

## **Irish Girl Guides press release**

12 December 2018

### **Irish Girl Guides' Chief named Trustee of the Year**

#### **- Helen Concannon's tireless work recognised at Charity Impact Awards –**

Irish Girl Guides throughout Ireland are celebrating the fact that their Chief Commissioner, Helen Concannon, was named Trustee of the Year at The Wheel's Charity Impact Awards, which took place in Dublin's Mansion House last night [11 December].

The Wheel – the national association of charities, community and voluntary organisations and social enterprises – established the Charity Impact Awards to celebrate the positive impact made in communities throughout Ireland by the country's 29,000 non-profit organisations. 104 organisations and volunteers were nominated for this year's awards and over 19,000 people voted for their favourite nominees.

"For all of us in Irish Girl Guides Helen is an inspiration," says Irish Girl Guides (IGG) President Maureen Murphy. "She has worked tirelessly to provide new, exciting opportunities for our members and volunteers enabling everyone to meet their full potential.

"She has overseen the implementation of policy changes making our organisation stronger and up to date with all our compliance obligations. She is a team leader, good at networking inside and outside Guiding, and promotes Irish Girl Guides at every opportunity. Helen is a volunteer and we are very proud that she has received this much deserved award."

Speaking following the ceremony, Ms Concannon said: "It was an honour to be nominated and shortlisted and an absolute privilege to be selected. Being a trustee has been a wonderful experience and an opportunity to give something back to the organisation that I joined as an eight-year-old Brownie.

"I would also like to pay tribute to my fellow volunteers and staff who make my job easy by being such a wonderful team. As a girl-led organisation, it is important that trustees listen to their members and respond to their needs."

Ms Concannon, who has been Chief Commissioner of IGG since April 2013, has worked hard to ensure the organisation remains current and relevant for the youth of today. She has ensured IGG's full compliance with the Governance Code for the community, voluntary and charitable sector, has overseen the development of a new award-winning website and has overseen the review and updating of all Leader resource books.

She has spearheaded a campaign to encourage girls to pursue Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) subjects and careers with over 500 IGG members participating in a Lego robotics initiative developed in partnership with Dublin City University. She has also overseen the development of a #FutureCEOs Cookie Project, which fosters business and entrepreneurial skills in girls from age five plus as they sell packets of

cookies in their local communities. She developed this initiative in partnership with Dragon's Den investor Alison Cowzer, who co-founded East Coast Bakehouse where the Irish Girl Guides cookies are made.

In 2016 Helen also came up with the innovative idea of a North to South Pole Trek to see if IGG members could walk 20,000 kilometres – the equivalent of walking from the North Pole to the South Pole. Girls and Leaders embraced this challenge so wholeheartedly that they succeeded in hiking a total of 40,000 kilometres, so it ended up as a Global Trek!

*Irish Girl Guides welcomes new members from age 5+ and new volunteer Leaders from age 18+. Previous Guiding experience is not necessary. To find out more, see [www.irishgirlguides.ie](http://www.irishgirlguides.ie) or tel: 01 6683898.*

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**Notes for editors:**

**Irish Girl Guides** has approximately 12,000 members. Guiding started in Ireland in 1911 and currently operates approximately 580 units throughout the 26 counties. 1,800 volunteer leaders provide an informal educational programme of fun and challenging activities that foster confidence and leadership skills in girls and young women, enabling them to develop to their full potential and to become responsible citizens. Girls from age five-plus can choose to earn a wide range of badges, including Community Action, Cultural Diversity, Disability Awareness, Drug Awareness, Engineering, Online Surfer, Science Investigator and Global Traveller.