

**MESSAGES OF SUPPORT ABOUND AS TRANSPLANT TEAM IRELAND DEPARTS FOR  
WORLD TRANSPLANT GAMES IN DURBAN, SOUTH AFRICA**

Messages of support and good wishes abound for 24 brave transplant recipients who flew out from Dublin airport today to represent Ireland at the 19<sup>th</sup> World Transplant Games in Durban, South Africa which will take place from July 28<sup>th</sup> until August 4<sup>th</sup>. Amongst those offering words of encouragement to the team was South African Ambassador to Ireland, H.E. Jeremiah Adou, who was special guest of honour at a pre-departure reception for the team that was also attended by family members and supporters, and was held at the Clarion Hotel, Dublin airport this morning at 11am.

Tyrone football manager Mickey Harte described the athletes as “inspirational” and “a ray of light” and advised them to “be ready to compete to the best of your ability with a strong and positive frame of mind at the right moment. Do not have any regrets”.

The Minister for Transport, Sport and Tourism, Leo Varadkar said that the team will be “wonderful ambassadors for Ireland and will help to further enhance Ireland’s reputation at sporting events abroad”.

The Irish team of 24 athletes, including 10 women, ranging in age from 12 to 68, have all received organ transplants including kidney, pancreas, liver, and heart. Seven of the kidney recipients received their transplant from living donors. Two of the younger members of the team completed their Junior and Leaving Cert. exams earlier this summer.

Transplant Surgeon David Hickey also sent a message of support to the team, some of whom had their kidney transplant operations conducted by him. He said that “the goal of transplantation is not only to save lives but also to enable the complete physical, social, mental and spiritual rehabilitation of people with organ failure.” He said that “the success of this aspiration is gloriously seen in this group of heroic warriors representing themselves, their donors and Ireland at the World Transplant Games”.

In support of some of the younger members of the team who were looked after by the Children’s University Hospital Temple Street, staff members Consultant Nephrologist Dr. Atif Awan, Sheila Boyle, Senior Nephrology Nurse and Olive Boyle, Play Specialist also attended the team’s pre-departure event.

Over 1000 athletes from 50 countries will participate in the 19<sup>th</sup> World Transplant Games which are a celebration of life and the strength and generosity of human spirit. The Games include a broad range of events including Track & Field, road races, cycling, swimming, golf, tennis, table-tennis, badminton, squash, lawn bowls, petanque and Tenpin Bowling.

At the pre-departure event, the South African Ambassador to Ireland, H.E. Jeremiah Ndou said, “it is an honour for our country to be the first on the African continent to host such an important event which promotes organ donation and transplantation. I would like to wish each and every member of the Irish team success in their sporting disciplines at the 19<sup>th</sup> World Transplant Games. I hope that while sharing in celebrating the gift of life through sport with other transplant recipients from around the world that

you also have time to enjoy the friendly hospitality of the South African people, our country's culture and the world class infrastructure and sunny beaches which the host city of Durban enjoys".

National Team Manager, and World Transplant Games Federation Councillor, Colin White, said that "the athletes' participation in the Games offers a great opportunity to showcase the success of organ donation and transplantation. Their achievements offer inspiration to others experiencing organ failure and an impetus to the general public to embrace organ donation".

Irish soccer legend Niall Quinn, who gave a motivational talk to the team last month, said, "it is a great honour to meet such inspirational athletes who have faced huge health battles and now thanks to the gift of organ donation they can share with me their passion for life and its celebration through sport".

At the previous World Transplant Games which were held in Gothenburg, Sweden in 2011, the Irish team of 33 athletes who ranged in age from 9 to 70+, secured a world record in one event and picked up a massive haul of 39 medals comprising 13 Gold, 14 Silver and 12 Bronze and were placed 11<sup>th</sup> overall on the medals table.

**The Transplant Team Ireland panel for the 19<sup>th</sup> World Transplant Games:**

Seamus Eager (heart), Kilcoole, Co Wicklow

Tony Gartland (liver), Hacketstown, Co Carlow

Vienna White (kidney), Letterkenny, Co Donegal

John Connell (kidney), (living in Capetown, South Africa) from Mullingar, Co. Westmeath

Sheila Gegan (kidney), Nenagh, Co Tipperary

Orla Hogan (kidney), Nenagh, Co Tipperary

Andrew Duncan (kidney), Clonmel, Co Tipperary

Robbie Lyons (kidney), The Swan, via Athy, Co Laois

Sinead McGowan (kidney), (living in China) from Renmore, Galway

Bridie Nicholson (kidney and pancreas), Sligo Town, Sligo

James Nolan (kidney), The Curragh, Co Kildare

Sonia Treacy (kidney), Newbridge, Co Kildare

Catherine Murphy (liver), Aghabullogue, Cork

Charlie Ryan (liver), Cobh, Cork (**most senior** team member)

Oisin O'Gorman (kidney), Lismore, Waterford (**youngest** member of team)

Eoin Hurley (kidney), Waterford city, Co Waterford

Deirdre Faul (liver), Dalkey, Co Dublin

James Reynolds (kidney), Tallaght, Dublin 24

Angela Sherlock (kidney), (living in Spain) from Walkinstown, Dublin 12

Dara McLaughlin (kidney), Lucan, Co Dublin

Brian Carney (kidney), Killester, Dublin 5

John Moran (kidney), Glasnevin, Dublin 11

Peter Heffernan (kidney), Skerries, Co. Dublin

Harry Ward (kidney), Baldoyle, Co Dublin (**Team Captain**)

Sinead O'Regan, Rosscarbery, Co Cork (**Team Physio**)

Yvonne Ryan, Ballinagarde, Ballyneety, Co Limerick (**Team Doctor**)

Colin White, Irish Kidney Association, from Balbriggan, Co Dublin (**Team Manager**)

The Irish Kidney Association is responsible for managing Transplant Team Ireland's participation at the Games. Individual athletes have undertaken fundraising activities to offset some of the expenses incurred in travelling to and participating in the Games.

Messages of support are proudly posted on the team blog [www.transplantteamireland.ie](http://www.transplantteamireland.ie) Members of the public can also offer messages of support in its Guestbook.

For more information on the 19<sup>th</sup> World Transplant Games and Transplant Team Ireland, visit the team blog [www.transplantteamireland.ie](http://www.transplantteamireland.ie) (Twitter [www.twitter.com/teamireland1](https://www.twitter.com/teamireland1) Facebook [www.facebook.com/transplantteamireland](https://www.facebook.com/transplantteamireland) and follow trends on #wtg2013) and the World Transplant Games official event website [www.wtg2013.com](http://www.wtg2013.com)

*For organ donor cards Freetext DONOR to 50050 or contact the Irish Kidney Association on locall 1890 543639 or log on to [www.ika.ie](http://www.ika.ie) . You can now store your donor card details on your smart phone by downloading the free Organ Donor Ecard app.*

**-ENDS-**

**Flight information:** The team gathered for a pre-departure morning reception at the Clarion Hotel, Dublin Airport on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> July at 11am before departing on their flight to Durban via Dubai (Emirates Airlines EK 162Y) at 13.50.

They will return to Dublin airport (Terminal Two) on Monday, 5<sup>th</sup> August (flight from Dubai, Emirates Airlines EK 161Y) at 12.15.

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