

Irish Girl Guides press release

13 October 2019

- with photos sent to picture desks by Robbie Reynolds Photography

135 Girl Guides blaze a trail to Croke Park

- Teen girls receive Irish Girl Guides' Trail Blazer National Guide Award –

Over 130 Girl Guides received the Trail Blazer National Guide Award – Irish Girl Guides' highest award – at a special ceremony in Croke Park yesterday [12 October 2019].

The 135 girls aged 14-15 travelled from all corners of the country to receive the award and, with their families and Guide Leaders, celebrate reaching the pinnacle of Guiding.

Each girl received a Trail Blazer gold pin from Irish Girl Guides (IGG) President Maureen Murphy and a National Guide Award certificate from IGG Chief Commissioner Helen Concannon.

Congratulating the recipients, **IGG President Maureen Murphy** said, "It is a privilege to be here today to celebrate and acknowledge the achievements of our Trail Blazers who have all shown commitment in completing the challenges and, in doing so, putting your individual footprint on your tasks. You are inspirational, you will inspire younger members and take your learning and experiences gained into your communities and wider society."

IGG's Honorary Ambassador, Dr Niamh Shaw, said she was "especially excited" to attend the National Guide Awards to celebrate and acknowledge all the recipients' outstanding achievements and contributions to the Irish Girl Guides. "I want you to keep contributing your very best to everything you pursue in life because you are our future, Ireland's future," she said.

"We can create any future we want if we dream big enough and work hard enough," she continued. "I can already see that working hard comes easy to you all, so nothing can possibly stop you from becoming whatever you want in your life."

Zoe Burgess, a member of Ballybay Guides in Monaghan, was one of a number of Guides to speak during the ceremony. She said she had earned numerous badges during her four years as a Guide: "Some I worked on with a group and others individually. Some of the badges I earned were Guiding Traditions, Outdoor Cook, Campers Way, Drug Awareness, Disability Awareness, Global Traveller, Healthy Mind and, of course, everyone's favourite - the Chocolate badge, which teaches us the importance of supporting Fairtrade. I loved my time in Guides and hope to achieve many more badges now I am a Senior Brancher."

Cora Stronge-Smith, Assistant Chair of IGG Guide Branch, said that, without the hard work and commitment of the 135 girls, there would be no celebrations: "This award is made in recognition of the successful completion of a series of challenges, including teamwork activities, outdoor survival skills, community service, global awareness and working with

younger members of Irish Girl Guides to help them develop confidence, independence and essential life-skills.

“We are delighted for you all and we all know that you have worked to your fullest potential to receive this award and hope you continue to use many of the life-skills you have achieved wherever life takes you in the future.”

Irish Girl Guides welcomes new members from age 5+ and volunteer leaders from age 18+. Previous experience of Guiding is not necessary. To find out more, see www.irishgirlguides.ie. Tel: 01 6683898.

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Notes for editors:

Irish Girl Guides has around 11,000 members. Guiding started in Ireland in 1911 and operates throughout the 26 counties with 1,600 volunteer leaders providing 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 fullest potential and to become responsible citizens. There are four branches – Ladybirds (5-7 year olds), Brownies (7-10 year olds), Guides (10-14 year olds) and Senior Branch (14-30 year olds). Girls from age 5+ can choose to earn a wide range of badges, including Community Action, Cultural Diversity, Disability Awareness, Drug Awareness, Online Surfer, Science Investigator, Engineers and Global Traveller.