we do: from the services we provide and the issues we campaign on, to the way we operate as an organisation. This National Member Forum is a crucial part of future-proofing the IKA, strengthening our governance while ensuring we remain a patient focused organisation. For more details,

please see pages 12-13.

We also had a training day for our Counsellors (pages 48-49) and our new Peer Support volunteers (page 47). Mary Adamson and Sara Santi, volunteers from the Tipperary and Kilkenny Branch respectively, ran an information day in Waterford University Hospital (pages 30-31) and you can also read people's inspiring stories throughout this issue.

Christmas is a time of warmth and connection, but it can be a difficult time, particularly for those who have lost loved ones, are struggling with the high cost of living, or are managing kidney disease. We have an article on pages 28-29 with useful tips on self-care at Christmas. You are not alone, the IKA community is here for you.

Nollaig Shona agus Athbhliain faoi Mhaise Daoibh.



**CAROL MOORE
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

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Front row: Fiona, Deborah, Ciara, Gary, Colin.
 2nd row: Carol, Margaret, Carrie.
 3rd row: Deirdre, Caroline, Aoife.
 Back row: Sarah Buchanan.
 Missing from photo:
 Edina, Gwen, Lisa, Jacqueline, Sinead.



*From all of us at the IKA
 We wish each and every one of you
 a safe and healthy
 Christmas and happy New Year*

Christmas Opening Hours

DONOR HOUSE
 (IKA Main Office)

Ph: **01-6205306**

Mon - Fri:
 9.30am - 5.30pm

CLOSED
24th December
– 1st January, 2026

Re-opens
 2nd January, 2026

If you require overnight accommodation to enable you to attend hospital in Dublin or Cork please use the following numbers for bookings:

01-6908887 to book accommodation in the Clayton Hotel in Dublin.
021-2044555 to book accommodation in Munster Kidney Support Centre.

OPENING HOURS

Clayton Hotel Bookings
 Mon - Fri: 9.30am – 7.00pm

For emergency bookings:
 Sat, Sun/Bank Holiday Mondays
 and
 Wed/Thurs December 25th, 26th
 and Wed January 1st
 12.00pm - 4.00pm

Munster Kidney Support Centre
 Drop-in
 Mon - Thurs: 9.30am - 6.00pm
 Fri 9.30am - 3.30pm

For emergency bookings:
 Sat, Sun/Bank Holiday Mondays and
 Wed/Thurs December 25th, 26th
 and Wed January 1st
 12.00pm - 4.00pm

A Christmas Message

from the

National Chairperson



Dear members, supporters, and friends

As the festive season approaches, I want to take a moment to reflect on the challenges and triumphs of this past year, and to extend my heartfelt gratitude to each and every one of you for your unwavering support and dedication to the mission of the Irish Kidney Association (IKA).

2025 has been another year filled with successes, challenges and opportunities. A significant milestone certainly has been the commencement of the Human Tissue Act, giving a clear legal framework for organ transplantation. The campaign to return our National Kidney Support Centre in Beaumont significantly consumed much time and resources. Our success in that endeavour provides hope and purpose that our newly refurbished Centre will be a 'home from home' for patients and their families. The Board has committed to future-proofing the IKA, with a renewed focus on patient voice representation through the Member Forum, while strengthening the IKA's governance capacity for future generations. We look forward to all these objectives being further realised in 2026.

For those affected by kidney disease, it's a year marked by resilience, determination, and hope. Those of you who face daily struggles, either on dialysis or waiting for a transplant, remain at the heart of everything we do. Your strength and courage are an inspiration to us all. We understand that living with kidney disease is not easy, and it takes an immense amount of resilience to keep moving forward each day.

Kidney disease touches the lives of so many families, and throughout the year, the IKA has worked tirelessly, through our dedicated staff and volunteer team, to support with quality services, those in need, raise awareness, and advocate for better healthcare services. None of this would be possible without the generosity, commitment, and kindness of our supporters.

We continue to remember, with immense gratitude, all donor families, who in their darkest hours, made the most generous decision to give the 'gift of life' to others. Our thoughts are with you this Christmas time. We also remember loved ones who passed away this year which included the IKA's previous CEO Mark Murphy and staff members Lenny Ryan and Anne Spring.

To our funders, healthcare professionals, and charity partners – your contributions have been invaluable in helping us raise awareness, fund research, and provide essential quality health services to renal patients right across the country. The impact of your support has been immeasurable, and we are grateful for your continued commitment to improving the lives of kidney patients and their families across Ireland.

Heartfelt appreciation to our Branch leaders, volunteers and those who make up each Branch community. You are the embodiment of the IKA patient-centred values, through listening, empowering, respecting and supporting each other, at different stages of our 'kidney journey'.

To my fellow Board Directors, our CEO, management and staff team for your relentless hard work and commitment throughout the year, thank you!

As we celebrate Christmas and look forward to the new year, I am filled with optimism for the future. On behalf of the Board, I wish you all a peaceful and joyful Christmas, filled with warmth, love, and hope. Thank you for being part of our IKA community, and for your ongoing support. Let us look forward to a brighter 2026 and continue to work together to make a difference in the lives of kidney patients throughout Ireland.

Nollaig Shona Daoibh go Léir!

LIZ O'SULLIVAN



Michaela Morley, Brian O'Driscoll.

From iconic Temple Street photo to lifelong friendship with rugby legend O'Driscoll



Michaela & Bridie Morley in the Support Centre's large garden.

As she looked ahead to her 21st birthday in December 2025, **Michaela Morley**, a kidney transplant recipient from Co. Mayo, reunited with rugby legend, **Brian O'Driscoll**, who lit up her Temple Street hospital room when she was a six-year-old child on dialysis. They caught up again in early September this year together with Michaela's mother Bridie, for a heart-to-heart chat at the **Irish Kidney Association's (IKA) National Kidney Support Centre**, (currently under renovation), located on the grounds of Beaumont Hospital.

In their upbeat reunion, Michaela and Brian recreated their iconic ball-throwing moment first captured on camera by photographer Shane O'Neill years before. The light-hearted exchange, this time recorded on both photo and video, replaced the original Heineken Cup target with a rather less illustrious shiny tin bucket!

MICHAELA'S JOURNEY

Michaela, since birth, has been no stranger to hospitals, as she has been undergoing treatment since she was a little girl, commencing dialysis when she was just 18-months-old. There were long journeys from Ballyglass, near Claremorris, in Co. Mayo, to Dublin, for the three times weekly haemodialysis treatments, an experience that became her 'normal', even if it was far from a typical early childhood.

In May 2011, a surprise visit from Ireland and Leinster rugby captain Brian O'Driscoll, who arrived at Temple Street Hospital with the Heineken Cup the Leinster rugby team had won, broke that routine. In a joyful, iconic moment captured on camera and making national headlines, Michaela, then six-years-old, while undergoing dialysis treatment, tossed a ball into the cup from her hospital bed as Brian stood cheering her on at the foot of it.

That day sparked a lasting connection, and they've stayed in touch ever since. In 2018, the formidable duo reunited to officially open the Renal and Nephrology Outpatient Unit at

By **GWEN O'DONOGHUE**
Photos: **GARETH CHANEY**

Temple Street, and more recently appeared together on the RTÉ *Late Late Show* in April 2024, when they promoted Organ Donor Awareness Week, the annual campaign which is organised by the IKA.

Bridie shared, "Before Michaela was born, we were told she wouldn't survive, but she proved everyone wrong. She spent her first 10 weeks in hospital, and by 18 months we were travelling four hours to Dublin, three times a week, for dialysis. That was our normal. Her transplant at Christmas time, when she was seven-years-old, was the best Christmas present you could hope for and it changed everything, and we, her family including my husband Sean and her elder brother John, are forever grateful to her donor's family."

The Morleys also keep in contact with Michaela's transplant surgeon Dr. David Hickey who they were delighted to meet again at the IKA's 40th Service of Remembrance and Thanksgiving held at the end of September.

FRIENDS SUPPORTING FRIENDS

Michaela and Bridie explained to Brian why their family is proudly supporting the IKA's national fundraising campaign to help complete the Support Centre's refurbishment ahead of its reopening in Spring 2026. When it reopens, it will, once again, be available free of charge, to countless patients and their families, like Michaela's, from across Ireland, who travel to Dublin hospitals for treatment, including surgery, follow-

Bridie, Michaela and Brian discuss their first meeting captured in a photo.



up appointments and ongoing treatment.

"I'm delighted to catch up with Michaela today and hear how she's getting on," said Brian, who is an Ambassador for CHI at Temple Street and the ISPC.

"It's clear to see how the IKA has supported her family over the last number of years. Today, we're visiting the charity's National Kidney Support Centre which is on the Beaumont Hospital campus approximately 200m from its main entrance. I believe the Centre will offer families of kidney patients of all ages, exactly like Michaela, great support whilst their family member is being treated in hospital."

For Michaela, the Support Centre represents comfort and dignity during uncertain times – a real *home away from home*. Earlier this year, during a 17-night hospital stay, the IKA arranged nearby accommodation for her mother Bridie. It meant that Bridie could be close to her daughter

when she needed her most. When the Support Centre reopens, it will be a lifeline, a safe, welcoming place for families like the Morley's, from all over the country.

"The transplant I received at the end of 2011 gave me my life back, but it's still a journey," said Michaela. "I'm so grateful to the donor family who made it possible. But being a kidney patient is for life. Having a place like the Support Centre makes ongoing care much more manageable – especially for families like ours who have to travel long distances and for early appointments. I will be able to go there to relax between appointments, go back to my room to rest, watch television, have a bite to eat and a cuppa, and chat to other people on a similar health journey."

Michaela is now in her second year of a childcare course, chasing her dream of working with young kids – something she says she always wanted to do.

Carol Moore, Chief Executive of the IKA, expressed gratitude to Michaela and her mother Bridie for helping to shine a light on the importance of the IKA's National Kidney Support Centre. Acknowledging the enduring friendship between Michaela and Brian, she highlighted the crucial role which the National Kidney Support Centre plays in supporting kidney patient families as they travel from all parts of the country for complex and often lifelong care.

"The Support Centre which was opened in March 2000 has always been more than just a building. It's a space where vulnerability meets compassion where patients and

continued next page

Bridie watches on while Michaela and Brian go down memory lane.





Brian signing a rugby ball.

families find peace, connection, and understanding. With the public's help, we can reopen the doors to this sanctuary and make it even better than before. We are deeply grateful for the continued support from people like Brian, Michaela and Bridie, in helping us restore the National Kidney Support Centre and sustain the vital services we provide."

To help complete the final phase of its transformation, the IKA has a dedicated online fundraising campaign at www.supportkidneycentre.ie aimed at supporting the Centre's



Back, l-r: Colin White, Carrie McMullan, Susan Bradley, Gwen O'Donoghue, Carol Moore (IKA's CEO).
Front, Michaela Morley, Brian O'Driscoll, Bridie Morley.

€1.3 million renovation and fit-out and ensuring that it remains a safe, convenient, and sustainable place of rest. The Centre is run by the organisation and will be free of charge for families from across Ireland to use.

With a fundraising target of €250,000 to support the project, the campaign invites members of the

IKA, the public, corporate partners, and supporters to help restore this essential facility for the kidney community.

Michaela and Bridie are proudly supporting the fundraising campaign to bring the National Kidney Support Centre back to life – not only for themselves, but for kidney patients and families across Ireland.

SOLAR PANEL UPDATE



By COLIN WHITE, NATIONAL ADVOCACY MANAGER

On October 15th, Minister Darragh O'Brien TD announced that eligibility for the Solar PV Scheme for Medically Vulnerable Customers is now being extended to include all homeowners who are registered under the life-support category of the Priority Services Register, with whichever energy supplier they are using.

Homeowners listed under the life-support category of the Priority Services Register will automatically qualify for the scheme. Their electricity supplier will contact them directly in the coming weeks and months – no application is necessary.

The house must be built and occupied on or before December 31st, 2020 to qualify for the scheme.

The energy provider will send a letter of interest. They will then assign a Solar PV company to visit the home and assess its suitability for a solar PV system.

If your home is deemed suitable, the Solar PV company will provide you with an installation date.

If you believe you are using life-support equipment such as dialysis machines, ventilators, or similar devices, please ensure you are registered with your electricity supplier under the life-support category of the Priority Services Register.

To register as a Vulnerable Customer see: www.cru.ie/consumer-information/your-rights/vulnerable-customers/

Energy suppliers will communicate this update to eligible customers in the coming weeks and months, as the eligibility criteria are revised and qualifying homeowners are identified to benefit from the scheme.

Source: <http://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-climate-energy-and-the-environment/press-releases/minister-obrien-welcomes-extension-of-solar-pv-scheme-for-medically-vulnerable-customers>

REMEMBERING

Mark Murphy



Mark Murphy was the CEO of the Irish Kidney Association for over two decades, from 2000 to 2020.

He had personal experience of living with end stage kidney failure, as his first wife Bernadette passed away from kidney failure. This deeply personal connection fuelled his tireless advocacy, both nationally and internationally, at one stage holding the position of President of the European Kidney Patients' Federation, after holding roles as Secretary and Treasurer in previous years. He also held positions on the governing councils of both the European Transplant and Dialysis Sports Federation and World Transplant Games Federation.

Such was his deep knowledge of both transplant and dialysis, he could speak astutely and authoritatively without notes in both medical and general forums. His dedication to the Association was unwavering.

Politicians still speak of the time, Mark, when working with Senator Mark Daly, was responsible for the unprecedented recall of the Seanad during the Summer holidays in 2013, a move that ensured more resources for organ transplantation.

As a result of Mark's 'big' vision, kidney patients and their families across the country are continuing to benefit from improved services and policies. His ability to advocate passionately for those with kidney disease and for organ donor awareness, with medical leaders, politicians and civil servants, continues to serve us well as we seek improvements and developments for kidney patients into the future.

A wide range of people and organisations paid respectful tributes to Mark. For example, the Irish Nephrology Society stated:

"We remember, with affection and respect, his long tenure of leadership in advocacy for those with kidney disease. In that role he was passionate, fearless and effective."

In expressing his admiration for the former CEO, Eoin Madden, an IKA Director, from the Galway Branch said:

"Mark inspired me in many ways and taught me much about the importance of looking to "invest" in people. He was larger than life, and good fun, as well as a powerful advocate for patients on dialysis."

Mark was a unique, insightful person who touched the lives of so many people. The IKA community is deeply appreciative of all Mark's hard work and dedication for kidney patients. We extend our deepest sympathies to Mark's wife Frances, his family and all those who knew and loved him.

May he rest in peace.

CAROL MOORE

ROOTED IN PURPOSE

- A Day for connection, learning and Inspiration



By DEIRDRE MARKEY & SARAH BUCHANAN

Gerard O'Neill, Westmeath; Mary McGrenaghan, Donegal; Jack Cunniffe, Sinead Dowling, Pattie O'Neill, Westmeath.

On Saturday, October 11th, the Volunteer Team hosted its first in-person Branch Officer and Board Member Training, Development and Strategy Day at the Sheraton Hotel, Athlone.



Carol Moore, IKA CEO

The event brought together both new and long-serving volunteers from across the country, a wonderful opportunity to reconnect, share experiences, learn from one another, and strengthen the bonds that underpin our Irish Kidney Association (IKA) community. Many attendees were delighted to meet those they hadn't seen in years, while others made new connections that will help shape the future of our Branches and organisation.

The day was designed to be as engaging as it was informative, blending training, development, and strategic discussions with creative and interactive sessions. Participants enjoyed a full and lively day featuring guest speakers, workshops, shared learning, art activities and feedback sessions, all centred around the theme of *purpose, connection, and growth*.

MORNING SESSION

The day began with a warm welcome and overview by National Chairperson Liz O'Sullivan, setting the tone for a day

of collaboration and reflection.

Guest speaker Michael Darragh MacAuley, eight-time All-Ireland winner, former CEO of Sanctuary Runners, and passionate advocate for organ donor awareness, inspired the room with his insights on community building, teamwork and the power of purpose-driven action.



Liz O'Sullivan, National IKA Chairperson



Debbie Sheehy, Limerick; Theresa Looney, Kerry



Declan Sherlock, Gerry McKenna, Dublin South



James Riordan, Limerick; Anne Hackett, Mary Adamson, Tipperary.



Pat Hegarty, Vincent Finan, Roscommon; Cathriona Charles, Leitrim; Eoghan O'Ceirín, Clare



Pat O'Sullivan, Cork; Rose Dalton, Cavan; Brian Duignan, Carlow; Aodhan Cullen, Cavan.

Geraghty (Senior Change Management Specialist) offered attendees the chance to ask questions and share ideas directly.

AFTERNOON SESSION

After a social lunch, the afternoon resumed with an overview of the current redevelopment of the National Kidney Support Centre and the progression of works. It also included the topic of Fundraising, and how Branches can support this important fundraising drive

Participants then choose between two practical breakout sessions which were led by fellow officers:

Session 1

Supporting Branch Engagement

Session 2

Event & Activity Volunteering

Facilitated by Branch and Volunteer Team Deirdre Markey and Sarah Buchanan, Branch Volunteers Gerry McKenna (Dublin South), Mary Adamson (Tipperary), Eoin Madden (Galway) and Theresa Looney (Kerry) together with Jennifer Barry (Munster Kidney Support Centre) and Carrie McMullan (social media and communications) shared valuable insights from their local experiences, sparking lively discussion and idea-sharing among peers.

The afternoon also featured guest speaker Maeve Butler, Assistant

Director of Réalta/Waterford Healing Arts (WHA), who spoke about the healing power of creativity and connection and the amazing work that they are doing through creativity in patient settings.

This theme continued in a fun and uplifting group activity led by artist Kate Murphy, who manages the WHA art programme at the B. Braun Wexford Renal Care Centre.

The day closed with reflections from Liz O'Sullivan, capturing a shared sense of achievement, purpose and optimism for the future of the IKA.

LOOKING AHEAD

For those unable to attend, an online follow-up session was held on Wednesday, November 12th, ensuring everyone had the

opportunity to review key insights and contribute to the ongoing conversation.

The Branch and Volunteer Team have collated the valuable feedback gathered during the day and will share the findings with officers and Board members through upcoming regional online meetings. These discussions will help determine how best to apply the ideas and learnings from the event to further support our Branches and volunteers nationwide.

Overall, the day was a great success, a reminder of what can be achieved when passionate volunteers come together, rooted in purpose, and united by a shared commitment to making a difference for kidney patients, their families and carers.



Ciara Edwards, Carrie McMullan, Donor House; Jennifer Barry, Munster Kidney Support Centre, Sarah Buchanan, Michelle Geraghty and Deirdre Markey, Donor House.

Future-proofing the IKA - Next Steps

Since our last update in the Summer edition of SUPPORT, our 'Future-proofing the IKA' project has moved from planning to active engagement at a remarkable pace. We successfully launched the National Member Forum on social media, complete with a new webpage at ika.ie/memberforum, and we briefed Branch officers and directors in-person at our Training, Development and Strategy Day in October.



ika.ie/memberforum

The response was immediate, with nominations for representatives swiftly rolling in, a momentum that led to our inaugural meeting on November 19th. This pivotal session focused on inducting and training our new reps, building team cohesion, and, most excitingly, beginning the critical work of prioritising patient issues for deeper discussion.

It's clear that there is a shared enthusiasm for building our first dedicated, patient-focused platform. Members are ready to bring their personal stories to the table, to ensure patient issues lay the foundation for IKA priorities and strategy into the future.

GOVERNANCE REQUIREMENTS

The establishment of the National Member Forum is a pivotal first step in our project to future-proof the IKA. The project's core goal is to strengthen the Association by building trust through our governance and operational practices; all while ensuring we uphold our mission to support,

By
MICHELLE GERAGHTY

educate, and advocate for people affected by end-stage kidney disease.

Over the past decade, new standards in Ireland have helped build a stronger, more trustworthy charity sector. We at the IKA fully support the work of the Charities Regulator, and the guiding principles set out in the Charities Governance Code. They provide a vital framework for demonstrating the transparency and good management that you, and the public, rightly expect.

While the National Member Forum will ensure this necessary work never overshadows our patient-first mission, fulfilling our governance duties will continue to require a significant commitment from our voluntary Board.

The second pillar of our future-proofing project is designed precisely for this, creating an effective organisational Board structure to fulfil our governance objectives effectively for decades to come.

EFFECTIVE BOARDS

So, what does an effective Board look like? Research consistently points to a few key principles.

- First, it is crucial to **separate membership representation from governance**. This allows both functions to be performed effectively, without one hindering the other. Our National Member Forum was created to help us achieve this goal.
- Second, **size matters significantly**. An optimal Board has 10-12 members, less than half the size of our current Board. Studies show that larger Boards can become less engaged, focusing more on listening to reports than on making decisive, strategic decisions.
- Finally, and most importantly, an effective Board must **prioritise skills over headcount**. This isn't just a best practice, it's a legal requirement. The Charities Governance Code, which guides Irish charities, requires that Board members possess the skills needed to govern effectively.

PROPOSED BOARD CHANGES

With all 25 Branches represented on our National Member Forum, we have a clear opportunity to refocus our Board's energy from representation to strategic governance. To that end, the Board has proposed a new structure for member approval at our AGM in Summer 2026.

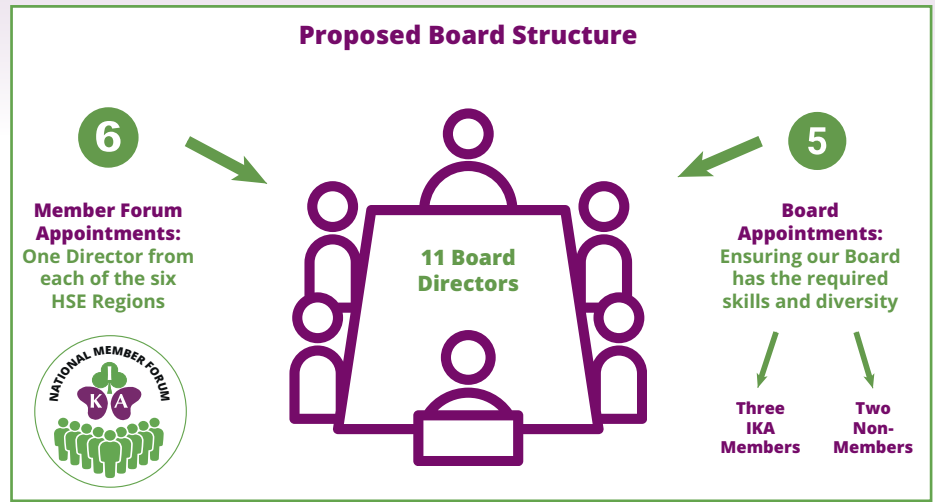
The proposal is for a Board of eleven directors. Six directors will be appointed by the National Member Forum, one from each of the six HSE regions. This ensures that the majority of the Board Directors will be kidney patients or family members/carers and that all regions across the country are represented.

The remaining five Directors will be appointed by the Board itself to ensure we meet specific skills and diversity requirements. This group will include three IKA members and two external, non-member Directors, a crucial change to bring an independent, strategic perspective to our decision-making.

WORKING TOGETHER

These changes will do more than improve how we work and make decisions; they are fundamental to increasing transparency, building trust and meeting our regulatory obligations. In fact, demonstrating strong compliance and transparency is essential for securing the public funding and grants that our services rely on.

By clearly separating membership representation from governance, and streamlining our Board's



operations, we will create a solid framework for sustainable growth and greater impact. This new structure will empower us to advance our mission more effectively than ever before.

We are confident that the combined strength of the National Member Forum and the refocused National Board of Directors will ensure the IKA remains a resilient, trusted patient-led organisation, clearly focused on implementing its charitable purpose for generations to come.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2026

We will be sharing more detailed information on these proposals in the new year, via social media, our website, *SUPPORT* magazine and through your Branch officers and Member Forum representatives.

These changes are vital to strengthening our foundation to continue to build trust with our

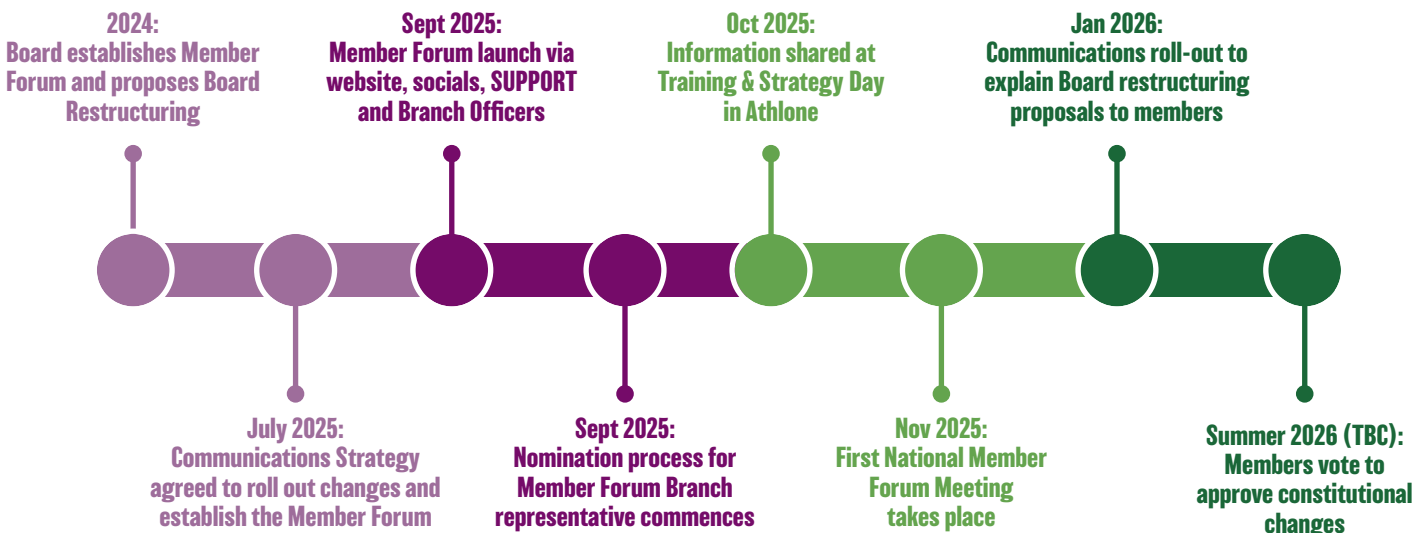


members, the public, and the Charities Regulator, and to ensure our strategic plan always has patients at its heart.

Your perspective is crucial in this process. We warmly welcome your feedback, questions or concerns. Please feel free to contact us directly or share your thoughts through your local representatives. We are excited about the year ahead and look forward to working with you to build a stronger future for our community.

Contact us at michelle.geraghty@ika.ie or on the contact us form on ika.ie/memberforum

TIMELINE





Karl Cassidy, Ali Cullen running for the IKA.



Samantha Lee, Martina McDonagh

Inspirational group took on Dublin Marathon

Despite the cold, rain, and blustery winds, more than 50 of the 22,500 runners who registered for the Irish Life Dublin Marathon on Sunday, 26th October, proudly supported the Irish Kidney Association (IKA). United by a shared goal - to raise vital funds and awareness for kidney health and the life-saving impact of organ donation - participants came from all over Ireland, including Cork, Galway, Longford, Limerick, Meath, and several from Dublin, Kildare, and Wicklow. One Galway native even flew in from Scotland to take part.

Many runners were wearing their bright yellow IKA t-shirts, which they had collected at the packed Dublin Marathon Expo held at the RDS over the previous two days, along with goodie bags handed out by the welcoming IKA staff, Lisa Fitzgerald and Carrie McMullan, when they

collected their race numbers. The IKA goodie bags also included pocket-sized suncare products generously sponsored by La Roche-Posay.

Through their valiant fundraising efforts close to a phenomenal €85,000 was raised for the IKA.

Among them was Irish athlete Martina McDonagh of Castlegar A.C., Co. Galway, fresh from winning two gold medals and a silver at the European Masters Championships in Madeira, Portugal. Despite feeling quite sick on the morning of the Dublin Marathon, Martina joined thousands of runners tackling the 42.2km course through Dublin city. She dedicated her effort to her friend Samantha Lee (43), a kidney patient and mother of 4-year-old Iarlaith. Samantha, who, like Martina, is from Headford, undergoes dialysis treatment three times a week but still trains twice weekly with the running club that Martina founded two years ago. Headford Harriers now boasts more than 100 members. On marathon day, Samantha travelled from the West showing up with a placard to cheer on Martina and two other members of Headford Harriers, Margaret McDonagh and Andrew Curran, who also ran the marathon.

A latecomer to running herself, Martina only took up the sport a few years ago and credits her partner and coach Ian Egan for encouraging her and believing in her. "Little did I know when I took up running a few years ago I'd end up representing Ireland at the European Masters," she said, reflecting on her recent success in Portugal. Speaking about her friend and inspiration for supporting the IKA by running in the Dublin Marathon, Martina added, "Samantha has shown so much strength, courage, and determination. She shows up to training twice a week - even on mornings when she's been on



dialysis for three hours. She is an inspirational lady, and we at Headford Harriers love her to bits."

Karl Cassidy from The Ward in Dublin ran with his friend Ali Cullen and he crossed the finish line in an impressive time of 3:37. "I was delighted with my time after tackling a hilly course and horrible weather conditions. Raising money for a great cause made running on the day, and getting the training done, a lot easier," he said.



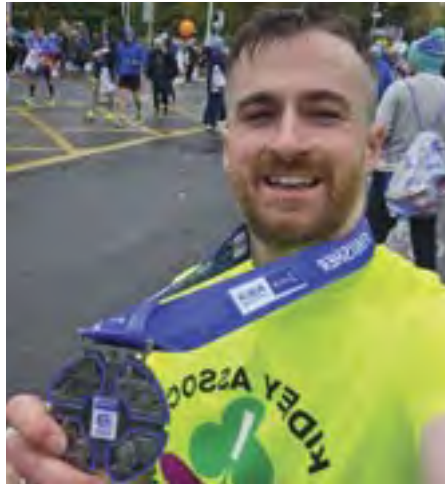
Peter O'Connell

Marking his 50th birthday year, Peter O'Connell flew into Dublin from Glasgow, Scotland, where he has been living for the past thirty years. He was running in memory of his late father, Liam, a native of The Crescent in Galway, who passed away in 2018 after receiving a life-changing kidney transplant more than two decades earlier. Peter shared, "My father received a kidney transplant, and it had a profound impact on his quality of life. Although he passed away in 2018, those years after the transplant meant he could enjoy time with his grandchildren and continue living life to the fullest."

Also running in the marathon in memory of his late father Joseph was Kevin Kilbride from Moydow, Co.



Kevin with his late father Joseph and his mother Grainne.



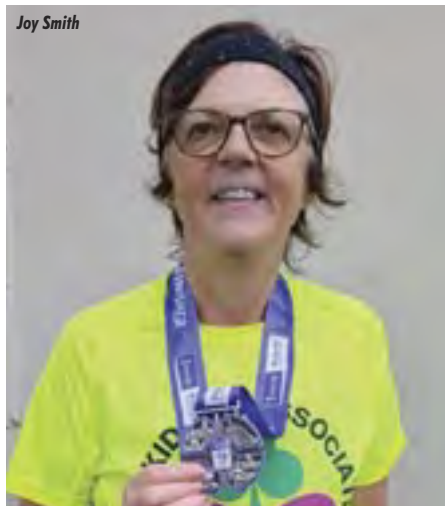
Kevin Kilbride

Longford who shared, "Organ donation completely transforms the life of a patient and their family. Sadly, my dad passed away in 2024 from prostate cancer but thanks to his very successful transplant in 2011 he was able to enjoy many more years of life that he most certainly wouldn't have had without it. We are grateful for those years, and I am running the Dublin Marathon in his memory and to raise vital funds for the IKA."

Cork native Joy Smith and her husband Edward who live in Dunshaughlin, Co. Meath also ran in the Dublin Marathon.

Joy was fundraising for the IKA inspired by her brother-in-law Tom Murphy who lives in her native Conna, near Fermoy, Co. Cork. Tom has been on the waiting list for a transplant and has been undergoing dialysis treatment for over a year. This was Joy's seventh marathon and third time to take part in the Dublin Marathon.

Joy shared her reason for fundraising for the IKA, "The IKA has been super in its support to Tom



Joy Smith



Edward Smith

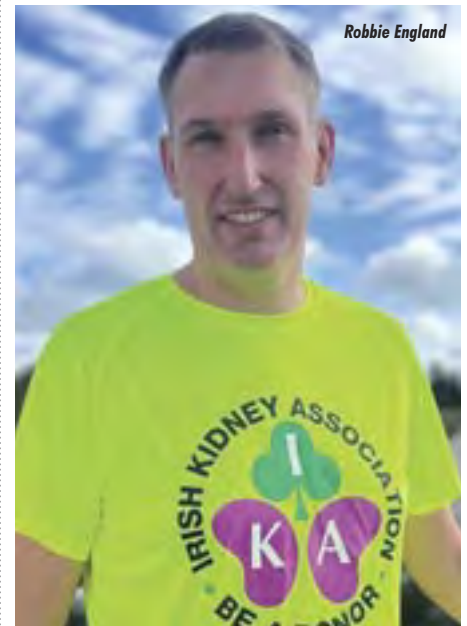
providing advice, assistance and overnight accommodation in Dublin when he attends appointments at Beaumont Hospital. A transplant would transform not just his life but his whole family's including his wife, my sister, Claire and their children."

Joining the marathon effort for the first time was Robbie England (39), an accountant from Rathfarnham, Co. Dublin and now living in Naas, Co. Kildare.

Standing tall at 6ft 6 ins, Robbie is counting his blessings since receiving a new lease of life with a kidney donated by his brother Mark. Three years ago he got married, became a father, and has another baby due in early 2026. Robbie also proudly represented Ireland at the European Transplant Sports Championships in Lisbon in 2024 where he won a silver medal for Badminton.

Robbie shared, "Running this marathon is not just a personal goal – it's a way to raise awareness about the

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Robbie England





Robbie England and his kidney donor brother Mark.

importance of organ donation, and to give back to the IKA, who've been there for me since I was first diagnosed with kidney disease and who also introduced me to transplant sport."

Also from Naas, Co. Kildare and running in support of the IKA was Niall Hanlon. Although Niall's family has not been directly touched by organ failure, a friend of his father donated a kidney to his wife.

Taking part for the first time also in the Dublin Marathon was Stephen Rubotham (41) from Leixlip, Co. Kildare, whose wife Niamh (36) received a living donor kidney transplant from her childhood friend Lyndsay Daly (age 37, from Lucan, Dublin) a month before. Stephen wasn't a suitable kidney donor himself but ran in honour of both women and the lifesaving gift they shared. As a tribute to Lyndsay, Stephen not only ran the Dublin Marathon for the IKA, the charity that supported their family, but he gifted his marathon finisher's medal to

Gillian and Robbie England with baby Conor at his christening with his godparents, Mel, and her husband and Robbie's kidney donor brother Mark.



Niamh McCabe and her kidney donor friend Lyndsay Daly reunited post-transplant at Beaumont Hospital in September 2025.

Lyndsay, in honour of her selfless gift. He said, "I may not have been able to give Niamh a kidney, but I can do this. Running 26 miles is nothing compared to what they've both gone through."

Terry Pierce from Foxrock, Co. Dublin, whose father Brian underwent a kidney transplant last year, following three years of dialysis



Brian & Terry Pierce.

treatment, ran in the Dublin Marathon for the first time. On his successful fundraising platform for the IKA he shared, "On October 26th I'm taking on the Dublin City Marathon. Every mile I run is a reminder of how far my dad has come, and how vital this charity is for so many families like ours. I'm running not only to give back, but also to raise awareness about the importance of organ donation and to support the amazing work the IKA does



Niall Hanlon



(left): Carrie McMullan, Lisa Fitzgerald, Niamh McCabe, her daughter Faye (8) and Stephen Rubotham and (right) Stephen in action.

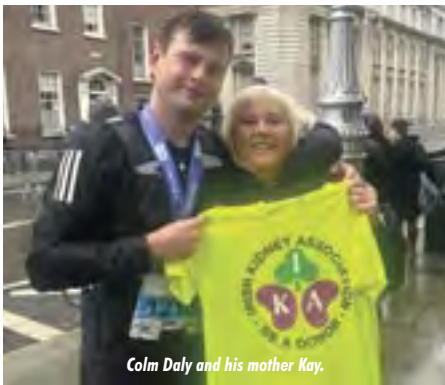


every single day. Every donation, big or small, will go a long way. Together, we can make a real difference."

Also running for the IKA and from Foxrock, Dublin was Colm Daly whose mother Kay, a native of Ballina, Co. Mayo, underwent a kidney transplant. He said, "Our family has been very fortunate to witness the life changing work this charity does - with my mother having been the beneficiary of a transplant in 2008".



Colm Daly at the RDS.



Colm Daly and his mother Kay.

Ben Klinger from Dublin 2, an altruistic kidney donor and an experienced marathon runner, having completed two marathons in the past shared, "I want to inspire others to consider living donation and raise awareness about the life-changing impact it can have. Participating in this



Lisa Fitzgerald, Ben Klinger and his daughter.

challenge allows me to combine my passion for running with my commitment to spreading this important message."



Evan and Bruce O'Connell.

Evan O'Connell from Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin was fundraising in memory of his late grandmother, who was a dialysis patient.

Cheering all the runners on was Dublin Marathon veteran Mary Nolan Hickey from Arklow, Co. Wicklow - who has completed every single Dublin Marathon since it began 45 years ago. This year, the 73-year-old swapped her running shoes for cycling cleats, taking on a 200km cycling challenge over three days, around the time of the marathon, all in support of the IKA and in honour of her friend Bridget Mellon, also from Arklow, who is living with kidney disease and back on dialysis following two kidney transplants.



Mary Nolan Hickey

In recognition of her extraordinary marathon legacy, a new perpetual trophy in Mary's name was this year, for the first time, presented by her to the elite female winner of the Dublin Marathon, 19-year-old Limerick woman Ava Green.



Oisín and Emer Casey.

Running for the second year in the Dublin Marathon was Oisín Casey from Leixlip, Co. Kildare. Oisín's brother Daire needed a kidney transplant following his diagnosis of Immunoglobulin A (IgA) nephropathy in 2016. Both their parents were screened for living kidney donation and their mother Emer proceeded to donate one of her kidneys to him in 2021.

Inspired by their strength and recovery, Oisín ran his first Dublin Marathon last year in support of Cure Leukaemia, having already been a regular blood and platelet donor for five years. This year, he

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Sophie Moorehead, Fionnuala Lawlor

fundraised and raised awareness for the IKA, the charity that played such an important role in his family's lives.

Oisín said, "Living donations have a life-changing impact, not just improving quality of life, but also greatly enhancing long-term health outcomes for recipients. My goal was to support the IKA in this year's Dublin Marathon, to raise funds for this great Association, and to promote the conversation about organ donation."

Friends Sophie Moorhead from Straffan, Co. Kildare and Fionnuala Lawlor from Ashbourne, Co. Meath ran their first marathon in support of one of their best friends whose child was born with kidney failure. Their friend encouraged them to run for the IKA as the charity has been very supportive of her family.

Maurice O'Connor from Tallaght, ran the Dublin Marathon for the first time. His father is receiving dialysis treatment while on the transplant waiting list. Both his parents John and Ann are members of the Dublin South IKA Branch.



Maurice O'Connor



Maurice O'Connor, at the RDS.

Also from Tallaght and running the Dublin Marathon for the first time was Ane Marie Aralit Clarke. She was inspired to run for the IKA as her friend is a kidney transplant recipient.



Ane Marie Aralit Clarke

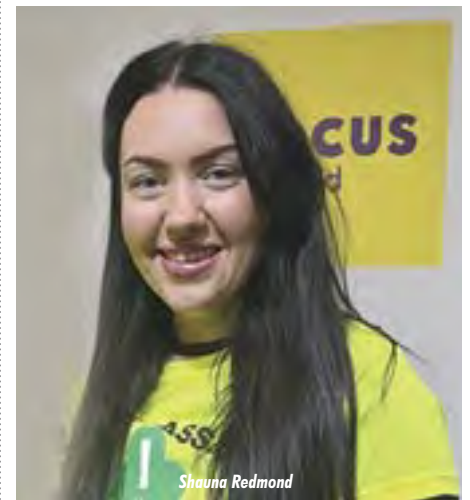
Gemma O'Neill (nee Prendergast), a much loved renal nurse from Merlin Park Hospital in Galway, and her friend Catherine McHugh ran in



Gemma O'Neill, Catherine McHugh

support of both the Irish Cancer Society and the IKA and in memory of Gemma's father who passed away just a few months before. Together they raised almost €7,000 which was divided between the two charities.

Shauna Redmond from Arklow spoke about her late uncle, "Patrick had three kidney transplants over his short 29 years, he received dialysis for years in between and had many hospital stays. With the help of this amazing charity it made life easier. This is a charity close to my heart and I'm sure there are many families in Ireland that find themselves on the same road Patrick and our family were on. They deserve to have a helping hand like we did."



Shauna Redmond

Donna Fairbrother from Templeogue ran her first Dublin Marathon and shared on her fundraiser platform, "For the past three years, my dad has been on dialysis three times a week (sometimes even more). The care, support, and time given by the IKA have made an incredible difference - not just to my dad, but to all of us as a family".



Donna Fairbrother



Carrie McMullan, Carol Yorke, Dara McIntyre



Just three days before the marathon, Dubliner Dara McIntyre lost his father, Gerry, from Raheny, who had been on dialysis for five years. Despite the heartbreak, he ran in his father's memory. Earlier this year, Gerry, a patient at Northern Cross, had asked Dara if he was running the marathon to raise funds for the IKA, who had supported the family throughout his treatment, including a cherished holiday in Kerry in the summer of 2025.

Alan and Nathan Maher



Caoimhe McFadden

Among the other runners who signed up with IKA marathon spots included: Alan and Nathan Maher from Leixlip, Co. Kildare; Adam



Martina McDonagh and Samantha Lee, Headford Harriers.

Grant from Dunshaughlin, Co. Meath; Eimear Gavan from Croom, Co. Limerick; Caoimhe McFadden from Annacotty, Co. Limerick; Lee O'Donnell from Rathnew, Co. Wicklow; and Dubliners Annette Browne, Barry Golden from Dublin 6 and Kerry Warfield from Cabra.

From an elite athlete to first-time runners, kidney recipients and their loved ones, each share a unique story of connection, courage, and compassion. Together, they highlight the critical importance of organ donation and the ongoing work of the IKA in supporting patients and families across the country.

The IKA extends heartfelt gratitude to the more than 50 runners who braved the rain and wind to take part in this year's marathon, raising vital funds to help the Association continue providing essential services and support to kidney patients and their families.



Annette Browne and her daughter



The IKA will have a limited number of places for next year's VHI Women's Mini Marathon on May 31st and the Dublin City Marathon on October 25th, 2026 and would be delighted to hear from those interested in running as part of #TeamIKA

You can contact Lisa and Sinead at fundraising@ika.ie to express your interest.



Kerry Warfield.





“ I fully expected to return to my role as Learning and Development Administrator in Rehab Group following the Parathyroidectomy, but my body had other plans and what I thought would be 8 weeks is now 14 months and counting. ”



Photo: Alan Betson, Irish Times

BY LOUISE MILICEVIC

Managing Two Chronic Illnesses

I was diagnosed in 2023 with Polycystic Kidney Disease (PKD), a hereditary genetic condition. I had long discounted that I had the disease having been tested decades ago, but, following my youngest daughter's diagnosis at three years of age, I grudgingly had some tests, and the diagnosis was made.

Needless to say, I was flabbergasted as I didn't feel particularly unwell and kept waiting to be told that they had made a mistake. But blood tests don't lie. I had the disease and that was that.

Kidney disease was something that I had grown up with because my mother was diagnosed with PKD when I was a child, as were my four brothers in later years. As a child it was just part of the weekly routine for my mother to be collected three days a week for her treatment, initially in Jervis Street and later in Beaumont Hospital. I never dreamed that my children would be watching me do the same all these years later.

The initial prognosis was good. It was felt that I wouldn't need dialysis for several years, but high calcium and a subsequent Parathyroidectomy meant that my kidney function deteriorated far quicker than anticipated.

I fully expected to return to my role as Learning and Development Administrator in Rehab Group following the Parathyroidectomy, but my body had other plans and what I thought would be 8 weeks is now 14 months and counting.

I started dialysis on December 30th, 2024 and attend dialysis twice a week in the Vartry Renal Unit in Tallaght Hospital.

Before starting dialysis, I had an AV fistula put into my upper right arm. This was a significant issue for me because I have Cerebral Palsy and I only have the use of one arm. My right arm and hand are the key to my independence and without them I could do nothing for myself. I was hugely fearful of having my right arm used for this procedure, but the spasticity of my non-functioning left arm deemed it to be unsuitable.

Due to my rapidly declining kidney function the fistula surgery happened very quickly so I didn't have much time to agonise over it in the end. The fistula takes 6 to 12 weeks to mature during which time the arm is to be used as little as possible

This was problematic as I needed to continue to use my arm and hand for my daily needs but minimised their use as much as I could. The inability to use my right arm means I am very restricted during my dialysis treatment. My good arm is connected to the machine so I'm unable to do anything independently which can be frustrating. However, the staff in the Renal Unit give me great support and never make me feel like I am a burden.

I did feel a little self-conscious in the

beginning as I needed assistance with eating and drinking but I just had to accept that it is part of my reality and get over my embarrassment. All of us on dialysis are on our own journey and this is just part of mine.

I also had to make a conscious effort not to move my right arm while on dialysis which was easier said than done, but I learnt very quickly that any slight movement would impact the fistula and cause significant swelling and bruising, especially in the early weeks and months. Sometimes learning the hard way is the only way to move forward.

All in all, things are going well and the concerns I had over using my only fully functioning limb have so far been unfounded. I hope to be on the transplant list in the early New Year and I'm sure that will bring its own set of challenges.

I required a nephrectomy of my right kidney (as there is no space for a transplanted kidney), and that took place in November. Usually, a transplanted kidney is placed beside, or on top of the existing kidney, but the size of my cysts, coupled with my slight frame meant that one had to be removed. I also have the added complication of immune thrombocytopenia (ITP) which causes low platelets, so I had to have several infusions in preparation for surgery.

It is important to acknowledge that those of us with additional needs must be considered holistically, rather than just as kidney patients, so that that we can have the best possible outcome. For the time being, it's one dialysis session at a time and learning to live in the present.

Living with chronic illness can be a lonely place at times and could not be done without the tremendous support of family, friends and colleagues whose regular contact

Louise and husband Stefan.



and check-ins keep me going.

I was also deeply honoured, earlier this year when a very dear friend, **Chantelle Guilfoyle** raised over €1,000 for the Irish Kidney Association in my name.

For all its drawbacks, this disease

has given me the opportunity to spend time with my family that I otherwise would not have had. As the saying goes, every cloud has a silver lining, even when being on dialysis.

DO YOU HAVE AN UPCOMING EVENT OR FUNDRAISER?

We would be delighted to add it to the events calendar on our website - just email carrie@ika.ie with the details (including what type of event it is, where, when it will be held, ticket and price information).

Launch of fundraising website for the National Kidney Support Centre

Families of kidney patients gathered with dialysis nurses and transplant coordinators in the garden of the Irish Kidney Association's **National Kidney Support Centre** at Beaumont Hospital to launch its renovation fundraising website, www.supportkidneycentre.ie. Their presence was a heartfelt endorsement of the Centre's vital role, reflecting the comfort and support it has long provided to those facing kidney illness.

The O'Shea family from Killorglin, Co. Kerry were up bright and early to catch a 5.05am train to Dublin for 15-year-old kidney transplant recipient Clodagh's appointment at CHI Temple Street before travelling over to the National Kidney Support Centre (NKSC) to take part in the photocall.

Clodagh's kidney donor father Tim shared, "In October 2016, I donated a kidney to my daughter Clodagh, who was just 6-years-old at the time. Now 15, she's thriving, but our journey through kidney disease has been long and difficult. However, the IKA's Support Centre at Beaumont Hospital was always there as a lifeline.

"Living in Kerry, we faced 640 kilometres round trip to Dublin for her care. The Centre gave us a safe, supportive place to stay near the hospitals, easing the burden of travel, especially during early morning appointments.

When I was being screened as a donor, the Centre supported me too. On transplant day, I had surgery at Beaumont Hospital while Clodagh was in Temple Street. At what was a time of great uncertainty, having the National Kidney Support Centre there to allow our family to be close by was a great comfort for all of us.



Back row: Maria Greene, CNM3, Home therapies; Tim and Georgina O'Shea from Kerry (parents of kidney patient Clodagh); Transplant Coordinators Laura Lynch and Andrea Fitzmaurice. Front row: Transplant Coordinator Laura Austin; Clodagh O'Shea, kidney patient; and Colm Fox, CNM 3, haemodialysis.

"Even now, we benefit from the IKA's provision of interim accommodation when attending regular check-ups in Dublin. As Clodagh moves to adult care, knowing this support continues brings huge peace of mind. I'll always be grateful to the IKA and the Centre. It gave our family dignity, comfort, and hope during our hardest times."

Kidney transplant recipient Aoife Adams from Dundalk, Co. Louth, also attended the photocall with her daughters Sophia (7) and Isabelle (2) and her parents Margaret and Frankie Watters.

Aoife is a lecturer at Dundalk IT. Her brother Daniel Watters donated a kidney to her at Beaumont Hospital in February 2020.

Aoife shared, "Our parents, partners and my then 2-year-old daughter Sophia were able to stay in the Support Centre the night before and for a number of days after the transplant in February 2020. They had a direct link to the ward to check on us

and were close by so they could easily visit. For me, it was really comforting to know they were close by, and travelling was one less thing they had to worry about. The NKSC becomes 'a home from home' for so many kidney patients."



Sophia and Aoife.



Therese Daly

Also attending the photocall was Therese Daly from Athboy, Co. Meath who underwent a kidney transplant from a deceased donor in 2001 and, when it failed, her brother Cathal Egan stepped up to donate a kidney to her at Beaumont Hospital in 2015.

Therese shared, "Our family availed of overnight accommodation at the Support Centre. After my second transplant, I went on to have two children, my first son, Cathal (now 9), named after my kidney donor brother, and my second son, Aaron (now 7). I regularly used the Centre while attending appointments at Beaumont Hospital. It was a calm and safe place to rest, especially when my immunity was low, making it a better option than waiting around at the hospital. It also gave me the chance to meet others on a similar health journey. It truly was a home away from home. It was exactly what my family and I needed. I'm excited about the reopening of the Centre next year."

Pat Kilgannon a farmer and former taxi driver, from Templeboy, Co. Sligo is enjoying the successful longevity of a kidney transplant he received from his sister Sarah in November 1984. Pat, a father of two, had travelled from Sligo for an



Pat Kilgannon's sister flies in from the US to reunite with Pat, ten years after donating a kidney to him.



The Watters family: Margaret, Frankie and their kidney transplant daughter Aoife Adams and her children Sophia (7) and Isabelle (2).



Pat Kilgannon (centre) with Beaumont's Maria Greene and Colm Fox.

appointment at Beaumont Hospital and dropped over to the Centre for the photocall.

He said, "My sister Sarah flew home from the US in 1984 to save my life, nearly 41 years on, I'm still here thanks to her. Out of twelve siblings, Sarah was the only match. I'll never forget what she did for me. When the Support Centre opened in 2000, it was a game changer. There were no early trains to get me to Dublin in time for morning blood tests, so being able to stay the night before made all the difference. I'd fast, go for my tests, then return to the Centre to rest, have a cup of tea and eat while waiting for results. It took so much pressure off. I still attend regular appointments – and I really look forward to the Centre's return."

Delighted to drop over from the hospital for the photocall and to see how works were progressing were transplant coordinators and clinical nurse managers (CNMs) for home therapies and haemodialysis at Beaumont Hospital.

Colm Fox, CNM3, Haemodialysis, said, "The opening of the Centre is a major step forward for the kidney community. It brings together all the services required to support people

with kidney disease."

Maria Greene, CNM3, Home Therapy and Nephrology, said, "I'm delighted to see the Centre will be back up and running again. It provides a much-needed home from home environment for our dialysis, all therapies and transplant patients at their time of need."

Laura Austin, CNM3, Transplant Coordinator, National Kidney Transplant Service, along with transplant coordinators, Andrea Fitzmaurice and Laura Lynch, were delighted to catch-up with the transplant patients. "When someone gets that call for a transplant, their whole life has to shift in an instant," said Laura Austin. "Knowing there's a place just 200 metres from the hospital where patients and their families can stay, free of charge and even between appointments, takes a huge weight off their shoulders."

"Having their families close by removes so much worry at an already stressful time. The friendly, welcoming staff provided by the IKA make the Centre feel like a home from home, and it's a perfect example of how the charity, kidney patients, and healthcare professionals can support one another in striving for the best overall wellbeing of our patients."

"Once the renovations are complete, it will restore the sense of security, comfort, and continuity that people have deeply missed since it closed during COVID."

When the Centre reopens it will once again bring together patients, families, healthcare professionals, and the IKA in their shared commitment to delivering compassionate, holistic support.



Matthew McNeive and his late brother James who passed away in August 2024.



Continuing James's Legacy

Scaling five peaks for charity



James McNeive, a primary school teacher, touched the hearts of many with his warmth and generosity during his life, tragically cut short at just 28 years of age. The depth of love and respect for him was clear in the 6,000 people who came to pay their respects at the Mayo man's wake after a tragic road accident in August 2024.

By
GWEN O'DONOGHUE

Described as a *giant among men*, and remembered for his boundless energy and kindness, James brought huge joy into the lives of others. He left a lasting impact on everyone who knew him; from his family, friends and neighbours, to the children he taught, sporting teammates, and those he studied with and worked alongside. As a tribute, his family founded the **James McNeive Foundation** to support charities that reflect his values and passions including the Irish Kidney Association (IKA) which advocates for kidney patients like James's brother Matthew.

The Foundation's first fundraiser, **Summit for James - 5 Peak Challenge** across the UK and Ireland, created in James's memory, was held in June and raised a remarkable €184,000 for several worthy causes which were close to James's heart. This includes the substantial sum of €45,000 which will be gifted to the Irish Kidney Association's National Kidney Support Centre, located on the grounds of Beaumont Hospital, which is currently under renovation. The decision to choose the Irish Kidney Association (IKA) as a

beneficiary of this fundraising challenge by the James McNeive Foundation relates to the experiences of James's younger brother, **Matthew, age 27**, who has spent his entire twenties on dialysis while waiting for a second kidney transplant. Poignantly, James had been in the process of being tested as a potential kidney donor to Matthew.

The IKA is deeply grateful for the generous contribution of €45,000 towards the **National Kidney Support Centre**, which is due to reopen in **Spring 2026**. This significant support will make a huge and positive difference to kidney patients and families who travel to Dublin for hospital appointments, providing them with a comfortable "home away from home". We look forward to sharing more details in the next issue of *SUPPORT* about how this welcome funding will help enhance the facilities and services available to those who will benefit from in the Centre.

Among the numerous other charities to benefit from James's legacy through the James McNeive Foundation are local charities, The Daisy Lodge in Cong, Co. Mayo which provides respite to children with cancer and their families which will



James family: his first cousins Ross Egan and John McNeive, brother Michael, mother Bernadette, brother Matthew, first cousins Enda Sweeney and Declan Sweeney.

receive €50,000, while €20,000 will go to Mayo Mindspace to support young people with counselling and therapeutic facilities. Other charities to benefit include the Irish Heart Foundation, Make-a-Wish and numerous local schools and sports clubs where James made his mark including Aghamore NS, Ballyhaunis NS, Barnacarroil NS, Began NS, Gortskehy NS, Knock NS, St. Louis Community School, Tooreen NS, Glasnevin NS, Aghamore GAA, Eastern Gaels GAA.

SUMMIT FOR JAMES – 5 PEAK CHALLENGE

Family, friends, and GAA teammates of the late James, from Knock, Co. Mayo, a much-loved member of the communities he impacted, honoured his memory, between June 24th and June 28th, 2025, through the *Summit for James – 5 Peak Challenge*, less than a year after the 28-year-old’s tragic death. A core group of 30 dedicated climbers, including James’s family and former teammates from the local Aghamore GAA club where James played, took

Fr. Richard Gibbons gave a blessing at the summit of Croagh Patrick



on all five peaks across the UK and Ireland. An estimated 1,000 people climbed Croagh Patrick, Ireland’s famous pilgrimage mountain, while nearly 200 more gathered at the base in support. Among those who completed the climb were **Colin White**, the National Advocacy & Projects Manager for the IKA and architect and **TV personality Dermot Bannon**. Remembering James, cherished by his pupils, their parents and colleagues in the schools where he taught, Dermot Bannon said, *“James was an amazing person and was special to our family, as he was my son’s teacher.”*

Participants scaled the highest peaks in Ireland and the UK over five consecutive days, beginning on what would have been James 29th birthday, Tuesday, June 24th at **Ben Nevis** in Scotland and finished on Saturday, June 28th with a climb up **Croagh Patrick** in James’s home county. Among the **30 climbers** who scaled all five peaks were James’s mother Bernadette and his aunt Noreen. Other dedicated climbers braving all five peaks included a large group from Aghamore GAA Club where James played, his brothers, twins Michael and Matthew, as well as six of his cousins – Ross Egan,

continued next page



L-R, (back row): Michael McNeive (brother and Aghamore player); John McNeive (cousin and Eastern Gaels player); Liam Conboy (friend of James and Aghamore player); Ross Egan (cousin and Aghamore player); Darren Duffy (friend of James and Aghamore player). Front: Adam Byrne (friend and Aghamore captain); Grainne McNeive (cousin); Bernadette McNeive (mother).



Dermot Bannon, Bernadette McNeive and Tommy Marren.

Catherine Carr and James McNeive



Enda and Declan Sweeney, John and Grainne McNeive and Gary Fahy. Their commitment was their heartfelt tribute to James's memory.

Close to **80 participants** climbed **Carrauntoohil** including James's sister Fiona and his girlfriend Catherine Carr (from Letterkenny). More than **1,000 people** supported the final Croagh Patrick climb as Parish Priest Fr. Richard Gibbons gave a blessing at the summit.

The Challenge began on June 24th with Ben Nevis, in Scotland (1,345 metres), followed by **Scafell Pike** in northern England (978 metres), then to **Snowdon** in Wales (1,085 metres). On the fourth day, the Challenge continued back home to Ireland, for the country's highest peak, **Carrauntoohil, Co. Kerry** (1,038 metres).

The Challenge culminated with a final ascent of Croagh Patrick in Co. Mayo. At 764m, although not as high as the other peaks, after four consecutive days of climbing, it posed its own challenge, and served as a fitting, symbolic end to the journey in James's beloved home county.

Lending their support to raise awareness of the Challenge with their large social media followings were Mayo man **Garron Noone**, Irish



Scafell Pike, England, for day 2 of the '5 Peaks Challenge'.

professional golfer **Leona Maguire**, former Ireland rugby star and TV presenter **Tommy Bowe**, several GAA stars, and Arsenal football legend **Paul Merson**, a particularly meaningful gesture, as James and his late father Pete were lifelong Arsenal supporters. Journalist Eavan Murray, a close friend and neighbour of the McNeives, penned a beautiful article about the McNeive's impending 5 Peak Challenge in the Irish Independent. There was a live link with updates from each of the mountains to local Mid-West radio morning show presenter **Tommy Marren**, supported by his radio colleague **Michael Dee**. The final summit was broadcast live back at the station, as Tommy himself joined the Croagh Patrick climb.

The event was completely **self-funded**, meaning participants covered their travel and other expenses for all five climbs to ensure that funds raised went directly to the chosen charities.

While honouring James's memory, the initial goal was to raise **€50,000** through the iDonate online fundraising platform. This target was smashed numerous times over!

In an extraordinary show of determination and resilience, the late James's brother Matthew, a

kidney patient, took on **three of the five mountain peaks**. For two of the days, Matthew had to attend dialysis treatment at Beaumont Hospital, yet he pushed forward with three of the five climbs.

In speaking about his brother James and the inspiration for the 5 Peak Challenge, Matthew said, "*James was the heartbeat of our family. He had this rare ability to light up any room and lift the people around him, whether you were a friend, a student or a stranger. He had a deep love for his school communities and his local GAA club. That's why the charities we've chosen reflect his passions, teaching, mental health, sport, a children's charity, and of course the Irish Kidney Association, because he never liked to see me struggle. He always wanted to do something to help and supported organ donation.*"

"In his memory, we wanted to do something that reflects his spirit, his love for life, and his love for helping others. It's emotional, but it's also something we're proud to do for him. The 5 Peak Challenge is just one of many events we hope to organise under the James McNeive Foundation."

Members of the Mayo diaspora living in **Australia** have shown their support. Friends and acquaintances of the late James in Australia came



Bernadette McNeive, IKA's Colin White, twins Michael and Matthew McNeive at Croagh Patrick.



Darren Duffy, James's friend and Aghamore GAA player, climbing Scafell Pike in England.



Matthew, Bernadette and Michael McNeive at the top of Snowdon in Wales.



On the summit of Mount Maroon



together from across the land downunder to **Brisbane** on Saturday, June 21st, for a climb up Mount Maroon. Around 40 people took part in this tribute called 'Warm Up for James', which was organised by James's cousin and best friend, Lorna Egan. Among those participating was Ciaran Harrison, James's best friend who now lives in Sydney, Australia. Since Ciaran was unable to return to Ireland, for the 5 Peaks Challenge, his brother, Brendan Harrison, a former Mayo player, climbed all five peaks in his place. Ciaran returned to Mayo in August 2024, to attend James's funeral along with seven others who also live in Australia (including Ciaran's girlfriend Lauren, and Lisa, Jason and Lorna).

Closer to home, another cousin, Siobhán Sweeney Dolan, and her husband Eoin Dolan – both primary school teachers like the late James – organised a climb up the **Sugarloaf** in **Wicklow** on June 2nd. They were joined by fellow teachers, SNAs, and children from the schools where they teach and where James taught, in a moving show of solidarity and remembrance.

MATTHEW'S STORY

Matthew, a twin to brother Michael, was diagnosed with Triad Syndrome before birth, a condition that left him with one functioning kidney and dependent on dialysis for

much of his life. At just 12-years-old in 2010, Matthew, a patient at the Children's Hospital in Crumlin, underwent his first transplant at CHI Temple Street. It lasted eight and a half years before the kidney failed, and he needed dialysis again just as he was set to start college. Since 2018, he has undergone haemodialysis three times a week at Beaumont Hospital in Dublin, each session lasting over four hours.

Despite the immense health challenges, Matthew received a sports scholarship to TUD for his sports accomplishments, and he graduated from college with 1st Class Honours and recently moved from his job as a Cardiac Physiologist at the Beacon Hospital to medical technology company BIOTRONIK where his role is Territory Manager (Cardiac Rhythm Management). But his day-to-day life remains severely restricted by his illness. He lives on a strict diet, cannot travel freely, and is constantly on alert for the call that could give him the gift of a second transplant.

Unfortunately, due to complications from his previous transplant, Matthew has developed high levels of antibodies, which makes finding a match especially

difficult.

The late James had planned to step in as a kidney donor in the **Paired Exchange Scheme** based in Belfast, a programme where his mother, Bernadette, had volunteered to donate one of her kidneys so that Matthew, might receive a matching kidney from another donor in the network if a suitable deceased donor wasn't found. Concerns about age-related risks for Bernadette meant James was prepared to take over as the family's donor, ensuring that Matthew could still remain eligible to receive a kidney in the exchange. James tragically passed before he could fulfil this intention. Michael, Matthew's twin, who is not a suitable match, is now going forward for the paired exchange programme.

Like his late brother, Matthew shares a deep love for sport and also played for his local Aghamore GAA club. He represented Transplant Team Ireland (now Transplant Sport Ireland) at the European Transplant & Sports Championships in Finland, in 2016 when he was 18-years-old, from which he brought home three bronze medals, one in the 100m sprint, and two in table tennis, both singles and doubles. These accomplishments came during the years following his first kidney transplant, before his current time on dialysis.

* * * * *

Although in its infancy The James McNeive Foundation has already made a giant and lasting difference to help ensure that James's legacy continues to inspire and uplift others.

It is through the people behind the Foundation's work that James's light continues to shine.



Matthew with his transplant sport medals in 2016 with his brother Michael.



Your Presence, Not Presents: A Christmas Reflection for Those Living with Chronic Illness



By AOIFE SMITH
COORDINATOR OF
COUNSELLING SERVICES

As the twinkling lights go up and festive music fills the air, Christmas arrives with its familiar blend of joy, nostalgia, and expectation. For many, it's a season of celebration, togetherness, and giving. But for those living with a chronic illness, the holidays can also bring a familiar struggle, the challenge of balancing connection with the need for rest, pacing, and self-compassion.

Living with a chronic illness means that energy is a precious resource. While others may rush from party to party, bake batches of cookies, and wrap gifts late into the night, you may find yourself needing to slow down, to choose carefully where and how you spend your time. And that's not only okay, but it is also wise.

Pacing yourself during the holidays isn't about missing out. Pacing yourself isn't a sign of weakness. It's a powerful act of self-respect. It's about showing

up in ways that are meaningful and sustainable. It's about giving yourself permission to say no when needed, to rest without guilt, and to prioritise your well-being. By honouring your limits, you make space for the moments that truly matter, the ones that fill your heart, not just your calendar.

If someone says, "present at Christmas," they're usually referring to a physical gift. It's the wrapped box under the tree, the tangible token of affection. But when someone says, "your presence at Christmas," they're speaking from the heart. It's not about what you bring, but that you're there.

Your laughter, your stories, your warmth, these are the true treasures of the season. The phrase "your presence at Christmas" reminds us that simply showing up, being together can be the most meaningful gift of all. It's a gentle nudge to prioritise

Thank you to all who emailed or called to discuss the counselling service provided here at the Irish Kidney Association. Please continue to email me at aoife@ika.ie with topics that might benefit you to read about. Your comments to me will be completely confidential, no names will be used, and no reference will be made to any person or any specific email. If there is a common theme in the requests, I will base the next article around that topic.

connection over consumption, and to cherish the people who make the holiday feel whole.

At a time that often equates love with lavish gifts and grand gestures, it's easy to forget what really matters. The most valuable gift we can give and receive is our presence. People rarely remember what was wrapped under the tree. But they do remember how we made them feel. Did we make space for them? Did we show up with kindness? Did we share a moment that made them feel loved?

Time spent together in a long chat over tea, the laughter shared over a simple meal, the quiet moments of listening, the warmth of a hug, or the sparkle in someone's eyes when they feel truly seen, these are the gifts that linger. They don't require perfect health or endless energy, just intention, love, and a little creativity to really connect.

In recent years, the world has grown more fragmented. Screens often replace conversations, and busy schedules leave little room for genuine connection. But Christmas offers a beautiful opportunity to change that, to reach out, to reconnect, to remind ourselves and others that we matter to each other.

At its core, human connection is not just a social preference, it's a biological and psychological necessity. Studies consistently show that people who maintain strong relationships experience greater happiness, lower stress levels, and improved mental health. These connections act as emotional anchors, helping individuals navigate life's challenges with resilience and grace.

But the benefits extend beyond the emotional realm. Physically, those with meaningful social ties tend to have stronger immune systems, lower risks of chronic illnesses, and even longer lifespans. Evolutionarily,

humans are wired for connection; our ancestors survived and thrived in communities where cooperation and bonding were essential.

From childhood to old age, our sense of self is shaped by the relationships we form. Deep connections across generations help preserve traditions, values, and emotional wisdom. Today, despite the illusion of constant contact through screens, many face a growing epidemic of loneliness. In truth, human connection is the thread that weaves our lives with meaning, it's what makes us feel seen, heard, and valued. Without it, we don't just feel alone; we lose a part of what makes us who we are.

So, remember, whether it's a heartfelt phone call, a handwritten card, a shared story, or simply sitting together in silence, these moments of connection are what make the season truly magical. And for those of us managing chronic illness, they can be especially healing reminders that we are not alone, that we are loved, and that we belong.

This Christmas let's redefine what it means to celebrate. Let's embrace the quiet joy of connection and of being present. Let's give ourselves grace to rest, to pace, to choose what matters most. And let's remember that the heart of the holiday isn't found in the hustle, it's found in the connection we nurture, the memories we create, and the love we share.

Because in the end, the most beautiful part of Christmas isn't what's under the tree, it's who's around it, and how we make each other feel. Let's choose connection over perfection.

I would like to wish you all well over Christmas. Stay safe and be mindful of yourself and your loved ones.

Warmest and kindest wishes,
Aoife



Here are some key highlights from Budget 2026 that the patient support team think our readers might find relevant.

Supports for carers and family-carers

- From January 2026: weekly social welfare payments (including for carers) go up by €10.
- From January 2026: the Domiciliary Care Allowance (for children with disabilities requiring ongoing care) increases by €20/month (from €360 to €380).
- From July 2026: the income disregard (i.e., how much you can earn) for the Carer's Allowance will increase to €1,000/week for a single person and €2,000/week for a couple.
- Also from July 2026: the income limit for Carer's Benefit increases by €375 to €1,000 per week.
- From January 2026: the maximum weekly rate of disability payments rises by €10.

There will be additional investment in healthcare infrastructure e.g. acute and community beds.

Leave a Gift in your Will



Donating to the Irish Kidney Association is a meaningful and enduring act of generosity

The Irish Kidney Association has teamed up with **FreeWill.ie** to provide you with a free online service to create or update your will using their will drafting tool.

For more information please see

ika.ie/leave-a-gift-in-your-will/





By MARY ADAMSON

Back row (l-r): Dr. Seán Leavey, Aoife Smith (IKA), Jennifer Barry (Social Worker UHW), Francis Hogan (Tipperary Branch Secretary), Welshley Lorin (UHW), Laura Lynch (Transplant Coordinator), Nurses Fiona Tobin, Margaret Moran and Derry O'Farrell (UHW), Fiona Aherne (IKA), Joan Gavan and Alison Fogarty (Tipperary Branch). Front row: Jenny Doyle (Dietitian UHW), Maeve Butler (Réalta), Mary Adamson (Tipperary Branch).

Waterford Information Day

An Information Day was held on Friday, October 31st, 2025 at South East Technological University (SETU) campus, with the cooperation and enthusiasm of all the renal staff in University Hospital Waterford (UHW), the Irish Kidney Association (IKA) and the Tipperary IKA Branch.

The organisers were a two-woman team, Sara Santi from Kilkenny and Mary Adamson from Tipperary. In February 2023, both received kidney transplants.

Having already connected while training to be peer supporters, their friendship emerged as they travelled together for post-transplant appointments at Beaumont Hospital.

Both have had very different renal journeys.

Sara started dialysis in her mid-20s during the COVID pandemic while Mary had a long history of dialysis and transplants.

Two years on, the event finally took place, and it was a great success!

The morning session was opened in the auditorium by the much-respected Dr. Sean Leavey, Consultant Nephrologist, Waterford, giving a brief history of dialysis, transplantation, and renal services in UHW.

He then gave a trajectory of three different patient journeys.

This was followed by talks from nursing clinical specialists. Nurse Fiona Tobin presented a most informative session on Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD), low clearance, preparation for dialysis and an overview of haemodialysis.

Margaret Moran spoke about renal anaemia, followed by Derry O'Farrell who led the session on



Mary Adamson



Jennifer Barry and student Chloe Hawkins.



Margaret Moran, Welshley Lorin, Aoife Smith, Fiona Tobin



renal transplantation and work-up.

Laura Lynch, Transplant Coordinator from Beaumont Hospital, was very engaging, speaking about the role of the coordinators, preparation for transplant, living and deceased donors, and the paired kidney exchange scheme in Belfast.

Following the morning break, **Maeve Butler**, Assistant Director of Waterford Healing Arts (WHA) (now Réalta) showed the work of many patients who have benefited from art therapy during their dialysis sessions resulting in art and photography exhibitions, poetry, biographies and much more.

Ciara Robinson, a clinical home dialysis specialist nurse, presented on the preparation, and pros and cons of peritoneal dialysis and home haemodialysis.

Welshley Lorin, a Vascular Access Coordinator, presented a study on dialysis access with images of perm catheters, fistulas



Fiona Aherne

and grafts.

The morning finished with very interesting presentations from **Jennifer Barry** (social worker) and dieticians **Jenny Doyle** and **Louise Walsh**.

Jennifer Barry, Manager of the Munster Kidney Support Centre (MKSC) was present to introduce people to the building in Cork and give information about bookings and other details.

The lunch break was a great opportunity for carers and patients to network with speakers and medical staff.

It was delightful to see Dr. Leavey and his team remaining for the second half of the day relating to the IKA patient services.

Fiona Aherne, Patient Support Manager, opened the afternoon session with a talk about the wide range of services from counselling, patient aid, education and information. IKA counsellor **Aoife Smith** followed with her presentation on the psychosocial aspects of patients with CKD. This was a fascinating detailed



Aoife Smith



examination of patients complex mental health issues before and after transplant, the services offered to IKA patients including counselling, Peer Support and the *Living Well* programme.

Aoife invited living kidney donor **Joan Gavan** from Tipperary to speak as a presenter of the *Living Well* programme which was very informative.

Mary Adamson spoke about her long kidney journey, since 1981, with 25 years of dialysis and three transplants, and her experience of being a peer supporter. Mary outlined how privileged she feels.

"We are not there to give medical advice or counsel peers. It is about supporting a fellow patient as someone who gets it, because we have the lived experience".

When she spoke about her niece donating to a little girl through the paired exchange scheme in Coventry UK, and how her own donor was an altruistic man who just wanted to donate his kidney, there was hardly a dry eye in the auditorium.



Welshley Lorin

Another Tipperary woman **Alison Fogarty**, spoke about how her experience of receiving Peer Support changed her life, having received the call for a transplant within hours of receiving encouragement from her peer supporter.

Alison is so grateful for this 'gift of life' that, in March of this year, she walked the equivalent distance from her house in Tipperary to Beaumont Hospital, a distance of 180kms, raising €11,000 for the IKA, a phenomenal achievement.

Finally, Sara thanked everyone who presented, attended and helped organise the event. She said how important days like this are, with everything together in one venue.

SETU was thanked for so generously giving us a free venue which was invaluable. The overall feedback from the day has been excellent. Here's hoping the event can be repeated in Waterford, and around the country going forward.



Alison Fogarty

Organ Donation and Transplantation

THE EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE



Those of you familiar with the **SUPPORT** magazine will be aware that every year, around this time, the **Newsletter Transplant** (International figures on organ donation and transplantation) is published, and we review the figures. This year's report covers data from 2024.

The Newsletter has always provided a useful source of international comparisons with activity in Ireland which in turn allows us to bring focus to areas that should be considered when looking to develop the national organ donation and transplantation programme.

Whilst the Newsletter is very heavy on statistics, it is important to always remember that behind every statistic are people – each with their own unique life story. Organ donation is the ultimate ‘gift of life’, offering someone a second chance through the selfless generosity of another.

It is also important to acknowledge the amazing teams across the health service involved in making organ donation and transplantation a reality.

Looking at Map below, we can see the number of **actual deceased organ donors** Per Million Population (PMP) in 2024.

As stated in previous years, it is

always important to put any such data in context. An annual report is a snapshot in time and statistics may only give a top-line story.

Figure 1 compares the rates of actual deceased organ donors across several countries from 2022-2024. This allows for comparisons of the latest data, and it also allows us to look at trends.

With rates in some of the countries significantly higher than those in Ireland, it poses the obvious question, why is this the case?

There are two broad categories of organ donation – namely, donation after brain stem death (DBD) and donation after circulatory death (DCD). Under these, the other categories of interest are extended criteria donors including organ donation from people over the age of 60 (ECD) and living donation (LD).

Figure 2 shows figures for these categories in 2024 and this now starts

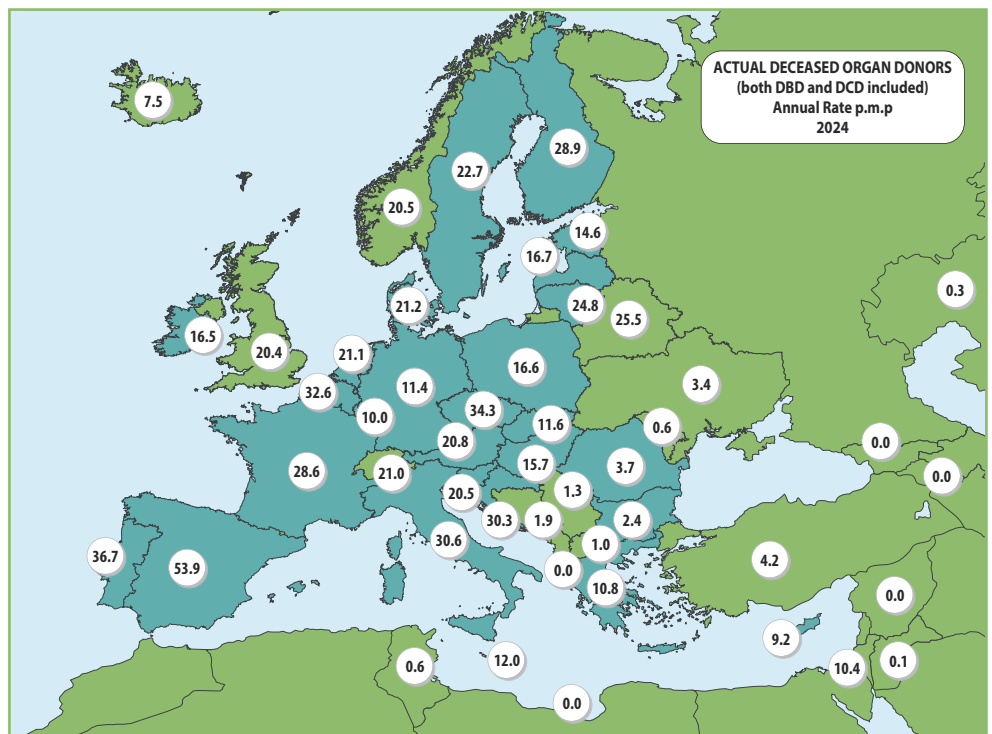


Figure 1 – Actual Deceased Donors

ACTUAL DECEASED DONORS						
	2022		2023		2024	
Country	Number	PMP	Number	PMP	Number	PMP
Belgium	342	29.2	383	32.7	381	32.6
Croatia	95	23.2	116	29	121	30.3
Hungary	122	12.7	131	12.8	157	15.7
Ireland	86	17.2	95	18.6	84	16.5
Netherlands	293	17.0	304	17.3	373	21.1
Portugal	318	31.5	375	36.8	374	36.7
Spain	2196	47.0	2346	49.4	2562	53.9
United Kingdom	1413	20.6	1513	22.3	1385	20.4

Figure 2 – Organ Donation 2024

ORGAN DONATION 2024						
Country	Population	Utilised Organ Donors after Brain Stem Death (PMP)	Utilised Donors after the Circulatory Determination of Death (PMP)	Utilised Deceased Organ Donors (>60 years) PMP	Total Living Kidney Donors PMP	OVERALL Utilised Deceased Organ Donors Per Million (PMP)
Belgium	11.7	16.2	15.6	14.8	7.0	31.7
Croatia	4.0	29.8	0.0	18.0	0.8	29.8
Hungary	10.0	15.4	0.0	3.5	5.2	15.4
Ireland	5.1	12.2	3.5	2.2	5.9	15.7
Netherlands	17.7	7.1	13.3	9.1	27.5	20.3
Portugal	10.2	29.6	3.9	17.2	7.0	33.5
Spain	47.5	23.8	24.2	26.9	8.4	48.0
UK	68.0	9.9	9.3	6.9	13.9	19.2

to shine a light on where the difference are most stark.

Donors Per Million Population are used for comparison to allow for differences in population sizes.

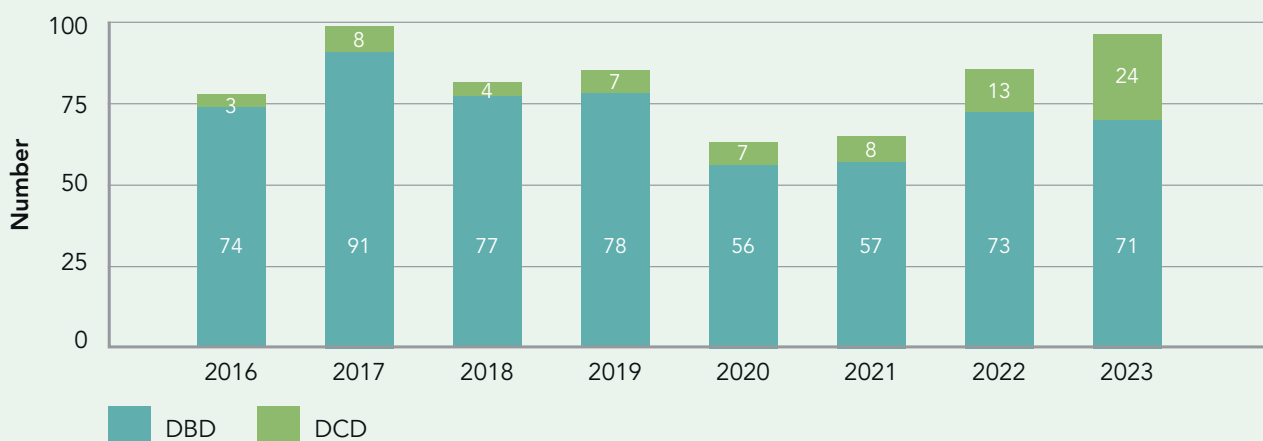
DONATION AFTER THE CIRCULATORY DETERMINATION OF DEATH (DCDD)

In recent years, Ireland has been developing its DCD programme as can be seen in Figure 3 below.

However, looking at the other countries in Figure 2 above, it appears that there is scope for significant additional development.

continued next page...

Figure 3: Number of DCD/DBD Donations 2016 - 2023



If, for example, it would be possible to increase the rate from 3.5 PMP to the UK level of 9.3 PMP (by no means the highest), that would be an increase of 29 additional donors.

DECEASED ORGAN DONORS >60 YEARS OF AGE

When looking at all the different categories, this is the one that really stands out as where there is potential for Ireland to make a significant difference in its overall rates of organ donation. Again, if Ireland were able to replicate the 'modest' UK figures (6.9 PMP) that would equate to an additional 24 donors per year.

LIVING KIDNEY DONATION

In **Figure 2** Ireland is at the lower end of rates of living kidney donation compared to the other countries (30 living donor transplants were carried out in 2024). Looking at the table opposite, it is evident that there has been very little growth in the number of living donor kidney transplants carried out in Ireland in recent years. Noting that there were 50 living donor kidney transplants in 2016 and 51 in 2017, there is clearly the potential to increase at a higher level. It is important to understand why the programme is not repeating, or even building on, these figures.

Looking past the numbers, which are a measure of activity, it is important to note a comment in a Medical Independent article on January 15th this year that puts this activity in a wider context.

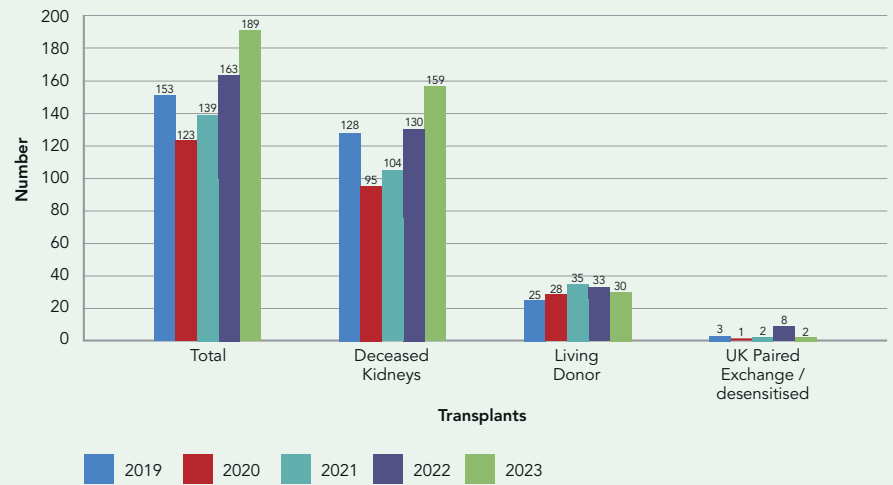
"The field of transplantation has changed considerably in the past decade, with increased complexity and resourcing requirements. Many kidney donations, for example, are now from older donors with a history of more co-morbidity. Kidney transplants arising from donation after circulatory death have increased from zero in 2010 to almost 30 per cent of activity in 2023."

www.medicalindependent.ie/comment/editorial/scope-to-improve-organ-transplant-rates/

It is also important to understand that rates of organ donation and transplantation are affected by many factors so when we compare

KIDNEY TRANSPLANTS 2019 - 2023

Figure 11: Kidney Transplants 2019-2023



Source: National Kidney Transplant Service Beaumont Hospital

outcomes with other countries, we are not always 'comparing apples with apples'. For example, for a long time Ireland has had a younger population than many of our European neighbours. If we look to infrastructure, Spain has significantly more ICU beds (important in the process of organ donation) per million population than we have in Ireland.

In other words, organ donation and transplantation is a complex area that relies on more than just consent to donate. There are over 100 people involved in ensuring that each potential organ donor can donate, and their organs can be transplanted.

However, what is clear from the statistics is that there is potential that needs to be explored. The **Potential Donor Audit** that is being managed by the **National Office for Clinical Audit (NOCA)** in Ireland will help provide greater insights into how the 'gift of life' that is organ donation can be offered to as many people as possible.

With the launch of the new Member Forum in the Irish Kidney Association (see page 12-13), one of its areas of activity will be around advocacy issues. This will include considering the Association's role in advocating at a policy level related to the development of the national organ donation and transplantation programmes.

For further information, please see: <https://www.transplant-observatory.org/newsletter-transplant-2025/>

GLOSSARY	
DBD	Donation after Brain Stem Death – After brain death, while on life support.
DCD	Donation after Circulatory Death – After the heart stops beating.
ECD	Extended Criteria Donors – After brain death (DBD) or circulatory death (DCD). Donors who are older (e.g., over 60) or have medical conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, or mild organ issues.
LD	Living Donation – While a donor is alive, e.g., a healthy living person donating one kidney or part of his/her liver.



Ruby Anniversary
of the
Service of Remembrance
and *Thanksgiving*

Church of The Holy Child, Thatch Road, Whitehall, Dublin 9



Archbishop Dermot Farrell, Archbishop Michael Jackson, Rev. Damian Murray, Shaykh Dr. Umar Al-Qadri, Gavin Byrne and Fr. Robert Smyth P.P.

Marking Forty Years of Remembrance and Thanksgiving

The Irish Kidney Association's 40th Annual Service of Remembrance and Thanksgiving took place on Saturday, September 27th, at the Church of the Holy Child in Whitehall, Dublin, the same church where the Service was held in 2024. This milestone ruby Service brought together donor families, transplant recipients, healthcare professionals, and members of the wider community, in a moving celebration of life, reflection, and deep gratitude to organ donors.

The interfaith Service, which included those from faith and non-faith groups, has become a cherished annual tradition, honouring deceased organ donors and their families while celebrating the transformed lives of transplant recipients. Celebrants from diverse faith traditions and non-religious world views came together, united in their support of organ donation as the ultimate act of humanity.

The moving ceremony, attended by nearly 1,500 people, was marked by spontaneous rounds of applause at various moments, reflecting the deep emotion and shared gratitude felt by all present.

The Service was covered on RTÉ TV News that evening. It was recorded by Kairos Communications, was broadcast on RTÉ One and RTÉ

Radio 1 Extra on All Souls Day, November 2nd. 31,100 households tuned in to watch it on TV, while many more caught up to watch it on RTÉ Player in the days following the broadcast. This allowed the heartfelt tributes and solemn reflections of the day to be shared with a nationwide audience and bring awareness to the importance of organ donation.

While the weather was wet, it did little to dampen the spirit of the occasion and a beautiful light shone down into the church, perfectly captured in the recording, reflecting the warmth and emotion felt among all those in attendance.

For those present, the Service offered a deeply moving opportunity to reflect, remember, and give thanks. For those who watched or listened later, it served as a poignant

reminder of the lasting impact of organ donation and the bonds it creates across families and communities.

The Service included a series of deeply symbolic moments, with donor families and transplant recipients participating in processions and bringing gifts to the altar. Many took part in the liturgy alongside healthcare professionals in reading the Scripture readings, reflections, and prayers of thanksgiving, with the themes of the generosity of donors and the gift of new life received carried throughout.

The former **President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins**, patron to the Irish Kidney Association (IKA), wrote a letter of support which was read aloud at the beginning of the Service by **Colin White**, husband of a dialysis patient and National Advocacy



Colin White



Volunteer florists Gillian Scanlan, Una Whelan

Manager for the IKA. The President's message was warmly received and met with a round of applause. See his letter on page 45.

This ruby anniversary theme was reflected in print materials and throughout the Service – from the beautifully designed invitations issued to donor families to the Service booklet and the stunning ruby coloured floral arrangements that adorned the church created by Una Whelan from the Dublin East/Wicklow Branch of the Irish Kidney Association and her friend Gillian Scanlan. Each detail added to the sense of history and helped to make the occasion especially memorable.



Liz O'Sullivan, IKA National Honorary Chair

The Service was opened by Liz O'Sullivan, Chair of the IKA who welcomed the congregation and paid tribute to the many families who have given the 'gift of life' through organ donation. She also acknowledged the recent passing, a month before, of the late Mark Murphy, former CEO of the IKA, who was instrumental in promoting organ donation for two decades before retiring in 2020. In her address, Ms. O'Sullivan said, "we honour the contributions of all our loved ones who have died, and the warmth, strength, and spirit they have brought to our community." She added that we "remember with deep



Martina Goggin

sadness our dear IKA staff colleagues Anne Spring and Lenny Ryan" who passed away in 2025.

Guest narrators were Martina Goggin and Sallyanne Clarke, both bereaved mothers who have become prominent advocates for organ donation. Martina and her husband Denis, known to many of the congregation, donated the organs of their only child Éamonn in 2006 and later founded the 'Circle of Life' National Organ Donor Commemorative Garden in Galway.

Sallyanne and her husband Derry Clarke honoured the wishes of her 16-year-old son Andrew, who had expressed his desire to become an organ donor prior to his untimely passing in 2012.



Sallyanne Clarke

There was a warm reception for the eminent retired Transplant Surgeon, Dr. David Hickey, a former All-Ireland-winning Dublin footballer who performed over 1,500 transplants during his distinguished career, from 1986 to 2015, and who



Dr. David Hickey

also pioneered pancreas transplantation in Ireland.

Dr. Hickey read a moving reflection, "Who is My Neighbour" by Brian Patrick. He also shared an impromptu message further touching all in attendance, when he said, "I feel in the presence of profound and transcendent goodness. The humanity of the families here is indeed, in a very dark world today, a shining light at the end of the very long tunnel, but hopefully this light will show that another world is possible." His poignant words were met with spontaneous applause from the congregation.

MUSIC



Kathryn Browne

Music played a central role in the ceremony, with the Whitehall Church Adult Choir providing beautiful choral performances under the direction of Kathryn Browne, who accompanied on piano. Kathryn, a soprano, and tenor Niall Stafford's performance of the enchanting duet *The Prayer* earned a spontaneous round of applause from the congregation.

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Whitehall Church Adult Choir



Marina Cassidy



Keith Matthews

Other members of the choir, including basses **Paul Spierin** and **Tony McGuigan**, and sopranos **Marie Therese Devins** and **Marie Costello**, gave equally moving performances. Guest musicians included harpist and vocalist **Marina Cassidy** and soloist tenor **Keith Matthews**, their beautiful music and solo's captured the emotion of the occasion and honoured the loss of loved ones and the joy that comes with the 'gift of life'.

OPENING PROCESSION

In the opening procession, narrated so sensitively by **Martina Goggin**, the celebrants for the ecumenical, interfaith and non-denominational ceremony were introduced. These included: His Grace **Archbishop Dermot Farrell**, Archbishop of Dublin; His Grace **Archbishop Michael Jackson**, Archbishop of Dublin and Bishop of Glendalough; **Father Robert Smyth**, Parish Priest, Church of the Holy Child; **Shaykh Dr. Umar Al-Qadri**, Chief Imam, Islamic Centre of Ireland; **Reverend Damian Murray**, Deacon; **Michelle Read**, Humanist Celebrant, Humanist Association of Ireland; and Trainee Minister **Gavin Byrne**, Dublin Unitarian Church.

Leading the opening procession was **Garda Alan Murphy** from Ennis who is stationed in Clifden. He carried the **Crucifix** to the altar. Alan's younger brother Garry passed away suddenly in 2005 at the age of 19. After Garry's family agreed to organ donation, five of his organs were received by those in need of the 'gift of life'.



Pat Fleming, Mary Keogh

Two **Altar candles** were carried to the altar by **Mary Keogh** from Caherdavin, Co. Limerick who was formerly from the Parish of Whitehall, and **Pat Fleming** from Athy, Co. Kildare. In 1969, Pat Fleming donated a kidney to his then 10-year-old brother Leonard. 46 years later Leonard continues to live a full life in Athy close to his brother Pat.

Mary and James Keogh's eldest daughter **Sinéad**, a mother of one, was just 41 when she passed away suddenly in Spring 2024, donating her kidneys and her heart valves.

Rev. Damian Murray carried the **Book of the Gospels** to the altar from which he later read 'A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke (10.25-37)' where Jesus tells the parable of the Good Samaritan, reminding us that every act of compassion reflects God's love at work in the world. His words call us to recognise our neighbour in those who suffer and to respond with



Rev. Damian Murray



Garda Alan Murphy

mercy, generosity, and care. The reading echoed the spirit of selflessness and love celebrated throughout the Service.



Kevin & Noreen Nuding

Also, in the opening procession and carrying the **large donor card** to the altar were **Kevin and Noreen Nuding** from Templeogue, Dublin whose beloved son **Darren's** organs were donated when he passed away in Spring 2024 three days before his 31st birthday. Just a few years before, **Noreen's** sister **Annette** lost her husband **Enda McDermott**, a Consultant at St. Vincents University Hospital, to a brain haemorrhage and his family selflessly donated his organs. **Noreen** herself has received a successful combined kidney and pancreas transplant over three decades ago.



Gillian Curtis, Geraldine Dowling

The **Book of Remembrance**, a roll of honour for organ donors who have consented for their loved ones' organs to be inscribed in the Book, was carried to the altar by **Geraldine Dowling** from Newcastle West in Limerick. **Geraldine's** twin brother **Patrick** was just 31 when he passed away in 1999 from a brain haemorrhage after which his two kidneys, liver, heart and corneas were donated to help others.

Following the Service, families who had authorised the inclusion of their loved one's name in the Book of Remembrance and its three replicas were invited to view it, with the compassionate support of Organ Donor Nurse Managers **Karen Healy**,

Bernie Nohilly, Gillian Shanahan, Orla Cradock and Liturgy Committee member Nicola Phillips.

The Booklet for the Service, which each of the congregation received a copy of, was carried to the altar by Gillian Curtis from Athy who underwent her heart transplant at the Mater Hospital in 2019 when she was 39-years-old. Gillian's diagnosis of cardiomyopathy in 2004 occurred at the same time as the tragic death of her 18-year-old brother Martin from Sudden Adult Death Syndrome.



Lorraine Costello, Phyllis Cunningham

Walking up together in the opening procession, were founders of the Service of Remembrance and Thanksgiving Phyllis Cunningham, the former, and first National Transplant Coordinator in Ireland, and Lorraine Costello, the now retired IKA Patient Support Officer. Phyllis carried a photo of St. Mary's Church, Haddington Road, Dublin 4 where the very first Service was held in 1985.

Lorraine carried a calligraphy pen signifying the inscription of names of organ donors remembered forever in the Book of Remembrance, which has been carried out for 40 years by the same calligrapher, Annette Daly.

Read more about the History of the Service on page 45.

GREETING

The Service was presided by His Grace Archbishop Dermot Farrell, Archbishop of Dublin who greeted the congregation and gave the Opening Prayer.

HOMILY

In his homily, The Very Reverend Robert Smyth, Parish Priest, Church of the Holy Child, welcomed attendees to the Service. Reflecting on the mixed emotions present – mourning, gratitude, and joy – he reminded the congregation that “we

share the human experience, filled as it is with emotions of sadness and happiness, with suffering and with redemption.”

Rev. Smyth highlighted the first reading, from the Book of Job (19:1.23-27), which was read by Dr. Catherine Motherway, Clinical Lead, Organ Donation Transplant Ireland, as a model of patient perseverance. He said, “Our first reading reminds us of the patience of Job who never lost the gift of hope.”



Dr. Catherine Motherway

The second reading, from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians, was read by Marita Mulhall, from Emly, Tipperary whose husband Dermot's organs were donated when he passed away in 2013. Dermot's sister Breda had received a kidney transplant from a deceased donor in 2009.



Marita Mulhall

In his homily Rev. Smyth also reflected on the second reading saying, “Faith, hope, and love are gifts from God that are freely offered...we can decide to flick the switch and allow the fruits of the Holy Spirit into the world.” Using a vivid analogy, the priest likened God's grace to electricity: freely available yet only flowing when we choose to accept it.

Rev. Smyth's homily recognised the selflessness of donors, the dedication of medical professionals, and the support of family and friends, asking that all might grow in gratitude for the ‘gift of life’ and

follow the example of the Holy Child, “to become fully human and inherit eternal life in the world to come.”

OFFERTORY PROCESSION

The offertory procession which followed the Homily was beautifully narrated by Sallyanne Clarke with several gifts presented to his Grace Archbishop Michael Jackson, who was assisted by Liam Buttle from Blackwater, Wexford, a long-time volunteer with the IKA.

Included in the symbols of great significance was the IKA's emblem, the forget-me-not flower, which was worn by the congregation. The Forget-me-not flower where the brown wood bandage over the graft of the flower, symbolises the transplanted life-giving organ.



Mary and John Dunne

Father and daughter John and Mary Dunne from Roscrea, Co. Tipperary carried a basket of forget-me-not flowers to the altar. Their late son and brother Declan had an organ donor card since he was 14-years-old. His family honoured his wishes donating his organs changing the lives of four recipients when he passed away at the age of 25 following a road traffic accident in 2001. Twenty years later, a close family relative, age 23, received a double lung transplant.

A beautiful framed embroidered forget-me-not flower was brought to the altar by Marion Farrell from Dublin 15 (and native of Mulraney, in Co. Mayo). She lost her beautiful daughter Cairtriona just before her

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Marion Farrell

30th birthday. Caitriona's family made the brave decision to donate five of her organs so that others might live.

Sally Toye from Carndonagh, Co. Donegal brought a recent copy of the IKA's *SUPPORT* magazine to the altar. Sally's son Shane was just 19-years-old when he passed away in 2004 following a car accident. His family's selfless decision to donate Shane's organs in their heartbreak saved the lives of five people. Sally's daughters Kerry and Lisa flew in from the UK to join her and their father Gerry at the Service.

Dublin native **Betty Morgan** from Tallaght, Dublin, carried her late son Eamon's **wordsearch puzzle book**. Eamon was just 44 when he passed away suddenly in late 2021. Betty and her children were unanimous in their decision to donate Eamon's organs as he was always a very giving person throughout his life.

Young kidney and liver transplant recipients who also took part in a symbolic offertory procession carrying items of importance to them included **Callum Cooney** (10) from Ballintra, Co. Donegal who underwent a kidney transplant from a deceased donor in 2023. Callum carried his **basketball**, representing the sport he loves, to the altar. **Sofia Corey** (11) from Walkinstown, Dublin received a kidney transplant in 2020 and she brought her **teddy** to the altar, while **Amber O'Rourke** (17) from Brownshill Road, Co. Carlow carried a **photo of herself celebrating with her kidney donor** (her mother's friend) Ann-Marie Byrne in 2017 taken on the first anniversary of their successful living donor kidney transplant.

Dubliners **Laura McDowell** (16) from Dalkey, whose aunt Deirdre donated part of her liver to her when she was a one-year-old, carried her three medals, 2 Bronze and a Silver, won at the World Transplant Games held in Dresden. **Sam Kinahan** (11) from Donaghmede, Dublin received a living donor kidney transplant when he was five-years-old. He brought the **three medals he won** at the British Transplant Games in the summer as well as a medal which his living kidney donor father, Ivan, won in Dresen in August.

Transplant Sport Ireland (TSI)



Sally Toye



Laura McDowell



Betty Morgan



Sam Kinahan



Callum Cooney



Mike Keohane



Sofia Coffey



Glenn Clinton



Amber O'Rourke

members **Mike Keohane**, a liver transplant recipient from Rosscarbery, Co. Cork, and kidney transplant recipient **Glenn Clinton**, from Cabinteely, Co. Dublin, carried

gold medals which they won at the British Transplant Games 2025.

Walking side by side in the offertory procession were **Padraic Brehon** and his brother **Liam** from Roscommon. Padraic is enjoying the successful longevity of a kidney transplant he received from his brother Liam in 1984. They carried **two pages of an award-winning article** that appeared in the *Roscommon Herald* written by Padraic's late son Cormac when he was just 11, as he reflected on his dad's kidney journey and the gratitude he had towards his uncle Liam.

Padraic and Liam Brehon



Violet Lambe, Patrick Mulvey



Patrick Mulvey from Raheny in Dublin joined his sister-in-law Violet Lambe in the procession as they remembered Paddy's late wife and Violet's sister Sheila. Sheila's local church was the Church of the Holy Child as she grew up in Whitehall. She was just 56-years-old and a mother of three when she passed away in 2006 donating three of her organs. Patrick carried a **replica certificate from the Book of Remembrance** and Violet brought a picture of her beloved sister to the altar.

Mary Delany, also from Blackrock, Dublin and a retired paediatric nurse who lived with severe congenital liver disease, received a life-transforming liver transplant in 2018. She carried a beautiful handmade poster on the theme of 'loving one another and organ donation', created by teenagers at **Ellenfield Community College** in Whitehall.

Mary Delany



Transplant Team prepare for the Service of Light

SERVICE OF LIGHT

The poignant **Service of Light** was facilitated by members of **Transplant Sport Ireland** including its team captain and kidney transplant recipient **Harry Ward**. The team lit candles for the congregation, symbolising the enduring connection between organ donors and those whose lives they transformed.

Leading the Service of Light were living donor kidney transplant recipients **John Moran** from Glasnevin, Dublin (*who underwent his successful transplant 40 years ago thanks to his living donor brother Frank*), and **Amanda O'Neill Coyne** from Youghal, Co. Cork (*whose sister Frances donated a kidney to her*).

For the Service of Light, as well as candles, the congregation was invited to place handwritten **remembrance cards** bearing the names of their loved ones into baskets at the altar. To commemorate the 40 years of Services, for this year, these baskets of cards were then presented to Martina and Denis Goggin by Transplant Sport Ireland members **Mick Dwyer** from Cabinteely, Dublin, and **Sheila Grogan** from Nenagh, Tipperary, (both deceased donor kidney transplant recipients). It is an honour that for 2025, the cards are now incorporated in the beautiful 'Circle of Life' National Organ Donor Commemorative Garden.

OTHER READERS

Along with previously mentioned Dr. Catherine Motherway and retired Transplant Surgeon Dr. David Hickey, many other key figures from the **medical and transplant community** carried out reading roles.

Breda Doyle, Organ Donor Nurse



Amanda O'Neill Coyne, John Moran, Teresa Smyth

Breda Doyle



Manager, Cork University Hospital read 'A Candle' by Helen Custer before the Service of Light. Following the Service of Light **Dr. Alexandru Cornea**, Heart and Lung and Transplant Surgeon, Mater Hospital read the first reflection, *Love Thy Neighbour* by AGO Speaks.

The second reflection was written by **Shaykh Dr. Umar Al-Qadri**, Chief Imam, Islamic Centre of Ireland. He spoke of gratitude for organ donors and their families, describing organ donation as an act of compassion and mercy inspired by the Qur'an's teaching that saving one life is as if you were saving all humanity.

Shaykh Dr. Umar Al-Qadri



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Mary Doolin-Murphy

The third Reflection was written by **Mary Doolin-Murphy**, from Mount Merrion, Dublin, the wife of an organ donor and Interfaith Minister with One Spirit Ireland. Mary's husband Éamonn was just 46-years-old when he died after an accident at home in late 2002 following which his organs were donated.



Michelle Read

Michelle Read, a Humanist Celebrant with the Humanist Association of Ireland also shared her thoughts on organ donation.

Prayers of Thanksgiving were read by **Emma Corrigan**, National Organ Procurement Service, ODTI; **Bernie Kelleher**, Clinical Nurse Manager 3,



Emma Corrigan



Bernie Kelleher



Dr. Robert O'Connell

Nephrology, Children's Health Ireland; **Dr. Robert O'Connell**, Liver Transplant Surgeon, St. Vincent's University Hospital; and **Dr. Gordon Smyth**, Kidney Transplant Surgeon, Beaumont Hospital.



Dr. Gordon Smyth

Reading other meaningful Prayers of Thanksgiving were: **Edward Kehoe** from Castlebridge, Co. Wexford who is still enjoying the successful longevity of the kidney transplant he received 42 years ago from a deceased donor; **Narender Katta** from Dublin 1 who received a deceased donor kidney transplant at Beaumont Hospital in 2018; **Camilla Earle**, from Dublin, the wife of organ



Edward Kehoe



Narender Katta



Camilla Earle

donor **David** who passed away in 2003 following which four lives were saved; newlywed **Nicole Walsh** (nee Grier) a native of Claremorris, Co. Mayo and now living in Portarlinton, Co. Laois with her husband **Kieran**. Nicole, along with her sister and father agreed to organ donation following her mother **Martina's** sudden passing following a brain aneurysm in 2012.



Nicole Walsh

Reading the final reflection, *Thank You, Thank You*, by Patrick Kavanagh was **Allsún Henderson**, from Castleknock, Dublin who received a double lung transplant in 2010 and a kidney from a deceased donor last year.



Allsún Henderson, Dr. Alexandru Cornea

Following the Prayers of Thanksgiving His Grace **Archbishop Dermot Farrell** said the *Our Father* and *Prayer of Peace* and as the Service came to a close, he gave the Closing Prayer and Solemn Blessing.

Archbishop Dermot Farrell (front) and Rev. Damian Murray



As the Service concluded, members of the congregation collected the candles – previously lit during the Service of Light – from the altar to take home. It has become a cherished tradition for many to light these candles on special occasions, such as anniversaries and Christmas, in remembrance of their loved ones and organ donors.

Among those also in attendance were **Patricia Doherty**, who was the IKA's first Chief Executive and one of the Service of Remembrance's founding members, and the Association's current CEO, **Carol Moore**. **John Walsh**, Chief Operations Officer of Organ Donation Transplant Ireland was also part of the congregation.



Current and past IKA Chief Executives, Carol Moore, Patricia Doherty

A SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

The combined goodwill of the community, church, and school created a wonderfully inclusive and uplifting atmosphere that truly made the day a celebration of unity and shared values.

The warm support of **Rev. Robert Smyth**, Parish Priest, together with **Vanessa Burke**, sacristans and volunteers from the church office, helped make the hosting of this special Service a pleasure. Principal **Aisling Roche**, teacher **Emily**

Dunleavy and the staff and students of Ellenfield Community College also supported this Service hugely again this year. The school not only opened its facilities for catering and car parking but also encouraged students to design posters on the theme of 'loving one another and organ donation' which were displayed with pride around the church.

In advance of the Service, **Ashleigh, Maeve, Clare and Erika**, from **Volunteer Ireland** helped IKA staff pack 1,400 ruby coloured bags for the congregation which contained a candle, the booklet, remembrance card, pen and forget-me-not flower emblem.

On the day itself, IKA staff were joined by volunteers and representatives from Branches across the country all working together to try to ensure that every aspect of the event ran seamlessly.

Lifeline Ambulance Service were on standby with paramedics and an ambulance, though happily their assistance was not required, while members of the local Gardaí from the roads and community policing divisions at **Ballymun Garda Station** provided much-appreciated support on the day.

Guests were treated to an appetising spread in both the adjoining Parish Hall and nearby Ellenfield Community School from **Egan Hospitality**, whose catering and refreshments were warmly received by all in attendance.

Behind the scenes, the Service was the result of over half a year of thoughtful planning and collaboration by a dedicated organising committee of six,



Gardaí John McMonagle, Clara Maguire, Mags Hession, Tiernan Feeney.

including three long-serving Irish Kidney Association volunteers: Living kidney donor **Joan Gavan**, from Donohill, Co. Tipperary; **Cathriona Charles**, who underwent a deceased donor kidney transplant 35 years ago, from Mohill, Co. Leitrim; and **Michelle Horan**, from Athy, Co. Kildare, who received two kidney transplants but has now returned to dialysis treatment. A valuable new perspective was brought to the committee this year by **Nicola Phillips**, an Organ Donor Nurse Manager at St. James's Hospital, who works in the coalface of organ donation meeting organ donor families. The IKA's senior media officer, **Gwen O'Donoghue** managed publicity, played a role in the operational planning, and handled approaches to organ donor families and transplant recipients who had participant roles.

Leading the project was **Olive Cummins** who ensured that every detail – from catering and location to celebrants, volunteers, scripture readings, and music – came together seamlessly. Her calm coordination and attention to detail were evident in every aspect of the day, and she carried out her role with true aplomb.

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The Liturgy Committee: Olive Cummins, Gwen O'Donoghue, Michelle Horan, Cathriona Charles, Nicola Phillips, Joan Gavan.

40TH SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE & THANKSGIVING CONTD....



Seamus Callagy



Venod Gopu



Pashcal Brooks



From back:
Sebastian Pannackal
Finbar Tracey
Vinod Gopu
Adrian Cunningham

Cunningham, sound engineer; Dan Hall, assistant sound engineer; and camera operators Seamus Callagy, Pashcal Brooks, Gerard Doyle, Cormac Duffy and Vinod Gopu.

Kairos had the unenviable task of editing the almost two hours long Service into a 55-minute production for broadcast on RTÉ.

Feedback from attendees was overwhelmingly positive, with many expressing heartfelt appreciation for the opportunity to come together, remember their loved ones, and celebrate the lives renewed through organ donation.

There was strong media coverage across press and online platforms, reflecting its significance. Social media updates from the Irish Kidney Association broadened its reach, with 31,100 watching on RTÉ and more on the RTÉ Player.

* * * * *

Marking four decades of remembrance, the Service honoured the lasting impact of organ donors and the lives transformed by their generosity.

Photographer Conor McCabe provided his usual professionalism, skill and sensitivity capturing the poignancy of the Service whilst allowing attendees their space

to reflect.
The Kairos Communications team included Finbar Tracey, camera director; Sebastian Pannackal, location manager; Adrian



Dr. Robert O'Connell, Dr. Alexandru Cornea, Dr. Catherine Motherway, Breda Doyle, Emma Corrigan, Dr. Gordon Smyth, Dr. David Hickey.



Organ Donor Nurse Managers...Karen Healy, Bernie Nohilly, Orla Craddock, Nicola Phillips, Breda Doyle, Gillian Shanahan.



Amber and her mother Elaine O'Rourke.



Frances Moynihan, Pat McCabe.



Bridie Morley, Dr. David Hickey, Michaela and Sean Morley.



UACHTARÁN NA hÉIREANN
PRESIDENT OF IRELAND

President's Message

Mar Uachtarán na hÉireann, may I extend my warmest wishes to all who are gathered for today's 40th Service of Remembrance and Thanksgiving, organised by the Irish Kidney Association.

This special service is an occasion of profound reflection, gratitude and solidarity. It offers an opportunity to remember with deep respect those generous individuals who, in life or in death, gave to others the priceless gift of renewed possibility through organ donation.

To the living donors, and to those families who, in moments of profound grief, selflessly made the decision to donate the organ of a loved one, choosing to transform loss into hope, I wish to offer the most sincere thanks for your great spirit of compassion and solidarity. Organ donation is an act of incredible solidarity, an act of great altruism towards a fellow human being, and perhaps the greatest gift one human being can give to another.

To those who have received the 'gift of life' through organ donation, and to your families, may I commend the dignity and gratitude with which you mark this day, by the appreciation that you all show by your participation in this annual service.

On this occasion I fondly recall the St. Patrick's Day Reception at Áras an Uachtaráin in 2018 when Sabina and I had the privilege of welcoming so many individuals and their families who have been involved, in their different ways, with that most generous of acts, the act of organ donation.

As Patron of the Irish Kidney Association, may I take this opportunity to acknowledge the tireless work of the Association since your foundation in 1978. I am so proud of all the vital work that the Association undertakes in supporting patients suffering from kidney disease and their families.

Such advocacy, support for patients and families, and steadfast commitment to promoting awareness of organ donation, all undertaken with inspiring generosity and empathy, have been of immeasurable value, and continue to inspire us all.

On this 40th anniversary of the Service of Remembrance and Thanksgiving, may I extend my support and thanksgiving for the great gift of organ donation, which has transformed and enriched so many lives, allowing new possibilities and new opportunities for recipients and their loved ones.

Go raibh míle maith agaibh go léir, is beir gach beannacht d'on todchaí.

Michael D. Higgins
Uachtarán na hÉireann
President of Ireland



History of the Service

The concept for the **Service of Remembrance & Thanksgiving** evolved when a grieving mother spoke with **Lorraine Costello**, the Patient Support Officer at the Irish Kidney Association (IKA), about her deep sadness that her son's organ donation had never been acknowledged. At the time, there was no system in place at the Old Jervis Street Hospital to formally recognise and thank organ donors or their families.

Lorraine brought this to the attention of **Patricia Doherty**, one of the IKA's founders and its first Chief Executive, who was also the mother of a kidney patient. Patricia then consulted with **Phyllis Cunningham**, the first National Transplant Coordinator (all three women are now retired). Together, it was decided that a Service should be held to publicly acknowledge and honour the courageous generosity of organ donors and their families.

The inaugural Service, organised by the IKA in 1986, was attended by 300 people in St. Mary's Church, Haddington Road, Dublin 4. In 2001, the Service moved to Corpus Christi Church in Drumcondra, where it continued to be held annually. While the Service has been predominantly based in Dublin, it has taken place outside the capital on two notable occasions: once in Galway Cathedral in 2014, attended by former President of Ireland Michael D. Higgins, Patron of the IKA; and in Mullingar at Christ the King Cathedral in 2023, marking the first in-person gathering following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Over the years, attendance steadily grew, with some Services drawing close to 1,800 people. During the pandemic, when the event was held virtually at Newman Church in Dublin and broadcast on RTÉ, its reach expanded significantly, with viewership from across the country and beyond.

The Service continues to be a unique and meaningful event on the annual calendar, offering a special space for transplant recipients and donor families to come together in remembrance, gratitude, and solidarity.



Nora Jones, Niamh Donnelly, her parents Walter and Louise with a photograph of their late son Colm, and Mary O'Leary.



The Toye family...Kerry, Gerry, Sally and Lisa with a photograph of their beloved Shane.



Mary and her father John Dunne with a photograph of their beloved Declan.



Violet Lambe, Patrick Mulvey with a photograph of her late sister and Patrick's late wife Sheila.



Marion Farrell with a photograph of her late daughter Caitriona.



Margaret Lawless with a photograph of her late daughter Kerri Whelan.



James and Mary Keogh and a photograph of their late daughter Sínead.



The Cooney family, parents Lorraine and Victor with Callum (10), Tadhg (12) and Honor Mae (6).



Betty Morgan (centre) with a photograph of her departed son Éamon, with her daughters Catriona and Martina.



Noreen & Kevin Nuding with a photograph of their late son Darren.



Denis & Martina Goggin with a photograph of their late son Éamonn.



Sallyanne Clarke with a photograph of her late son Andrew.

Growing together - A New Chapter for Peer Support !!



By AOIFE SMITH

As we approach the end of another transformative year, we're thrilled to share some exciting news from our peer support service. After a very successful recruitment drive, we've officially welcomed ten new peer support volunteers to our team!

These passionate individuals bring a wealth of lived experience, empathy, and commitment to supporting others and we couldn't be more excited to begin their training journey.

The training process is set to kick off shortly, and we're proud to say that our existing team of peer support volunteers will be playing a vital role. Their continued dedication to the service is a testament to the strength of our community. They'll be lending their expertise and insights to help shape the new team, ensuring that our expanding service remains grounded in compassion, understanding, and peer-led wisdom.

Over the past three years, our peer support service has grown in

ways we never imagined. From humble beginnings to a successful network of volunteers and peers, we've built something truly special.

As we look ahead to 2026, we're filled with hope and determination to continue this journey, reaching more people, deepening our impact, and creating meaningful connections.

With the festive season upon us, the team would like to wish you all a warm and joyful Christmas. We know the holidays can be a complex time, and we want to remind you: you're not alone. Peer support is about real conversations, shared understanding, and walking alongside one another.

So, if you feel that talking to someone who has lived through similar experiences might help, we encourage you to reach out – peersupport@ika.ie Your story matters, and someone who truly understands is ready to listen.

Our volunteers are here for you!

Here's to new beginnings, continued growth, and the power of peer connection.

We're honoured to share a heartfelt poem written by one of our peers, Angela, reflecting on her personal journey of becoming and growing as a peer support volunteer. Her words beautifully capture the spirit of connection, resilience, and hope that defines our community:

My Journey as a Peer Supporter

*It started off light-hearted
A cuppa and a chat
Sure, what could be so difficult?
They ask questions
We answer back.*

*Then the training started
My mind it changed quite fast
It's not about the chattering
It's the listening in fact,*

*To hear what they are saying
And not to answer back
To think before we speak to them
And take in all the facts.*

*We are here to listen
Support along the way
To a story that is similar
To a life we lived our way.*

*We hope that when we finish
Light-hearted they will leave
And knowing someone else out
there
Understands the life they lead.*

*It is with this understanding
That good wishes, we bestow
Of good health and of happiness
For the peers along their road.*

*To be a peer supporter
It's active listening all the time
It's empathy and understanding
And giving of our time.*

The Irish Kidney Association gratefully acknowledges the support of **Punchestown Kidney Research Fund (PKRF)**, the major funder for the provision of the Peer Support programme.

Annual Renal Education Day

The Irish Kidney Association's (IKA's) **Annual Renal Education Day** for counsellors and psychotherapists took place at the Ashling Hotel, Dublin 8, in September, a little later than usual, but no less informative and productive. The purpose of this event is to ensure our panel of counsellors and psychotherapists, who work on behalf of the IKA, remain informed and up to date on the experiences of patients living with chronic kidney disease (CKD).

We began with an opening address from **Carol Moore**, our CEO, who outlined the agenda and set the tone for the sessions ahead. She provided a snapshot of the diverse areas of work the IKA is engaged in, highlighting the growing demand for our services.

Carol discussed the recent report on patient experiences with End Stage Kidney Disease (ESKD) in Ireland. This report highlights strong satisfaction with renal care, with over 80% of dialysis and transplant patients rating their care as *"the best it could be."*

Patients praised respectful treatment, hygiene standards, and communication with renal teams, though systemic challenges such as understaffing, financial strain, and lack of integrated electronic health records were noted.

Mental health support emerged as a critical gap, with only 10% of dialysis patients accessing counselling in the past year, underscoring the need for better psychological services and signposting.

Overall, the findings emphasise the importance of patient-centred care, improved support systems,

By AOIFE SMITH

and holistic approaches to enhance quality of life for those living with ESKD.

Carol highlighted the importance of having the IKA counselling service available for our patients, families and carers. She concluded by acknowledging the consistently positive feedback we receive about the valuable work our panel provides for our patients and encouraged reflection of the impact we're making.

Jackie Moore from the accounts department took the floor next. She provided a detailed overview of the recent changes to our invoicing template and emphasised the importance of issuing separate invoices, especially around the end and beginning of the calendar year. To ensure that all sessions are correctly dated and that yearly session e.g. 2025 and 2026 sessions are not combined on the same invoice.

As service demands continue to grow, so too does the number of counsellors who submit monthly invoices to the IKA. Jackie highlighted the need for invoices to include specific required information to



Jackie Moore, Aoife Smith

facilitate smooth payment processing. Since payments often spark discussion, Jackie addressed all questions from the panel with clarity and precision, clearly outlining the steps necessary to ensure prompt and accurate payment.

With the housework out of the way, we were treated to an invaluable insight from **Suzanne O'Connor**, a Health Psychologist and Psychotherapist. Her presentation on health psychology and psychotherapy was a refreshing reminder that healing isn't just about medicine, it's about mindset. With warmth and wit, Suzanne unpacked powerful psychological theories like the Biopsychosocial Model and Psychoneuroimmunology, showing how our thoughts, emotions, and social environments shape our physical health and can dramatically improve treatment outcomes. By blending theory with practical strategies, such as enhancing treatment compliance and managing pain through psychoeducation, she highlighted the vital role health counsellors and therapists play in



Aoife Smith, Suzanne O'Connor



Breda Farrell, Tracey Kelly, Anne Marie Hayes.



Fiona Fitzpatrick, Cairenn Bryson, Suzanne O'Connor, Sandra Collins.



Sandra Collins sharing her life experiences.

bridging the gap between mental and physical wellbeing.

From tackling “man flu” myths to improving treatment compliance, Suzanne’s insights were both scientifically grounded and deeply human. Suzanne showed how her work with IKA clients proves that when psychology and psychotherapy meet healthcare, the results can be transformative.

From this point, the format of the day shifted to a workshop style, designed to encourage hands-on engagement and meaningful interaction among our psychotherapists and counsellors.

Our first workshop featured **Sandra Collins**, a patient who has engaged with our counselling services. She shared a deeply moving account of living with a life-limiting illness and how it has shaped her journey.

Sandra described how she refers to her illness as her ‘Politician’, because of the way it influences her life without ever consulting her. She spoke about losing her mother **Pat** to the same illness at just 11-years-old and, heartbreakingly, her two sisters, **Edel** and **Joanne**, in the years that followed. Sandra reflected on how counselling supported her through difficult times and spoke about what truly made a difference in building a meaningful connection with her counsellor. Despite the challenges, Sandra is now halfway through a doctorate, a powerful testament to her resilience and determination.

After hearing Sandra’s story, counsellors were invited to break into small groups and reflect on key questions, such as, what does healing mean when cure isn’t possible? and how do we maintain hope and realism together? Groups then shared their insights with the

larger audience. Sandra stayed to contribute her perspective, which added depth and authenticity to the conversation. This workshop proved to be a truly impactful and thought-provoking experience.

After lunch we moved into our second workshop of the day where, **Sue Paffrath**, Advanced Nurse Practitioner, from St. James’s Hospital delivered an insightful and thought-provoking presentation on Renal Supportive Care, challenging traditional approaches to CKD.

With clarity and empathy, Sue highlighted the alarming prevalence of undiagnosed CKD and the profound physical and emotional impact it has on patients. She introduced the concept of conservative care, an approach focused on quality of life, symptom management, and patient autonomy. Her message was clear: *Supportive care is not about giving up; it’s about helping patients live as well as possible, guided by their own choices.*

Sue highlighted the importance of advance care planning and honest, compassionate communication. She advocated for a healthcare model that respects patient wishes and avoids unnecessary interventions.

Using compelling data, real patient stories, and powerful quotes,



Sue Paffrath.

such as Carl Jung’s reminder:

“Know all the theories, master all the techniques, but as you touch a human soul be just another human soul”, Sue made her presentation both informative and deeply human. Her talk was a call to action: *to rethink how we support CKD patients by placing compassion, dignity, and choice at the heart of care.*

Following the presentation, counsellors were invited to reflect on key questions like:

- How best can we respond when patients or families express guilt, fear, or uncertainty about choosing conservative care?
- How do we help patients explore what matters most to them when considering conservative care? Or,
- What boundaries do we need to maintain to protect our own wellbeing while offering compassionate care?

These questions sparked rich and meaningful discussions, creating space for shared learning and deeper understanding.

The IKA is very aware of the value of a counselling service and that is why we are committed to having days like this for our counsellors and psychotherapists. All of the counsellors and psychotherapists we work with are fully accredited with the professional bodies of counselling in Ireland, but days like this one give us the opportunity to support them and to ensure they have the information they need from the IKA to provide the best possible service.

We would like to thank everyone who attended the educational day for their engagement and enthusiasm on the day and for their continuous service for our patients. A special thanks to all our speakers that made it possible to provide such a great day.



Have yourself a kidney-safe Christmas

Christmas is here again and with it comes parties and lots of temptation with tasty foods and drinks. Try some of these food tips and recipes to ensure that you can enjoy your Christmas food during the festive period.

For more detailed advice or if you are unsure whether a recipe is suitable for you, talk to your Dietitian.

TIPS FOR FESTIVE EATING AND DRINKING

- Plan ahead and make sure you have the foods you need at home for Christmas.
- Check your renal diet sheet for recommended portions of meat, dairy products and fruit and vegetables.
- Don't forget your fluid restriction:
 - Eating salty foods will make you thirstier so limit your intake of these foods.
 - Remember sauces and gravies can be high in salt and fluid. Use moderate amounts. Bread sauce and cranberry sauce are good options to use with Christmas dinners.
 - Soups can be high in salt and also are considered a fluid. Use irishkidneydiet.ie to get some kidney friendly soup recipes or try the Caramelised Onion, Roast Pepper and Brie tartlet in Thyme Pastry as a starter.
 - Desserts like custard and jelly can have a very high fluid content. Alternatives you can enjoy include fruit crumbles, trifles, meringues and cream.
 - If drinking alcohol remember to include it in your fluid allowance.
- Remember to take your phosphate binders with your meals and snacks.
- Meat
 - If you really would like to have ham on Christmas day have a small portion and to reduce the salt content of the ham, soak overnight and boil well, changing the water a number of times.
- Christmas cake and Christmas pudding are very high in potassium.
 - A small slice of either could be replaced for two portions of fruit.
 - A mince pie could be exchanged for one fruit portion. If you are making your own, add lots of apple and a small amount of mincemeat to make them lower in potassium.

CARAMELISED ONION, ROAST PEPPER AND BRIE TARTLET IN THYME PASTRY

Reprinted from *Truly Tasty*,
page 244-245.

Ingredients

For the pastry

70g (3oz) chilled butter, grated or finely chopped

140g (5oz) plain flour, plus extra for dusting

1 level tbsp fresh thyme, very finely chopped

A pinch (¼ level tsp) of freshly grated nutmeg

25ml of water

For the red pepper puree

30ml olive oil

2 red peppers, quartered, deseeded and roughly chopped

4 tsp red wine vinegar

80g Brie made with pasteurised milk

For the caramelised onions

1 tbsp olive oil

2 large red onions, thinly sliced

2 cloves

½ level tsp freshly ground black pepper

2 bay leaves

½ level tsp brown sugar

1 tsp fresh lemon juice

Method

First make the pastry: rub the butter into the flour until the mixture comes together like fine breadcrumbs. Stir in the thyme and nutmeg, then add the water and



bring the pastry together. Wrap it in cling film and leave to rest in the refrigerator.

Meanwhile, add a little olive oil to a heavy-based saucepan and place over a high heat.

Now add the red onions to the hot oil. Stir vigorously for about two minutes and lower the heat to medium. Add the seasoning; cloves, pepper, bay leaves and brown sugar, and then leave to gently sweat for 20 minutes. After this, stir in the lemon juice and set aside. The lemon will bring out the colour of the onions. Once cooked remove and discard the cloves.

On a lightly floured surface thinly roll out the pastry and use to line tartlet tins. Press the pastry into shape. Use the rolling pin to roll over the top of the tartlets and remove any excess bits of pastry. Line the shells with parchment paper and fill them with rice or dry beans to keep the pastry in place while 'blind' baking. Set aside to rest in the fridge for 10 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas 6. Now make the red pepper purée. Quarter, deseed and roughly chop the peppers. Place them in a roasting tin with the garlic, coat in a little olive oil and roast them in the oven for about 20 minutes. Remove the garlic after about 15 minutes. Peel it and set it aside. When the peppers are ready, add to a food processor and blend them with the vinegar and garlic. When the mixture is smooth, slowly trickle in the rest of the olive oil, while the processor is on its slowest setting. Once all the oil is combined, stop whizzing and set the purée aside.

Slice the Brie into 4 equal-sized slices.

Now you are ready to 'blind' bake your pastry shells. Bake the parchment-lined shells for 7 minutes in the oven. After this, remove the parchment and dried beans and place the shells back in the oven for a further 3 minutes.

Remove the pastry shells and using the back of a spoon smooth a quarter of the red pepper mixture into each tartlet case. Follow this with a quarter of the caramelised onions and finish with a slice of Brie**. Bake the tartlets for 10-15 minutes until the cheese is beginning to brown nicely.

*Per portion this dish provides 2 portions of vegetables and ½ a dairy exchange. Check your daily allowances to see if you have enough remaining for this dish.

**Brie is a soft cheese. To ensure food safety it should be made with pasteurised milk and cooked thoroughly; i.e., make sure it is steaming hot all the way through.

BREAD SAUCE

(with thanks to MMUH dietitians)

Ingredients

1 oz (30g) white breadcrumbs

1 oz (30g) double cream

110mls water

1 tbsp oil

¼ onion

Pepper

Method

Finely dice the onion and add, with the pepper, to the cream and water mixture.

Simmer until tender.

Strain.

Add the oil and simmer the crumbs in the liquid until it has been absorbed.

By ELAINE CAFFREY

Senior Renal Dietitian,
Mater Misericordiae University Hospital
(MMUH) on behalf of the
Renal Interest Group of the
Irish Nutrition and Dietetic
Institute (INDI)

INDI  **RENAL**
Irish Nutrition +
Dietetic Institute

TRAVELLING ON Dialysis



By **DEBORAH CERVI**
Holiday Co-ordinator

Dialysis doesn't have to prevent you from travelling.

For many chronic kidney disease (CKD) patients, remaining mobile and able to travel is an important part of maintaining independence. You may need to travel for work or family commitments or want to travel simply because you enjoy it - you can still travel and fulfil your travel wishes and dreams while on dialysis.

IS IT POSSIBLE TO TRAVEL WHILE I'M ON DIALYSIS?

Yes, it is possible for most dialysis patients to travel and to continue their treatment while being away from home. Your dialysis unit may even encourage you to travel, if you are able, because of the emotional boost it can give you. It is however, very important that you talk to your dialysis unit or me in Donor House before you make any specific travel plans so that we can advise you about how to travel safely and help you to make arrangements for

dialysis treatment while you're away.

TRAVELLING WHILE ON PERITONEAL DIALYSIS (PD)

Peritoneal dialysis (PD) patients can frequently have their supplies delivered to their travel destination. This means that it is often easier to travel on PD than other types of dialysis. However, if you are on peritoneal dialysis (PD), you still need to plan ahead of time for the delivery of treatment products.

Your first point of contact is your PD Nurse in your dialysis unit who will be able to tell you about the guidelines for travelling with medical equipment. Your PD nurse will then complete a travel order form which will be sent to the holiday team in Vantive (formerly known as Baxter Healthcare) on your behalf to arrange your delivery of fluids to your holiday destination. In addition, make sure that you remember to bring any other medication you will need for your holiday with you.

TRAVELLING WHILE ON HOME HAEMODIALYSIS (HOME HD)

Most home haemodialysis (Home HD) patients will need to arrange in advance to get in-centre treatment at a centre close to their travel destination. As above, you can speak to your nurse in your dialysis unit, or you can contact me in Donor

"If you never go, you will never know!"



House. You will need to travel to the dialysis unit you are attached to for necessary blood tests and paperwork to be carried out in advance. Dialysis units abroad require a minimum of eight weeks' notice.

TRAVELLING WHILE ON IN-CENTRE HAEMODIALYSIS (IN-CENTRE HD)

If you are receiving in-centre haemodialysis (in-centre HD) treatments, you need to arrange, in advance, to be treated at a centre close to your destination. You can speak to your nurse in your dialysis unit, or you can contact me in Donor House.

It is vital that you have with you all the medical information you will need

to receive treatment on your trip. Dialysis units abroad require a minimum of eight weeks' notice.

If you are thinking of a holiday abroad in 2026 in Spring, Summer, Autumn or Winter or would like advice on destinations, you can now make an enquiry on our website <https://ika.ie/patient-holidays/> by clicking on patient holidays and completing our secure enquiry form, or alternatively, you can contact me by phone on 01-6205306 or email deborah@ika.ie Please remember to contact me to arrange dialysis treatment **before you book** your holiday, as dialysis units abroad require a minimum of **eight weeks' notice**.



Tramore Holiday Homes

IKA HOLIDAY HOMES

We will have our application forms for 2026 ready from February 2nd, 2026. Forms will be available on our website under patient holidays where you can fill out our secure application form or visit <https://ika.ie/patient-holidays/>

Alternatively you can ask your dialysis nurse in your local dialysis unit, or local IKA Branch Secretary for an application form. You can also contact Donor House for an application form to be posted or emailed to you, Please remember to apply early, as there is a huge demand for holidays each year that far exceeds the supply. Preference is given to first-time holidaymakers.

Tramore holiday apartments will open from April to October in 2026.

Kerry holiday homes (in Tralee and Killarney) remain open all year round, however dialysis in Kerry University Hospital is not available all year round. If you are interested in one of our homes in Kerry in the coming months, please get in touch.



Killarney Holiday Home

HOLIDAY DIALYSIS IN IRELAND

Unfortunately, it's still extremely difficult for patients who are on dialysis to travel within Ireland for a holiday. Dialysis units are working under severe pressure, with most units at full capacity with local patients who may have no extra space to accept a holiday patient despite their wishes to do so. With this in mind, if you are hoping to travel within Ireland, please contact me for advice before you make any bookings.

Finally, I would like to wish all of you a happy and healthy Christmas and New Year.

Deborah



Tralee Holiday Home



THE GRACE

WESTPORT ESTATE

www.thegrace.ie

AUTUMN/WINTER *giveaway*

WIN a Luxurious TWO-NIGHT ESCAPE to THE GRACE, WESTPORT ESTATE

Be in with the chance to enjoy **two nights' bed and breakfast and one evening dinner for two*** at a stunning new hotel opening in March 2026 which offers a sanctuary of calm, connection, and discovery set within 430 acres of woodland with the Carrowbeg River flowing through the grounds.

Steeped in history and shaped by nature, **The Grace, Westport Estate**, forms part of the ambitious transformation of Westport Estate, including the restoration of Westport House and the creation of new visitor experiences. The thoughtfully designed **129-room hotel** reflects the natural beauty and cultural heritage of the estate, offering a warm and welcoming haven of refined comfort, luxury, and tranquillity.

Located along the iconic **Wild Atlantic Way**, and close to **Croagh Patrick, Clew Bay**, and the culturally vibrant town of **Westport**, it provides the ideal base from which to explore the richness of the West of Ireland. Whether wandering the estate, venturing across the region's dramatic landscapes, or simply unwinding indoors, guests will return to a place designed to feel both uplifting and effortlessly relaxing.

Enter now for your chance to experience this exceptional new destination before anyone else. To enter, simply email: colin@ika.ie with the words **THE GRACE** in the subject line, include your name, address and contact telephone number, and tell us who you would like to bring with you if you win. The winner will be picked on 22/12/2025 using a random number generator, numbers will be assigned chronologically to entries.

By entering this competition, you agree to your name being published in the Spring 2026 issue of SUPPORT magazine. Booking dates for the Grace Hotel, Westport Estate, are subject to availability.



By **CARRIE McMULLAN**
Communications Executive

SOCIAL MEDIA & COMMUNICATION

Social media storytelling: Ways your Branch can engage your community

Social media remains an essential tool for charities in raising awareness, fundraising, and, crucially, connecting with the community that supports us. Storytelling has long been at the heart of human connection, and within our community, sharing personal experiences of kidney disease or organ donation is particularly powerful.

Like traditional storytelling, compelling social media posts need a main character, a conflict, and a resolution. While writing a social media post may feel worlds apart from writing a novel, these same storytelling elements still act as a valuable guide.

In 2025, the Irish Kidney Association's (IKA's) main campaigns have set a strong example of storytelling through fundraising, awareness, and volunteering. Online, this storytelling can take many different formats.

USER-GENERATED CONTENT

User-generated content involves sharing authentic stories created by your audience. For Organ Donor Awareness Week, we invited our community to share one-minute videos about how organ donation has impacted them. The response was overwhelmingly positive, with lots of engagement and support in the comments.

As a Branch, you could invite your members to send in brief videos. Ask them to introduce themselves, explain why they became involved with the Branch, and encourage

others to join by sharing how being a member has enriched their lives.



“ So happy for you and your close ones ♥
The time WILL come for the rest of us, we shall take comfort in your amazing stories till then xx ”

“ Beautifully said.
Rock on 💜 ”

“ Fantastic story, so proud of you for speaking up 🙌🙌 ”

EVENT STORYTELLING

Throughout the year, the IKA attends a variety of patient health and organ donation events. Social media lets us share these experiences with those who can't attend.

In July, we attended the African Health Summit alongside John Opabola, Chairman of the Longford Branch, and his wife Uchenna. Throughout the event, we told the story of the day capturing conversations at the IKA stand, panel speakers, and the lively, welcoming



Uchenna Opabola,
Colin White,
John Opabola



atmosphere created by the organisers.

As a Branch, the next time you host or attend an event, consider taking photos and short videos throughout the day, with permission from the organiser. Afterwards, create a post on your Branch's social media page and include the best of your photos or a video reel with a brief caption reflecting on your experience of the day. Don't forget to tag the event organisers, as they may share your post with their own followers, helping you reach new people.

STORYTELLING IN FUNDRAISING

Fundraisers provide a powerful platform for storytelling. Ahead of the Dublin Marathon, we shared our charity runners' personal experiences with kidney disease on social media, including links to their fundraising pages. Our runners included transplant recipients, friends, living donors and family members of those affected by kidney

disease, and people honouring loved ones who were organ donors.

For Branches, promoting local fundraisers is a great idea because of the local connection. By sharing the stories and fundraising efforts of people in your area, you're strengthening the IKA's profile in your community and inspiring others to get involved.

INTERVIEWS

Interviewing volunteers and those who have benefitted from the IKA's services is a wonderful way to bring a human connection. While short, snappy videos are often found on social media, sometimes a person's journey deserves the space for a deeper, more meaningful exploration.

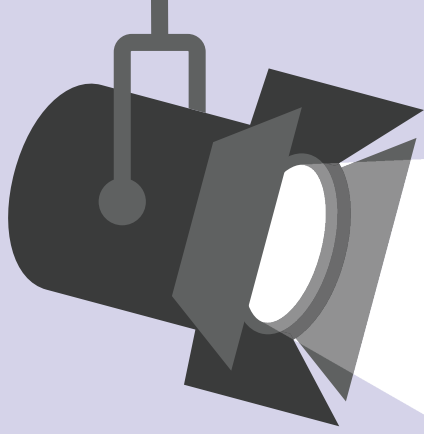
In March, we interviewed Alison Fogarty, a remarkable woman who took on a 180km walking challenge which was the distance from her hometown of Tipperary to the 'Circle of Life' monument at Beaumont Hospital.

However, a long video isn't always suited to Facebook and Instagram, so we shared her full story on our YouTube channel – and created a one-minute highlight video to serve as a teaser on our social media and reach as wide an audience as possible.

If you're considering video interviews within your own Branch, the best approach is to start by finding someone who feels comfortable sharing their story, keep the interview relaxed, and turn the full video into short clips to share their story across multiple posts.

Social media storytelling is far more than just sharing updates; it's about sharing authentic experiences to foster a sense of community and inspire action. By embracing user-generated content, highlighting events, sharing impactful fundraising journeys, and conducting heartfelt interviews, your Branch can showcase the real people and stories at the heart of the IKA.





SPOTLIGHT ON... VOLUNTEER

By **DEIRDRE MARKEY**
and **SARAH BUCHANAN**

We are proud to feature **Liam Buttle**, from Blackwater, Co. Wexford, who has devoted over 40 years to volunteering with the organisation.

From his first fundraiser in memory of his departed sister, to decades of dedicated volunteering across many roles, resulting in most recently assisting Archbishop Michael Jackson at the Ruby Service of Remembrance and Thanksgiving... Liam now brings his passion and commitment to the Irish Kidney Association (IKA) Board.

Liam's unwavering dedication has helped strengthen the IKA's mission and support kidney patients across Ireland. His remarkable journey reflects the true spirit of compassion, community, and volunteerism.



Liam Buttle and IKA ambassador in 2016, Vivienne Traynor.

Liam Buttle



WEXFORD BRANCH

Q. Is volunteering important to you, and if it is, why?

A. Volunteering has always been at the heart of who I am. It's not just something I do – it's something I deeply believe in. There's a great sense of satisfaction that comes from giving your time and energy to something worthwhile. Helping others in need, offering support, and being part of a community and organisation that cares – it's incredibly fulfilling.

Q. How did you get involved with the Irish Kidney Association (IKA)?

A. My journey with the IKA began in a very personal and emotional way. My sister was on dialysis for five years before she sadly passed away in October 1978 at just 18 years of age. Watching her go through that experience was heartbreaking, but it also opened my eyes to the strength and resilience of people living with kidney disease. Her courage during those years left a lasting impression on me.

Q. Why did you choose to volunteer with the IKA?

A. The following year after my sister's passing, I organised my first fundraiser for the IKA, and

from that moment on, I became actively involved. It felt like the right way to honour her memory and to help others facing similar challenges. What started as a single fundraiser quickly grew into a lifelong commitment.

Q. What time commitment does it demand from you?

A. Volunteering with the organisation requires a considerable commitment. Most evenings are taken up with something – organising fundraising events, visiting patients, offering a listening ear over the phone, preparing for upcoming activities, or attending planning meetings. It's a big part of my life, and while it demands time and effort, it's time I'm proud to give. It's not always easy, especially when juggling farming and my own work commitments, but the rewards far outweigh the challenges.

Q. In what ways have you found volunteering with the IKA rewarding and challenging?

A. At the core of our local Branch, volunteering is what brings us together. It's through organising events, raising awareness, and providing support to those



Meeting the former President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins and his wife Sabina at Áras an Uachtaráin Catherine and Liam Buttle in March 2018.



Catherine and Liam Buttle with IKA ambassador for 2014 Mary Kennedy and James Reilly, then Minister for Health

affected by kidney disease that we build a strong, compassionate community. One of the most rewarding aspects is seeing the development of services for patients and their families.

Initiatives from Donor House in Dublin have made a real difference. Witnessing the success of our fundraising efforts is truly uplifting – not just because of the financial support raised, but because of the real, meaningful change it enables.

On the challenging side, adapting to evolving governance and charity legislation has required a lot of adjustment. The introduction of the Charities Act brought a new level of accountability and transparency, which, while demanding, has ultimately strengthened the IKA.

Changes in personnel over the years have also been challenging, but they've brought fresh ideas and energy that have helped the organisation grow.

Q. Can you share a memorable experience or moment that has had a significant impact on you?

A. One of the most memorable moments for me was the opening of the B. Braun Wellstone Wexford Renal Care Centre in May 2018. It was the first purpose-built dialysis unit in Wexford serving the Southeast region. That moment was the result of years of fundraising, lobbying TDs, raising awareness, and working closely with the HSE. To see it finally open and know the difference it would make to so many lives – it was incredibly emotional and deeply rewarding.

Q. What advice would you give someone considering volunteering with the IKA?

A. If you're considering volunteering with the IKA, my advice is simple: **do it.** It's one of the most rewarding things you'll ever experience. You'll be part of a community that cares deeply, works tirelessly, and celebrates every victory, no matter how small. You'll meet lovely, kind-hearted people who often become lifelong friends. You'll listen to people in difficult moments and help them find strength. And you'll hear incredible success stories – people who've had transplants and found a new lease of life, not just for themselves but for their families too.



Cutting the ribbon at the Opening of the B. Braun Wellstone Wexford Renal Centre in May 2018 are Cllr. Frank Staples, Liam Buttle, Chairman IKA Wexford Branch, Paul Kehoe, TD, Markus Strotmann, Chairman of the Board, B. Braun Avitum AG, Leo Halpenny, Managing Director, B. Braun Avitum Ireland, Cllr. Jim Moore, Mayor of Wexford and Cllr. Ger Carthy.



By GWEN O'DONOGHUE

Transplant sister inspires man's KILIMANJARO Climb Fundraiser

On September 8th, Dublin native Martin Sherlock, who has made Kilmuckridge in Co. Wexford his home for the past twenty-six years, set out on an extraordinary 7-day journey to the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro, Africa's highest peak. This personal and heartfelt challenge was both a fundraiser, which raised over €7,300 for the Irish Kidney Association, and a way to raise awareness about the life-changing impact of organ donation. The climb was also a gesture of gratitude to the families of the two organ donors who gave his sister the chance to live a full and fulfilling life.



Martin displaying the Forget-Me-Not emblem on top of Kilimanjaro

Martin self-financed his fundraiser through tour operator Earth's Edge. This ambitious challenge was inspired by his younger sister, Angela, who has received two kidney transplants, the first in 1991 and the second in 2003.

Martin (57) grew up in Greenhills, Co. Dublin with nine siblings. A proud father of two daughters and grandfather to four grandchildren – three girls and a boy – he experienced a particularly memorable time in September 2025. His fourth grandchild, Alexander, was born just after he returned home from his incredible adventure, climbing Mount Kilimanjaro.

"I decided to take on this challenge in February this year and had never done anything like it before," he said. "The climb took seven days to reach the summit and two days to descend. It was both exhausting and exhilarating reaching the summit.

"My first grandson, Alexander, was due to be born while I was away, but he waited for me. He arrived the day after I got home. September 2025 has been an unforgettable month for me."

When Martin reached the Summit, he proudly showed his donor card and two of the IKA's forget-me-not emblems, to honour Angela's two organ donors, and the IKA t-shirt as a nod to the charity which has supported his sister and other kidney patients.

Before his climb, Martin shared his reasons for choosing the IKA to fundraise for. *"Between the ages of eight and fifteen, my sister Angela had numerous hospital stays and surgeries, the hospital became like a second home.*



Martin with his first grandson Alexander



Martin beside the sign for Kilimanjaro National Park.



"She began dialysis at sixteen and received her first transplant in 1991 at the age of seventeen. That transplant gave her a new lease on life, but sadly it failed after five years.

"She returned to dialysis, undergoing seven more years on CAPD, APD, and haemodialysis. In 2003, she received a second transplant, and everything changed for the better."

Today, Angela gives back as a trained IKA Peer Supporter, volunteering her time to help others navigate their kidney journeys, offering compassion, understanding, and first-hand experience.

Martin said, *"It is because of the generosity of organ donors, Angela has been able to live a full and adventurous life. She has represented Ireland in Transplant Sport events, travelled the world and built connections with amazing people along the way. Organ donation works. It changes lives, my family has seen it firsthand."*



Martin Sherlock with his kidney transplant sister Angela in Greenhills, Dublin.

Chief Clinical Officer reaches new heights for charity

Just a few weeks after Martin Sherlock reached the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro, another Irish adventurer followed in his footsteps to Tanzania – this time from within the ranks of the Health Service Executive (HSE). **Colm Henry**, the Chief Clinical Officer of the HSE, undertook the same demanding ascent with his daughter **Aoife**, adding a new chapter to the story of endurance while also raising funds and awareness for the Irish Kidney Association (IKA).

The pair reached the summit on October 12th and proudly held aloft the bright yellow IKA t-shirt they had carried throughout their seven-day climb, raising €2,835 for the charity. It wasn't Colm's first time supporting the IKA either, having completed both the Ring of Beara and the Ring of Kerry cycles in 2024. Our thanks to the father and daughter duo for their commitment to our cause.



Colm and Aoife Henry



MUNSTER KIDNEY SUPPORT CENTRE

Winter greetings from all of us in the Munster Kidney Support Centre (MKSC).

As we approach our second anniversary, we are delighted to say that the Centre is remaining constantly busy with quite a few nights at full occupancy. Our day visitor numbers are steadily rising too and the atmosphere in the Centre is truly buzzing. Our kitchen island is becoming quite the gathering spot for many chats and cups of tea, Barry's of course!

Witnessing such support between patients and family members who come in through the front door as strangers and leave as friends, stronger in the knowledge that they are not alone, is truly humbling.

As we have become busier, we have expanded our team here in Cork and we are delighted to welcome **Edel Cashman** as relief Patient Support Officer.

Edel will be a huge asset to our support team, and I know she is looking forward to meeting as many of you as possible, in person or chatting to you on our renal support lines.



Edel Cashman, liver transplant recipient Patient Support Officer.



Christine McCarthy, Louise Pollack, Seamus O'Sullivan, Esther McCarthy, Charlie Noonan.



Louise Pollack, Frances Kendellan.

MEDITATION NIGHT 2

We were delighted to have the pleasure of welcoming back **Louise Pollack** of 'Make it Mindful' to the Centre for another enriching hour of mindfulness. Our group is expanding, and we were thrilled that two brave male guests joined us. We all left calmer and more grounded with the tools to continue these sessions ourselves.

EATING WELL FOR YOUR KIDNEYS

The CUH Renal Dietetics Department have

commenced an initial three sessions of group education meetings in the MKSC. These sessions are for patients who are under the care of a Nephrologist and are focussed on supporting kidney health through Diet and Lifestyle.

Senior Renal and Diabetes Dietician **Johnathan Barry** and Clinical Specialist Renal Dietitian **Irene Cronin** organised these sessions and we were delighted to host the inaugural one in our communal area in early November with some patients also joining us online via Teams

If you are interested in joining this invaluable educational programme, please contact the team in the CUH on 021-4922169.



Senior Renal and Diabetes Dietitian, Jonathan Barry with his group of renal patients.



Josh and Kieran Harkins, Pat O'Sullivan.

THE O'MAHONY FAMILY

In August we had the pleasure of welcoming the O'Mahony family to the Centre. This was a unique visit for us as this family are a donor family. Their beloved Eimear, daughter of Anne Marie and Jerry, sister of Mary and Niamh and fiancée of Derry, died in 2015, and her family chose to make the ultimate sacrifice and donate her organs.

To mark the 10th anniversary of her death, in her honour, they held a fundraiser appropriately named 'Celebrating Eimear'. We are truly grateful to them for their support.

THE HARKINS FAMILY

In October we had the pleasure of attending the Harkins fundraiser, A Vintage Vehicle Run, in Grenagh, North Cork. Kieran, their son, had received his 'gift of life' early in August and is going from strength to strength since.

Kieran and his mum Ger are regular visitors to the Centre, and it is wonderful to see him so well again. The high esteem this family are held in their neighbourhood, amongst their families, friends and Jim's colleagues was so evident in the huge turnout on the day and we were delighted to host them at the Centre for their cheque presentation.



(L-R): Jack Harkins, Jim Harkins, Wesley O'Shea, Cork Branch Chairman, Mary Burns, Ger Harkins, Fiona Kelleher, Christine McCarthy, Pat O'Sullivan, Cork Branch, John Buckley, Kieran Harkins, Josh Kelleher.



Sally Nagle, Siobhan Buckley, Frances Kendall.



Marie Feen, Ger Harkins.

Thank you to Ger, Jim, Jack and our hero Kieran for your amazing fundraising.

AMELIA'S STORY

Earlier this year we had the pleasure of meeting the Kelly / Everard family. This amazing young family started their journey with kidney disease when Amelia, young mum of 3, from Thurles, suddenly became unwell.

See Amelia's story next page.

So, to all of you, the O'Mahony, Harkins, Kelly and Everard Families,

thank you for sharing your stories with us. To each and every one of you, whom we have had the pleasure of meeting this year, and to those of you we will meet as new friends over the coming months, we wish you a very Happy Christmas and every good wish for a Peaceful New Year.

The Munster Support Centre will remain open over the Christmas Season and the Patient Support Team will be on duty every day if you need us.

Colette, Sally, Edel and Jennifer



Jerry & Mary O'Mahony, Sally Nagle (MKSC), Niamh & Marie O'Mahony and Derry Cooney.



Santa waiting for his guests.



MUNSTER KIDNEY SUPPORT CENTRE

Amelia's Story

My experience with Acute Kidney Disease began in July 2025 when I was admitted to the Bons Secours in Cork after being unwell for several weeks. From there, I was transferred to CUH. In total I ended up spending eight and a half weeks in hospital. As a mother of three young children, it was especially hard for them to see me in the hospital, even at their young age, they knew something was wrong.

While I was in CUH, the renal team introduced me to the Munster Kidney Support Centre (MKSC). Once I was well enough, my husband brought the kids to visit me there. I was able to rest in the Cork Room, while the kids played in the garden, running in and out to see me. This space helped normalise our time together, which meant the world to me. I didn't have to worry about them being in a clinical hospital environment. Instead, they could have fun like they would at home,



Mark, Molly, Amelia, Jack and Kate met Santa at the Munster Kidney Support Centre.

and we could enjoy real quality time together.

My journey has since evolved, and I am now on indefinite dialysis and ongoing treatment for my condition, though I'm now an outpatient. I travel from home to the MKSC twice a week, a trip that takes about an hour and a half each way. This makes it possible for me to continue my dialysis while still spending as much time as I can with my children.

The MKSC isn't just a place to stay – it's a place where I feel supported, safe, and cared for. Having the MKSC available has truly made everything easier – it's like a home away from home.

Jennifer, Colette, Sally and Edel are an incredible team, always doing their best to ensure my stay is as comfortable as possible.

For my children, the MKSC means so much more. It helps them feel like I'm not in the hospital, so being away from them for a few nights each week is less stressful. As my 7-year-old son said, "Mammy, I don't mind you going to Cork because you're staying in the kidney house, not the hospital."

Now that Amelia has stabilised, we approached her to ask her if her wonderful children would be our VIPs for an afternoon and come to the Support Centre to light our now iconic Christmas Tree. It went up a little early this year to coincide with the Cork Branch Service of Remembrance on November 9th.

We arranged a little surprise for the family with a little help from Granny Anne and our own Denis and Liz Hyland – Santa made his first visit to the MKSC and Jack, Molly and Kate had a fun-filled visit with Santa. Their smiles were magical, their laughter infectious, and it made everything we do to support patients and their families so worthwhile.

SUPPORT MAGAZINE SUMMER PRIZE WINNER

The winner of the **Night for 2 with dinner, B&B** in the **Iveagh Gardens Hotel, Dublin 2** was **Carol Williams** from Coolock, Dublin.



Jack, Molly and Kate Kelly light our Christmas tree.

Transplant Lets Dad Be Home for Christmas Day

This Christmas will be a profoundly different one for a young family in Cork, as a 35-year-old father of two young children prepares to enjoy the festive season at home with his young family, for the first time in four years following a life-changing kidney transplant a few months ago.

Dave Healy, originally from Blarney and now living in Carrigaline, Co. Cork with his wife Sarah St. Leger, a native of Crosshaven, and their two children, aged four and two, spent more than two and a half years attending dialysis treatment at Cork University Hospital (CUH). His schedule required three haemodialysis sessions a week, each lasting three hours, all while continuing to work and parent as best he could.

"Dave was diagnosed four years ago with Chronic Kidney Disease, just after we had our first baby. Dialysis kept him alive, but it drained him," Sarah said. "It sometimes felt like I was sole parenting. We were both doing our best, but between him working full time and dialysis treatment in

hospital, he had almost no energy left. Our parents helped out whenever they could."

Sarah, a community support worker, shared "The prospect of spending Christmas morning in hospital receiving dialysis treatment, away from the excitement of our young children opening presents and enjoying playing with them, had weighed heavily on Dave. But this year, everything has changed and we look forward to enjoying Christmas dinner together without Dave having to comply with renal diet restrictions."

In August, a call came out of the blue from Beaumont Hospital to Dave asking him to make his way to the hospital. He received a donor kidney from a selfless deceased donor, a gift he describes as "nothing short of life



By GWEN O'DONOGHUE

Visiting Mr. & Mrs Claus, Dave Healy with his son Darragh (2), wife Sarah and daughter Saoirse (4).

changing." The effects were immediate. His energy returned, his health stabilised, and the restrictions around diet and fluids that once dominated daily life were lifted.

"It feels like getting my life back," Dave said. "And getting to be fully present with my children this Christmas morning it means more than I can put into words. I will be forever grateful to my donor and their family for giving us this chance."

Sarah and Dave's family have expressed their deep

gratitude to the medical teams at CUH who cared for Dave throughout his long dialysis journey, the teams at Beaumont Hospital, as well as the staff at the Irish Kidney Association (IKA) Munster Kidney Support Centre conveniently located just 200 metres from the hospital. They also thanked the IKA for providing accommodation near Beaumont Hospital, allowing his wife and family to stay close when the call for a transplant finally came.

As families across Ireland gather for Christmas, the couple hopes their story encourages conversations about organ donation in households around Ireland.

"Please talk about your wishes," Sarah urged. "One family's generosity, someone we have never met, gave us our family life back. Because of them, we have the prospect of a wonderful Christmas and a future full of hope."



Saoirse and Darragh ready for the Late Late Toy Show in 2023.

Transplant through a child's eyes

When **Ashlie McCorkell** from **Greencastle, Co. Donegal**, was just eight-years-old, her mother **Bridgeen** received the phone call that would change their lives, a kidney had become available for her. For Ashlie, that day unfolded through the innocent eyes of a child, filled with confusion, hope, and love. The experience left a lasting impression, inspiring her to write a short school essay (see page opposite) about what transplant and organ donation meant to her. Unbeknownst to Bridgeen, her daughter's heartfelt words would offer a beautiful and moving insight into the day her mum got "the call", and into the profound impact of organ donation from a child's perspective.



Bridgeen, Ashlie

I was diagnosed with Lupus Nephritis at the age of 20 and was told I that I would need a transplant at some stage in my life. I was put on medication to keep the lupus dormant and attended hospital regularly for check-ups.

I got married to John in 2012 and we were blessed with Ashlie in 2013 and Allie in 2015. Age and pregnancy took a toll on my kidneys and in 2019 I went onto the transplant list. I was constantly exhausted by my kidney function decreasing and my girls grew up knowing mammy had "bad kidneys". Thank God I have a wonderful supportive family who

helped me look after the girls when I was tired after work and needed a sleep.

In 2020, just before COVID hit, dialysis was talked about and I decided to do the peritoneal dialysis every night at home being on the dialysis machine for eight hours. It was the best decision that suited me and my family instead of going to the hospital three days a week.

I got the dialysis catheter put in in April 2021 and started home dialysis in May 2021. I was on dialysis for just over a year and I had finally mentally adapted to accepting this routine as part of my life when the rug was

pulled from under me. I got a call in July 2022 from the transplant coordinator to say that there was a match for me. Then it was a rush to get from Greencastle in Co. Donegal to Beaumont Hospital.

I never fully got a chance to explain to the girls what was going on and didn't want them to worry or get their hopes up that I would get a new kidney. I arrived at Beaumont about 7.30pm, said goodbye to John and my dad Owen and got admitted.

The hospital did all their usual bloods, and I was told I would be getting the transplant in the morning and that I was the only match for the



McCorkell family.

kidney. My sisters Marita and Elena flew home from London and Canada to help my Mum Marie look after the girls and me while I recovered.

I got my life-saving and family changing kidney transplant in July 2022 and haven't looked back health-wise since that day. My life has gone from constant sleeping to having so much energy and just being and feeling healthy all thanks to an amazing donor and their family who made such a heroic and courageous decision in what I can only imagine to be the darkest day in their life.

Both my daughters, Ashlie and Allie, know my "new kidney" came from another person and they signed an organ donor card with their age...it melted my heart.

I didn't know Ashlie was writing a short essay in school and when her teacher sent it to me I was blown away, the impact of organ donation has such an amazing effect on not only the recipient but also their family and it was lovely to see it from a child's. She was 8 and Allie was 6 when I got my transplant.

The Day My Mammy Got the Call

By Ashlie

It started out like an ordinary day but it turned into one that I would never forget. Myself, mammy and Allie got up early for mammy's work. So then we were up in my granny's where mammy works and me and Allie got some breakfast.

About an hour after my mammy got a call from an unknown number. My mammy answered it and she went down to the sittingroom. There was something wrong I thought. My mammy came back up and I asked her what was wrong because she was crying. When I screamed everybody rushed in and they saw mammy crying cause they thought somebody had died, but when mammy told them there faces lighted up with joy.

After all the hugs, crying, and thanking God, mammy had to rush down to Dublin for the transplant. Two days later mammy was nearly all ready to get her transplant. One day later mammy was all okay. Then when we face timed mammy there once again was more crying. But every time I looked at mammy I cried as she had bruising everywhere. She had a catheter in her neck and in her arms. I felt sadness, worried and I missed her.

Finally, mammy was in the hospital for a month and a half and we all missed her so much. However, all my family came halfway around the world to support me and Allie (and 'cause we were young we did not know what was going on so we were really scared). But mammy called us everyday and gave us a look of her food on the phone. In the end mammy was all okay and we were all happy, thank God.



Get ready to test your wit with a brief mental workout as quizmaster **Paul Donohoe**, Chairman, Cavan/Monaghan Branch IKA, invites our readers to tackle the following ten questions (answers below).

1. Republic of Ireland Manager Heimer Hallgrímsson is a native of what country?
2. Who presents the popular TV Quiz Show 'The 1% Club'?
3. Who wrote the Bridget Jones series of books?
4. Which city will host the 2026 Eurovision Song Contest?
5. Which sign of the zodiac is represented by a lion?
6. Name the Director General of the BBC who was forced to resign recently?
7. Which player won the award for 2025 GAA Player of the Year?
8. Which is the largest lake in Connacht?
9. Samuel Peyton Jones is the full name of which popular kids animated TV character?
10. According to the Bible what was the name of Adam and Eve's third son?

QUIZ ANSWERS 1. Ireland; 2. Lee Mack; 3. Helen Fielding; 4. Vienna; 5. Leo; 6. Tim Davie; 7. David Clifford; 8. Lough Corrib; 9. Fireman Sam; 10. Seth.

SUPPORT DEADLINE

The deadline for submission of Branch notes and high resolution photos for the next edition of **SUPPORT** is on, or before, **March 15th 2026**.
Email: supportmag@ika.ie

ORGAN DONOR AWARENESS WEEK 2026

MAY 16TH-23RD – SHARE YOUR STORY

If you are organising an activity to mark this campaign, or have an inspiring personal story about organ failure, organ donation, or transplantation, that you'd like us to share with the media, (which hasn't been widely publicised before) please get in contact by phoning Donor House **01-6205306** or send an email to carrie@ika.ie



Transplant Sport Ireland

TRANSPLANT GAMES 2025

Transplant Sport Ireland (TSI) is very busy with monthly Meet-ups, including the latest in Nenagh FC on Sunday, November 16th. The committee meet fortnightly, working on Policies and Governance, Media, Sponsorship, and planning events for 2026. Sports Captains for each discipline will be announced shortly, and they will liaise with Team Manager, **Harry Ward**, and help coordinate their group's training and yearly plan.

A key highlight of the year was the representation at the 40th Service of Remembrance and Thanksgiving where TSI athletes and members played a pivotal role in the Service of Light at the poignant Service. Remember you can keep up to date on the TSI social media platforms and website. TSI is a member of the Federation of Irish Sport.

MARK MURPHY

TSI wish to extend sympathies to the family of the former IKA CEO **Mark Murphy**. Mark was very supportive of the team and travelled with them to most Games, where he transported those on dialysis and was always available to help in any way. He was instrumental in the success of transplant sport in Ireland today. May he rest in peace.

TSI FOOTBALL

The footballers are training hard in preparation for international



TSI Footballers

Athletes and supporters at the World Transplant Games, Dresden 2025.



competitions in 2026. A huge thank you to **Cobi Sports Limerick** who sponsored half-zips and training tops for the players.

Across October and November, the team played two friendlies against Mungret from Limerick and Nenagh FC. The team are very appreciative of all the support and will continue training in the New Year for an extremely exciting 2026.

BRITISH TRANSPLANT GAMES - OXFORD

With over 1,000 athletes participating in the Games TSI had 14 athletes taking part (8 adults, 3 living donors and 3 U18) who made their mark competing with integrity and good spirit, reuniting with friends and fellow competitors and winning a haul of 19 medals – 8 gold, 2 silver and 9 bronze. TSI's U18 athletes **Laura McDowell**, **Sam Kinahan** and **Sadhbh Browne** won an incredible 7 medals while living donor **Ivan Kinahan** won 2 medals.

In the adults team, **Trevor Lynch** from Limerick won two of Team Ireland's 8 gold medals in the 800m and the 1500m. Other gold medallists were **Mike Keohane** from West Cork in the 5K race-walk, and he also took bronze in the Shot Put and Discus events. **Glenn Clinton** from Dublin won gold in Ten Pin bowling and bronze in Tennis.

JP O'Neill from Kilkenny won gold



Chris Walsh, Glen Clinton

in Squash, as did **Ivan Kinahan** from Dublin who competed in the living donors 50m swim. **Peter O'Reilly** took a well-deserved bronze in the 800m. New to the Games this year was **Tim Lion** from Dublin and **Chris Walsh** from West Cork. **Val Weblin** from West Cork won a hard-fought bronze medal in the darts.

Each Irish athlete has an incredible story of adversity and coming through the medical challenges they faced. It is not about medal success – instead, it is about the courage it takes to line up at the starting line of each event. To take part in the best way they can, to honour their donors, and most importantly to show that organ donation works!

WORLD GAMES - DRESDEN (August 16-24th)

TSI had 28 athletes taking part in the World Transplant Games this year with over 2,000 athletes



Victor Conroy (right) during the archery competition.

competing in over 17 sports from across the world's transplant community. The Games cater to both high-performance and social athletes. Led by Team Manager Harry Ward the Irish team won a staggering 28 medals – 11 gold, 12 silver and 5 bronze medals.



At the Opening Ceremony of the World Games, Irish athlete **Tony Gartland** from Carlow was honoured in the World Transplant Games Federation Hall of Fame for having participated in 12 World Games. Given that these happen every two years, that represents 24 years of transplant sport. A talented runner, Tony was the first person in Ireland to undergo a liver transplant in 1993.

Team Manager **Harry Ward** – who is a kidney transplant recipient himself and competes in Pétanque – said; *“It was a great World Games for TSI. Every athlete competing gave it their all. Whilst it’s not all about the medals for us – it’s about showcasing the success of organ donation, we are still delighted with our 28 medals and delighted with Cork athlete **Mairead O’Mahony’s** success in breaking a World record in the 800m race! Transplant sport is a real celebration of life through sport”.*

QUOTES FROM THE ATHLETES:

Mairead O’Mahony, Cork – bone marrow transplant recipient – *“I felt that I was reconnecting with something I loved so much, which was taken from me on my cancer diagnosis. I was so excited to potentially achieve some of the dreams which, as a 17-year-old I thought were gone forever”.*

Peter O’Reilly, Dublin – liver transplant recipient – *“It’s great to be part of such a wonderful group. Hearing their stories is inspiring. It’s an honour to compete alongside them*



TSI members with Dr. David Hickey (back, 2nd from right), at the Service of Remembrance & Thanksgiving.



Mairead O'Mahony

and to have their encouragement and support during the Games. “Competing has provided me with a new lease of life. It has helped me to get fit and has improved my mental outlook. I have also had the honour to meet an amazing group of people. I think my donor would be proud”.

Mags Kirwan, Kilkenny – stem cell transplant recipient – *“It’s unbelievable to represent your country first and foremost, to show people life can go on. The Games highlight this to the world”.*

Marie O’Connor, Co. Clare – kidney transplant recipient – *“I love meeting with the friends I have made all over the world and of course spend time with my second family in TSI. But it’s all about promoting organ donation and celebrating our life through sport!”*

John Moran, Dublin – kidney transplant recipient – *“I enjoy competing and it’s great to do well. It’s great to meet other people in the same situation and hear their stories. I like taking part in competition for the transplant Games. It’s a great way of showing how life-changing a transplant can be. I try to get the best out of every day and live my best life. I really appreciate being healthy and well”.*

Victor Conroy, Laois – double lung transplant recipient – *“We carry the flag of hope and inspiration for others on transplant waiting lists that life can and will get better. It’s our opportunity*



John Moran in action.

to showcase the life changing benefits of organ donation to the rest of the world”.

Bryan Duignan, Carlow – kidney transplant recipient – *“Completing my first triathlon would be up there with my sense of accomplishment. I also did an Ironman 70.3 and also the Escape from Alcatraz triathlon last year. Both of these took a lot of time and training – something I couldn’t have done before I got my transplant. So I will forever be grateful for my donor and the gift I received. I wear that message on my arm to inspire me when I’m struggling during a race”.*

James Nolan, Kildare – kidney transplant recipient – *“Ultimately competing at the Transplant Games is a huge honour for me personally. I have the privilege of representing Ireland at my chosen sports. That indeed is an honour. I feel it is a way of thanking my sister Catherine Doyle who kindly donated one of her kidneys to me. I feel I am representing Emma, Andrew James and all my family, my hometown of Kilcullen and the county of Kildare. I feel I am showcasing the success of organ donation and transplantation. This will be my 36th Transplant Games – I still get a huge amount of satisfaction from my training which helps me keep fit for life and also enables me to make the most of this wonderful second opportunity that Catherine has given to me in my life”.*

continued next page...

TRANSPLANT GAMES 2025 contd...

Sheila Gregan, Tipperary – kidney transplant recipient – *“The older I get the more I realise keeping fit and healthy is great for both physical and mental health. Competing in Games is a privilege for me. I have often been asked why I still compete and I always answer with the words ‘because I can’. There are quite a few milestones achieved as I have competed in many Games, but it always comes back to the basic fact that I wouldn’t be achieving anything were it not for my donor”.*

Laura McDowell, Dublin – liver transplant recipient – *“I find strength on difficult days from my friends and family. Spending time with people who make me laugh always makes me feel better. I remember how I’ve overcome difficult situations before and I can do so again. I also remember my goals and why I keep going. I love going to the Games because I get to meet new people who have had transplants. The transplant community is really friendly and welcoming. It’s easy to meet new people who understand your transplant experience better than anyone else in your life. It’s also fun to compete and represent Ireland.”*

Trudy Hayes, Dublin – kidney transplant recipient – *“It’s a celebration of life and knowledge that we are all connected. When I was on treatment, I never thought I would get here. To feel healthy and happy and strong. So happy I am able to give something back”.*



Laura McDowell

Claire Dolan, Co. Westmeath – kidney transplant recipient – *“Each moment feels like a precious gift, and I’ve gained deeper appreciation for the opportunities I’ve been given. The transplant has shown me that life is fragile, inspiring me to live with purpose, cherish relationships, and approach every day with resilience”.*

Mick Dwyer, Dublin – kidney transplant recipient – *“Thank you to everyone that keeps us as fit as we can be. I have achieved gold, silver and bronze medals in various competitions but the achievement that stands out is I reached 25 years of relatively good health and have seen my grandchildren grow up”.*

Pamela Cassidy nee McCrea, Dublin – kidney transplant recipient – *“My life changed immensely for the better when I received that life-changing call. There isn’t a day that passes that I don’t think of my donor and the selfless decision of their family at such an awful time for them”.*

Sean Beirne, Dublin – kidney transplant recipient – *“We appreciate the anguish and hard decision to go ahead with this, but every transplant recipient values your selflessness and says ‘thank you’”.*

Mark Mulhall, Dublin – bone marrow transplant recipient – *“For me as it’s nearly 25 years since my transplant...I want to show people who are going through what I went through all those years ago. There is light at the end of the tunnel and a chance to live a full and active life post-transplant”.*

Tom O’Reilly, Dublin – liver transplant recipient – *“These Games will be my second Games when I was recovering from my transplant, they gave me a goal and it’s great to meet other people and hear their stories and also to help to show others that organ donation works”.*

Trevor Lynch, Limerick, living in the UK – bone marrow recipient – *“Each Games week is a wonderful celebration of life and being part of that is amazing. Being part of TSI for these events is also a wonderful experience as the team is so supportive, friendly and encouraging”.*

Amanda O’Neill Coyne, Co. Cork – kidney transplant recipient – *“I look forward to travelling as part of Team Ireland. I see it as a wonderful honour to represent one’s country. I’ve made some great friends and met the nicest people at the Games”.*



World Transplant Games team: Back row (l-r): Mark Mulhall, Peter O’Reilly, Hugh Nolan, Mairead O’Mahony, Ivan Kinahan, Trevor Lynch, Harry Ward (Team Manager); Second row: Victor Conroy, Teresa Smyth, Tom O’Reilly, Finbarr O’Regan, Sean Beirne, Laura McDowell, Margaret Kirwan, Mick Dwyer; Front row: James Nolan, Bryan Duignan, John Moran, Marie O’Connor, Amanda O’Neill Coyne, Pat O’Sullivan, Pamela Cassidy, Mike Keohane.

TRANSPLANT GAMES 2025 contd...

Hugh Nolan, Co. Cork – kidney transplant recipient – *“I enjoy competing and want to do my best in all sports. This provides motivation to practice and try to get in the best shape physically and mentally to allow me to do my best. The other athletes competing in Transplant Games provide great motivation to me. I see them doing things that I could never do. There is nothing like being part of a team when you play sports. We as a team share similar experiences of ill health and recovery. There is unwavering support from your teammates”.*

Finbarr O'Regan, Dublin – liver transplant recipient – felt *“Elation. Pure Joy and Relief”* when he was able to return to physical activity as he used to play sports competitively for many years.

Pat O'Sullivan, Co. Cork – kidney transplant recipient - *“Going back training and having the energy to finish what I had started was amazing. The adrenaline rush the first time going to the track event at my first Games can never be replicated. Being able to honour my donor every time I train, walk, travel, hit a golf ball is what being a transplant athlete is all about”.*

Teresa Smyth, Galway – kidney transplant recipient – got to meet *“Wonderful people who are all so grateful for the ‘gift of life”.*

Nick Heather, Dublin now living in Australia – bone marrow recipient – *“One of the best experiences of my life where I met some incredible people and made lifelong friends”.*

Sinead McGowan, Galway now living in Sydney – kidney transplant recipient – *“Just that simple feeling of being able to be active again, to know that your body can support you, was amazing. Every single day is a milestone”.*

Ivan Kinahan, Dublin – living donor of a kidney to his son Sam – *“Sam's transplant was a success and whilst there were difficult days afterwards, we've experienced a huge change in our lives for the better. It was a great sense of joy for me to get back to running afterwards. I've always been a competitive runner and value it even*

more now, as I appreciate the delicate nature of our health. I'm so delighted to be able to play on the green outside our house with Sam. Watching him run around is so great given all he's been through”.

'GIFT OF LIFE GOLF CHALLENGE'

Robbie Merrigan, Limerick, living in Cork – kidney transplant recipient – In addition to competing in the Games, Robbie and his best pal John Lynch organised the 'Gift of Life Golf Challenge'. Robbie and John completed four rounds of golf, in four countries, within 24 hours – starting in Norway and finishing in Dublin, via Sweden and Denmark and raising over €17,000 for Transplant Sport Ireland.

Transplant Sport Ireland is very proud of all its athletes who powerfully showcase that organ donation works. Organ donors save lives. Making friends and family aware of your wishes on organ donation are the key steps towards saving lives – TSI encourages everyone to 'Have the Conversation, Say 'Yes' to Organ Donation!' If you would like more information on Transplant Sports Ireland, check out the TSI website transplantsportireland.ie and our social media platforms. If you would like to get involved with the Team or can help with sponsorship, email transplantsportireland@gmail.com

A 'WHEELIE' GREAT FUNDRAISER FOR THE NATIONAL KIDNEY SUPPORT CENTRE



Huge thanks to the IKA Westmeath Branch for their incredible generosity and support for our National Kidney Support Centre.

Led by Eddie Flood, they raised an impressive €3,450 towards the communal living room in the Centre, which will help to create a warm and welcoming space for everyone to enjoy.

Eddie and his family raised the money through a fundraising cycle in Co. Mayo, which they completed on a lovely summer's day in August.

Well done to Eddie and all involved – we 'wheelie' appreciate your support!!



“My family and I held a fundraising cycle in Mayo in August to raise funds for the National Kidney Support Centre which is being refurbished at the moment. We raised €3,450. As you know the Centre is 25-years-old and badly needed a major upgrade. The Centre will provide a home from home experience for all patients and their families which will help with their care. I have made lifelong friends after meeting them in the Centre and I know the support that we can give to each other is irreplaceable.



Give an item to our National Kidney Support Centre at www.supportkidneycentre.ie



BRANCH MEETINGS

Our Branch meetings have resumed after a summer break, at the Rua Red Arts Centre in Tallaght on September 24th and again on October 29th. We were happy to welcome some new members to the meeting for the first time and to help support them on their kidney journey.

Many discussions are had at these meetings of patients own experiences with End Stage Kidney Disease (ESKD), particularly in the areas of dialysis and transplant.

Thank you all for your contributions to the meetings this past year and for making these meetings very worthwhile for all of us patients.

Our next meeting is booked in for the Rua Red Arts Centre (D24 KV8N) on **Monday, January 12th 2026**. All newcomers are welcome to join us for a cuppa and a chat about all things kidney related. You are welcome to bring a friend or family member / carer along if you wish.

If you are not receiving Branch updates from us and would like to, please text or call Gerry on 086-0268223 for details. If you are not getting an email from us and would like to, please let me know by text or call, it may be that we have the incorrect email for you, or, no email at all.

SOCIAL EVENT

We are planning a Social Event in January. More details in the coming weeks on Facebook, Email and WhatsApp. We hope as many of you as possible from the Branch can make it along.

BRANCH REPRESENTATIVE - NATIONAL MEMBER FORUM

Declan Sherlock has been selected as our Branch

DUBLIN SOUTH

By GERRY McKENNA



Declan Sherlock

Representative to the newly created National Member Forum.

The Member Forum will serve as a platform to ensure patient experiences directly shape the strategy and future work of the IKA. Together its members will help support the resolution of patient issues, improve kidney healthcare services in Ireland and provide critical insights on the quality of IKA care and services. You can read more about the Member Forum at <https://ika.ie/memberforum>

Thank you Declan for allowing your name to go forward for this important role. We congratulate you and wish you every success in this new role.

SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE

A number of our Branch members attended the Service of Remembrance in Whitehall. Some also played a part in helping with the IKA Service of Remembrance on the day, from Liz who narrated the Service to others who helped with car parking. Thanks to all who helped out on the day particularly with very inclement weather.

DUBLIN CITY MARATHON

Congratulations to all participants across the country who helped raise organ donor awareness and much needed funds for the IKA during this year's Dublin Marathon held on October 26th. As patients we are

very grateful for your efforts. Special thanks to those from the South Dublin areas.

CONDOLENCES

We send condolences to the family and friends of all deceased members of the Branch.



Catherine (Kay) Leon

In particular, we lost a very dear friend of our Branch of more than 40 years. **Catherine (Kay) Leon** sadly passed away on August 28th, 2025.

Kay became involved with the IKA in the early 80's contributing nearly 40 years of promoting organ donor awareness, church gate collections and hosting various fundraisers.

Importantly, Kay and her husband Larry's hard work contributed to the building of the holiday homes in Kerry and Waterford for dialysis patients.

Over the years Kay both helped to organise, and was instrumental in, carrying out the numerous IKA-sponsored Children's and Adult's Christmas parties. Of note, was Kay's work in the early years of the IKA when she hosted barbecues in Brittas Bay, Wicklow, for the Dublin South IKA Branch. Kay will be sadly missed by her husband Larry and all her family and friends.

It is because of Kay and many others like her around the country that we have so many great IKA services available to us these days. We owe Kay a great debt of gratitude for what she did for the IKA.

On behalf of Kay's many friends from the Branch we send our condolences to her husband Larry and daughter Evelyn who have also

DUBLIN SOUTH

been very active members of Dublin South Branch, serving as Branch Officers at different times over the years. Kay will not be forgotten. May she Rest in Peace.

A minute's silence was held for Kay at our September Branch meeting.

ANNE SPRING

We were sad to learn from Donor House, about the passing of Anne on September 14th. Though not a Branch member, Anne was a lovely lady who many of us had gotten to know in recent years as an employee of the IKA. She was very kind and helpful to all the patients from our Branch who had dealings with her and will be greatly missed by her wide circle of family and friends.

We send, once again, our condolences to Anne's husband Gerry, her daughter Jenny, son Eric and all her extended family.

May Anne Rest in Peace.

PAUL ANDERSON

We also send our condolences to all the family and friends of Paul, in particular his partner Fran and sister Tina. Paul sadly passed away on October 23rd last. He was one of the newer members of our Branch, joining in 2024. From reading the many condolences it's clear that Paul was a wonderful person and friend to many people. May he Rest in Peace.

In addition to these members who have passed away, we send condolences to all those in our Branch and their families who have lost loved ones in recent months. May they Rest in Peace and may we remember them with joy.

WEXFORD

By MARIA DONLON



We received a cheque for €2,205 from Deirdre Cleary which was the total raised from her annual Cycle. Deirdre along with family, friends and staff of B. Braun Wexford completed this on Saturday, June 28th. Thanks so much!

Members of the Wexford Branch attended a cheque presentation from The Gurriers MCC for €8,150. This was the total amount raised at the Bike Run held on Sunday, July 13th. A big thank you to Jason and everyone involved in organising this very successful fundraiser. We also like to wish Jason's Mam, Pauline, the very best of health as she received a kidney transplant recently.

We held our Annual Mass of Remembrance on Friday, October 3rd in Barntown Church. There was a great turnout on the night and everyone enjoyed a cup of tea and a chat afterwards. We would like to thank Fr. Carroll for the use of his lovely church,

Fr. Pat Mernagh who officiated at the Mass and Adi Roche O'Leary for her beautiful singing.

Catriona Kenny and members of her family organised a Coffee morning in St. Senans Community Centre on Thursday, October 16th and raised a very impressive €2,270. A huge thank you to Catriona.

We look forward to Sunday, December 7th when Silvermines Vintage Club are organising an 'All Vehicle Christmas Light-Up Road Run' with all proceeds going to the Irish Kidney Association.

We extend sympathy to the families of Joe Redmond and Martina Murphy, both who passed away recently. Both Joe and Martina were from the Enniscorthy area and were always willing and available to help out with Branch fundraisers.

May they Rest in Peace.



LIMERICK

By DEBBIE SHEEHY

A MORNING OF GENEROSITY AND GRATITUDE AT CUBE PRINTING

The Irish Kidney Association (IKA) Limerick Branch was delighted to be part of a truly heart-warming coffee morning hosted by Cube Printing in Limerick. The event was organised by Ross Curtin, a kidney transplant recipient, who wanted to give back in appreciation for the support he received during his transplant journey.

With the full backing of his employer, **Brendan Ring**, and the entire Cube Printing team, the coffee morning was a resounding success – raising an incredible €6,448 in aid of the IKA.

Ross, joined by his wife Audrey, colleagues, and supporters from local businesses, welcomed a wonderful turnout of friends, customers, and community members who came together to share coffee, cake, and conversation. The atmosphere was filled with positivity, generosity, and a true sense of community spirit.

On behalf of the IKA Limerick Branch, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to Ross Curtin, Audrey, Brendan Ring, TJ Ryan, Inna Nakcere, and everyone at Cube Printing for their exceptional generosity, support, kindness and commitment.

We were honoured to attend and support Ross and the team on the day. The fabulous home-baked treats and the warm hospitality made it an event to remember – a real feel-good morning from start to finish.

We wish Ross continued good health and happiness with his family as he thrives post-transplant.



Debbie Sheehy and Ross Curtin accept the cheque for €6,448 from Brendan Ring and the team at Cube Printing.

IN ROSS'S OWN WORDS

"My name is Ross Curtin, and I've been working with Cube Printing Ltd. for almost 24 years now. I feel very fortunate to have met so many amazing people since my time here, from the owners themselves to my colleagues past and present, and our customers. Cube has always been like my second family.

In November 2018, my kidneys started to fail due to a hereditary condition called Polycystic Kidney Disease. I held out until September 2022 when I was told I had no option but to start dialysis. From the moment I broke this news to Cube, the outpouring of support my family and I received was incredible. They were so accommodating around my treatment schedule – four-hour sessions, three days a week – often getting home close to 11pm.

Looking back, it took a huge toll mentally and physically, but the support and encouragement from my colleagues, friends, neighbours, and of course the Irish Kidney Association, kept me going. It gave me hope that one day a transplant might come.

Fast forward eight months to April 2023 – during an evening dialysis session, I got the call I'd been waiting for. The next day was the day my life changed forever – the day we won the lotto!

My transplant has been a great success, and I'm doing very well.

To mark my second anniversary, I took part in the Great Limerick Run earlier this year in aid of the IKA, raising much-needed funds with family and friends. Not long after, Brendan Ring, Managing Director, and TJ Ryan, Sales Director at Cube Printing, suggested organising a coffee morning to raise funds for the IKA – and that's how the CUBE/IKA Coffee Morning was born.

After reaching out to Debbie at the IKA Limerick Branch to help us



Ross Curtin, James O'Riordan.



Debbie Sheehy, Brendan Ring, Ross Curtin, TJ Ryan, Inna Nakcere.



Some of the wonderful goodies available at the Coffee morning.

organise the day, it was a huge success. We're so grateful to all our valued customers, suppliers, friends, and colleagues who turned out in numbers, contributing generously and helping us raise €6,448 – far beyond our expectations!

I know this support will go a long way in helping others in renal failure or recovery, just like it helped me. Organ donation saves and changes lives. There isn't a day that goes by that I don't think and pray for my donor's family, who made a life-changing decision that transformed mine.

The IKA has been a massive support to me and my family – instrumental in my recovery – something I'll be forever grateful for.

Finally, a massive thank you to Cube Printing Ltd. for facilitating the event; to Brendan Ring and TJ Ryan for their thoughtfulness and generosity; Inna for organising food and drinks; Rodolpho for designing the advertising materials; and everyone who helped make the coffee morning so special. You've made a real difference to people living with renal illness nationwide."

– Ross Curtin, Cube Printing Ltd.

UPCOMING EVENTS AND UPDATES

We're also delighted to share that Pat Hayes and Sharon Cavanagh are kindly organising a 45 Drive on Saturday, December 7th at 2:30pm in the Pallasgreen Community Hall.

All support would be greatly

appreciated, and we look forward to seeing both familiar and new faces there for what promises to be a great community afternoon.

As we approach the festive season, we'd like to wish all our members, families, and supporters a very Happy Christmas and a healthy, peaceful New Year.

Please keep an eye on our social media feeds and consider joining our WhatsApp group to stay up to date with future activities.

We'll be announcing details of a social event in January, and we can't wait to share more soon!

Contact us: **086-8357257**.

CARLOW

By ORLA CANNING

The Carlow Branch has had a busy few months recently. Our Branch Secretary attended a Table Quiz in Dalton's Bar, Tullow, Co. Carlow in support of the JJ Connolly Memorial Annual Fundraiser. Hosted by Parkville United and the Connolly Family, in memory of their son JJ, the two-part event fundraiser was a huge success.

Each year the Connolly family donate to three local charities, and the Carlow Branch is honoured to be chosen as one of those charities each year. JJ's organs were donated when he passed away in 2014 saving three people's lives.

The Table Quiz was a great evening of fun and craic, whilst also remembering JJ, with all his friends and family in attendance. We were delighted to attend and are so



Orla Canning receiving a cheque for €2,778 from Gerry Connolly, JJ's father.

grateful for their extremely generous donation of €2,778 because of the fundraising events.

Several of our members were also in attendance at the 40th Service of Remembrance and Thanksgiving held on September 27th in Whitehall, Dublin.

It was lovely to see our youngest member of the Branch, Amber O'Rourke, take part in the ceremony, as she gave thanks to her donor.

Other members of our Branch also took part with Transplant Sport Ireland. It was a truly beautiful and special day.

New members are always welcome. Remember if you are interested in joining the Carlow Branch we are always delighted to welcome new members –

Contact Orla, 087-7560477 or email: orlacanning5@gmail.com



CHEQUE PRESENTATION AND SUMMER GET-TOGETHER

On Saturday, August 3rd, the Waterford Branch of the IKA came together for a very special occasion. We were delighted to receive a generous donation from Branch member Cairtriona Culleton, through a Bingo Night held at the Forum, Waterford. The event brought in an incredible €1,101!

A heartfelt thank you to Cairtriona and all her helpers, for her wonderful efforts, to the Forum for so kindly providing the venue, and to the generous sponsors who donated spot prizes – your support means the world to us.

Following the cheque presentation, members enjoyed a relaxed and enjoyable get-together at the Riverstown Apartments in Tramore. Delicious food was provided by House of Food, Waterford. It was a lovely afternoon of chatting, laughter, and catching up – a perfect way to celebrate our shared efforts and community spirit.

Thank you to everyone who made the day so special!

ATLANTIC VIEW CARAVAN PARK TRAMORE FUNDRAISING BBQ

On Saturday, August 23rd, 2025, the sunny Southeast lived up to its name, with the Atlantic View Caravan Park filled with patrons enjoying both the sunshine and the festive atmosphere. Younger holidaymakers had a fantastic time on the bouncy castles, while everyone was entertained by live music throughout the BBQ.

Our sincere thanks to Dunnes Stores, generous sponsors of food and beverages for the event.

A very special note of gratitude goes to Tommy Gemmell, the owner and organiser, along with his

WATERFORD

BY FRANCES MOYNIHAN



Lorraine Grant, Susan Cowman, Michael Galloway (Hon. Branch Secretary), Elaine Power, Cairtriona Culleton, Mary Culleton, Ray Halligan (Hon. Branch Chairperson), Frances Moynihan (Hon. Branch Treasurer).

dedicated team of workers and helpers, whose efforts ensured the day was a tremendous success.

The event was brought to a close with a spectacular fireworks display on the Prom at 9:30pm – a magical finale to a truly memorable community day.

On behalf of the Waterford Branch IKA, heartfelt thanks are extended to all the sponsors, patrons, and supporters who contributed to this successful fundraiser. Your kindness and generosity are deeply appreciated.

Combined with a very generous

donation from Tommy Gammell, the total raised was €5,180.

Honorary Treasurer, Frances Moynihan and Honorary Chairperson, Ray Halligan were delighted to meet with Atlantic View Caravan Park proprietor, Tommy Gemmell, to accept the cheque on behalf of the Branch.

If you or anyone you know is living with renal disease and would like to access further information and supports, please feel free to contact franceswaterfordika@gmail.com or Donor House, Dublin at info@ika.ie



Frances Moynihan (Hon Branch Treasurer), Tommy Gammell, Proprietor Atlantic View Caravan Park, Ray Halligan (Hon Chairperson), Dean Noblett, Atlantic View Caravan Park.

LOUTH/MEATH

By SANDRA FLANAGAN



Oriel Pickleball Fundraiser in aid of the IKA, Dundalk.

Hello to all our new members in the Louth/Meath Branch. We've had a quiet few months in the Branch, but the new Committee has been busy behind the scenes setting up the Branch after it has been re-launched earlier this year. We very much look forward to kicking off our Fundraising Calendar in 2026 and

we would be more than delighted to see any existing and new members at our next meeting so we can plan our Fundraising events.

Louise our Chairperson organised and participated in a very successful fundraising event with the Oriel Pickleball Club in Dundalk Sports Centre where they raised €1,030 in

aid of the IKA.

Well Done all.....!!!

We would like to take this opportunity to wish all our Louth/Meath members a very happy and healthy Christmas with family and friends.

ROSCOMMON

By MAURA QUIGLEY

Several of our members attended the 40th Annual Service of Remembrance and Thanksgiving Ruby Anniversary event in the Church of the Holy Child, Whitehall on Saturday, September 27th.

Vincent Finan was one of the members in attendance. Vincent was delighted to meet up with surgeons David Hickey and Gordon Smyth. David Hickey was the surgeon who carried out Vincent's transplant in 1994 and Gordon Smyth was the surgeon who carried out his transplant in 2021.

We were deeply saddened by the recent and untimely death of Caroline Cunnane Kennedy who passed away on October 16th, 2025. Caroline was a member of our Branch for many years and was a very active and valued member during her tenure.

We extend our heartfelt and sincere sympathy to Caroline's husband Pat, her sister Etna, brother Michael, the extended Cunnane and Kennedy families. May her gentle soul Rest in Peace.

Cór Comáin Roscommon have kindly agreed to perform a Choral



Dr. Gordon Smyth, Vincent Finan, Dr. David Hickey.

concert on Sunday, December 14th at St. Coman's Church, Roscommon at 6pm. Admission will be €20. All proceeds will go to Roscommon IKA Branch – your support will be much appreciated

Tickets will be available from the Secretary, Maura Quigley and other Committee members.

LEITRIM

By CATHRÍONA CHARLES

The Leitrim Branch is quiet at the moment, but the officers are always available when needed, please contact the Secretary as noted on the inside back page.

Frank Heslin and Cathriona Charles attended the very informative Officers Information Day in Athlone and thoroughly enjoyed the art at the end of the session.

We currently have no plans for Christmas but keep an eye on our Facebook page – Leitrim Branch IKA in case this changes.

Wishing all our members the very best wishes for the season.



Frank Heslin, Treasurer;
Cathriona Charles, Secretary,
Leitrim IKA Branch at the
Information Day



TIPPERARY

By MARY ADAMSON

Our last meeting was held in the Anner Hotel, Thurles on Monday, September 8th. We had a good attendance and a lot of discussion ensued about the possibility of a dialysis unit in Tipperary.

We reminded everyone about the upcoming Information Day for kidney patients in the SETU Waterford on Friday, October 31st, which I am helping to organise.

This event has since been held and was a great success for all, despite the inclement weather on the day. There is a separate write-up about the event in this *SUPPORT* edition with plenty of photos provided (see page 30-31). Hopefully it will be repeated as it was a great opportunity for patients and medical teams to get together and there was an abundance of expertise and information given on the day, both in the clinical presentations, and the IKA and patient-led talks.

James Dodd, Nenagh was his usual busy self organising the annual Nenagh Golf Classic in aid of the IKA. This was held at the end of the summer and raised over 7k. Well done James and team.

We were delighted to see so many at the Annual Service of



Patsy King, Bridie Corkery, Nancy Frawley and Margaret O'Brien, enjoyed playing the IKA Golf Scramble at Nenagh Golf Club.



Above: Michael Hewgarty, John Hackett, Matt Hanly and Bernard Delahunty supporting the IKA Golf Scramble.

Right: Pat Reddans, Seamus Powers, Gerry O'Rourke and Gerry Luttrell.

Remembrance and Thanksgiving which was televised recently. Our former board member, Joan Gavan, was very involved with the liturgy committee.

After 40 years it is wonderful to see that the Service is still as successful as ever.



Martin Ryan, Cathal Ryan, Pat and Clare O'Flaherty also played in the IKA Golf Scramble.



John O'Donoghue, Eamonn Fahy, John Coady and Tom O'Donnell



We had a lovely summer lunch in Langton's and were delighted to welcome some new members. All our photos are from the event.

Recently, Mary Rooney (Chair) and Bridget Langton (Treasurer) made a visit to Duiske College in Graiguenamanagh and spoke about aspects of the Human Tissue Act that relate to organ donation and transplantation.

They explained the legislation which includes an opt-out register to them and how they can share their wishes to be an organ donor.

Additionally, the importance of speaking to parents and family members was highlighted. Mary and Bridget also alluded to their lived experience of dialysis and how life-changing transplantation was and highlighted the gift that organ donation is.

Great interest was shown by students and teachers. Donor cards and leaflets were handed out.

We are also grateful to Bridget

KILKENNY

By LINDA BRENNAN



Moira & Joe Cashin.



Bridget and Richard Langton



Mary Kelly, Mary Rooney.



Hugh & Sharon Byrne.



Moira Cashin, Joe O'Farrell, Shem Carrigan, Bridget Langton.



Owen Hanrahan.

Langton who organised a coffee morning in Graiguenamanagh. This was held in her own home and funds

raised came to €535. Well done, Bridget!

CAVAN/MONAGHAN

By PAUL DONOHOE



Dialysis Unit Nurses, Siobhan O'Reilly and Anna Mae Lynch oversee Paul Donohoe at the Table Quiz.

Participants at the Table Quiz at Cavan Rugby Club in September.

All at the Cavan/Monaghan IKA Branch would like to thank our brainy supporters who attended Cavan Rugby Club for a fundraising Table Quiz in September.

Special thanks to the rugby club for giving us such a warm welcome.

Huge congratulations also to David Crosby (lung and kidney transplant recipient) for completing the Chicago Marathon – a great achievement.

Look out for further updates through our social media.



Support from all ages at the Table Quiz.



Lung and kidney transplant recipient David Crosby finishing the Chicago Marathon.



Huge thanks to everyone who supported the Ring of Kerry Cycle in July. We were delighted to receive a cheque for €65,000 recently. The amount of organ donor awareness it created and the friendships that were made was priceless.

Also big thank you to the staff in Astellas who, again this year, held their annual fun ball run to raise funds for the Branch. Transplant patient Clodagh O'Shea from Killorglin was the special guest on the day and did a great job. The staff of Astellas have been incredibly supportive over the years.

Our holidays in Tralee and Killarney have been fully booked all year, and many patients and their families received a well-earned break. The holiday homes remain open over the winter months so anybody wanting a short break please contact Deborah in Donor House.

Our Christmas party is booked for Sunday, November 30th in Killarney Heights Hotel. We look forward to welcoming new and old guests, to

KERRY

BY THERESA LOONEY



Cathal Walsh and John Rice presenting the cheque for €65,000, proceeds from the Ring of Kerry Cycle to Theresa Looney and John Paul Lehane, cyclist and double transplant patient (right).



Astellas cheque presentation (L-R): Eamon Foley, Eoghan Barry, accepting the cheque on behalf of the Kerry IKA Branch Clodagh O'Shea and Theresa Looney, Shannon Foster, Seamus O'Connell, John Kelly, Nigel Houlihan, staff from Astellas.

celebrate the festive season, for an afternoon of good food, good music, lots of spot prizes, craic and of course a visit from Santa.

Acknowledgements of Deceased Loved Ones

At a difficult and sensitive time, the Irish Kidney Association (IKA) wants to acknowledge the recent passing of your deceased loved one in a respectful and personal way. In recent times we have been receiving an increase in the number of requests for inclusion of expressions of sympathy and life stories in *SUPPORT* magazine, from families of loved ones who have passed away. Therefore, in order to ensure consistency of approach, guidance has been developed regarding inclusion of obituaries based on the deceased's person involvement and role with the IKA.

The guidance allows for expressions of sympathy in other ways outside inclusions in *SUPPORT* magazine.

Please contact your Branch officer if you have any queries in relation to this guidance which outlines what can be included.



LOCAL BRANCH SECRETARIES

IRISH KIDNEY ASSOCIATION CLG, Donor House, Block 43a, Parkwest, Dublin D12 P5V6

Ph: 01-6205306 | Email: info@ika.ie | www.ika.ie

NATIONAL KIDNEY SUPPORT CENTRE, Beaumont Hospital, Dublin D09 Y5R3 - **UNDER RENOVATION**

Telephone: 01-6908887 | Email: info@ika.ie

MUNSTER KIDNEY SUPPORT CENTRE, Glenflesk, Wilton Avenue, Bishopstown, Cork T12 X6XP

Telephone: 01-6908887 | Email: munsterkidneysupportcentre@ika.ie

CARLOW Orla Canning ✉ orlacanning5@gmail.com ☎ 087-7560477	CAVAN/MONAGHAN Rose Dalton ✉ volunteer@ika.ie ☎ 086-8186379	CLARE Sharon Fitzgerald ✉ fitzgeraldsm@hotmail.com ☎ 087-1683136	CORK Nicola Daniels ✉ secretary.ika@gmail.com ☎ 086-2755754	DONEGAL Patricia Callaghan ✉ volunteer@ika.ie ☎ 086-6073339
DUBLIN EAST + WICKLOW Niamh Dowling ✉ ika.dublineastwicklow@gmail.com ☎ 085-7042335	DUBLIN NORTH Peter Heffernan ✉ dublinnorthika@gmail.com ☎ 086-8357295	DUBLIN SOUTH Clair Hughes ✉ volunteer@ika.ie ☎ 087-6267854	GALWAY Peadar Ó hIcí ✉ volunteer@ika.ie ☎ 086-8357294	KERRY Theresa Looney ✉ kerrybranchika@gmail.com ☎ 087-2059205
KILDARE Michelle Horan ✉ volunteer@ika.ie ☎ 085-7131478	KILKENNY Linda Brennan ✉ volunteer@ika.ie ☎ 083-3232145	LAOIS John Byrne ✉ volunteer@ika.ie ☎ 087-6744519	LEITRIM Cathriona Charles ✉ volunteer@ika.ie ☎ 087-9768637	LIMERICK James Riordan ✉ volunteer@ika.ie ☎ 086-8357257
LONGFORD Elaine Heslin ✉ volunteer@ika.ie ☎ 087-9444515	LOUTH/MEATH Sandra Flanagan ✉ volunteer@ika.ie ☎ 086-8357283	MAYO Mairead Thomas ✉ mayobranch@gmail.com ☎ 086-3151613	OFFALY Marjorie Stanley ✉ volunteer@ika.ie ☎ 087-2140414	ROSCOMMON Maura Quigley ✉ volunteer@ika.ie ☎ 086-8357281
SLIGO Anna Mitchell-Kenny ✉ maryannakenny@yahoo.co.uk ☎ 087-6304216	TIPPERARY Francis Hogan ✉ francishogan1977@gmail.com ☎ 087-8357259	WATERFORD Michael Gallwey ✉ mgallwey@gmail.com ☎ 087-2029599	WESTMEATH Sinead Dowling ✉ volunteer@ika.ie ☎ 086-8357293	WEXFORD Walter Kent ✉ volunteer@ika.ie ☎ 086-2593428



Writing to your DONOR FAMILY

A transplant recipient acknowledges their donor in their own special way. Sometimes transplant recipients make the decision to write to the donor family. This decision is a personal choice and you may have to re-write this letter a number of times before you feel it is right.

From our experience the families of organ donors welcome and really appreciate this letter from the transplant recipient. It can be difficult to express your thanks when the donor family may still be grieving for the loss of their loved one. However, your letter can often provide them with some comfort, and consolation and help them cope somewhat better.

As a transplant recipient, you have the opportunity to write to the family of your donor through ODTI (Organ Donation Transplant Ireland) who facilitate written correspondence between recipients and donor families. You can also write to your family through your local recipient coordinator who will then forward this on to ODTI. All correspondence is completely anonymous and identities are kept confidential.

If you would like to write to the family of your donor, you may send a greeting/Mass card, note or letter. Please do not include any identifying details, i.e., home town, phone number, etc. Do not seal the envelope as the Organ Donor coordinator will need to review your correspondence to

ensure confidentiality. Outlined below is some general information you may wish to include:

- Your first name **only**.
- Acknowledge the donor family's loss and thank them for their gift.
- Interests and hobbies.
- Marital status, family size, etc.
- How long you waited for your transplant and how it has improved your quality of life.

When sending your card/letter to the transplant coordinators, please enclose your name and date of transplant on a separate piece of paper so that the card can be forwarded to the appropriate family. Place your card/letter in an unsealed envelope. Then send both documents in a sealed envelope to:

Organ Donor Coordinators,
 Organ Donation Transplant Ireland (ODTI),
 Ground Floor, Bridgewater House,
 Bridgewater Business Centre, Conyngham Road,
 Islandbridge, Dublin 8, D08 T9NH

This may be the most difficult letter you have ever had to write. If we can provide any assistance in this process please do not hesitate to contact Fiona in the IKA or the Beaumont Hospital Transplant Coordinators or staff in ODTI.



SCAN TO GIVE

HELP US TO REOPEN OUR NATIONAL KIDNEY SUPPORT CENTRE

SHARING IS CARING!

Please help us to spread the word about our fundraiser to as many people as possible!

1. Go to the IKA Facebook or Instagram page and share one of our posts about the fundraiser.
2. Text a friend – download a WhatsApp image to share at www.supportkidneycentre.ie/share
3. Post on Facebook/Instagram – download an image at www.supportkidneycentre.ie/share

Be sure to include the link to give – www.supportkidneycentre.ie/give



GIVE A LOVED ONE A CHRISTMAS GIFT WITH IMPACT

Give your loved ones a gift that keeps on giving by purchasing a Christmas Gift Card for the National Kidney Support Centre in their name. Your Gift Card will help to buy any items needed for the Centre such as paint, bedroom furniture or kitchen appliances.

After donating a Christmas Gift Card, you will receive a thank you email with an image to text to your loved one. You will also get a 'thank you cert' which you can print off and pop in a Christmas card. Give a Gift Card now at www.supportkidneycentre.ie/xmas



GIVE A CORPORATE DONATION

Do you own or work for a company that could help? We have Corporate Giving Packages for businesses and organisations which will equip the Centre with necessary materials such as sustainable solutions. Bespoke corporate packages can be created. Sponsor a package at www.supportkidneycentre.ie/corporates

In return for their generosity, the company will receive a VIP invitation to the Centre's opening ceremony, a mention on our website, and a shout out on our social media, plus a 'thank you cert' and other PR opportunities. For more info email: fundraising@ika.ie



DEDICATE A LIGHT ON THE VIRTUAL TREE

Dedicate a light on our virtual Christmas Tree of Hope and share a special message. This year all proceeds from the Christmas Tree of Hope will go towards reopening our National Kidney Support Centre at Beaumont, which will provide a much needed *home from home* for kidney patients and their families across the country, all year round.

Dedicate a light now at www.ika.ie/hope



ORGANISE A FUNDRAISING EVENT

Want to fundraise as a Branch, group or family? Our members are organising events such as tractor runs, coffee mornings and sponsored swims to raise money for our **National Kidney Support Centre** – and you can too!

The festive season is also the perfect time for a Christmas Jumper Day fundraiser and our fundraising team will be happy to assist you in setting this up – email: fundraising@ika.ie

