

Irish Girl Guides press release
20 February 2020

Girl Guides aim for the moon with new Mishon app!

**- Irish Girl Guides' members to walk, run, cycle, swim and kayak 363,104km
- the distance of the earth to the moon - to put girls in STEM on the map
with the help of a new app created by Irish tech entrepreneur Brendan Morrissey –**

**- New Mishon app will be launched on Saturday 22nd February 2020
at Dublin Institute of Advanced Studies (DIAS) Dunsink Observatory by astrophysicist
Prof Peter Gallagher and award-winning space communicator Dr Niamh Shaw -**

**- Irish Girl Guides seek sponsorship of €1 per km to raise €363,104
to kit out their new National Training Centre in Tallaght –**

Members of Irish Girl Guides (IGG) are setting out to complete 363,104 kilometres - the distance of the earth to the moon – in order to raise funds for their new National Training Centre in Tallaght.

Girls from age five up and their volunteer leaders will walk, run, cycle, swim, surf, kayak and undertake outdoor challenges over the next six months in order to raise €363,104 to kit out their newly-purchased premises in The Square Industrial Complex.

The centre is currently a blank canvas warehouse that will be converted into offices and training rooms with a Destination Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) lounge where girls and young women can develop their STEM skills and will discover how a career in STEM can lead to positive global impact.

They will keep track of their progress on a new Mishon app that will be launched this Saturday [22 February 2020] at the Dublin Institute of Advanced Studies (DIAS) Dunsink Observatory, Castleknock, by astrophysicist Prof Peter Gallagher of Trinity College Dublin and award-winning space communicator Dr Niamh Shaw.

The outdoor adventure app has been created by Irish tech entrepreneur Brendan Morrissey. Hearing about IGG's ambition to open a brand new training centre to facilitate its 11,000 members, Morrissey created a specific Mishon Moon section to the Mishon app where IGG members and supporters can upload their kilometres and undertake adventure challenges.

Speaking ahead of the launch, **Brendan Morrissey** said, "We're thrilled to be working with Irish Girl Guides and the Dublin Institute of Advanced Studies and supporting girls in STEM. Our core objective with Mishon is to get people active by creating daily challenges, dropping augmented reality crates around users to earn points and move up our leader-board to earn virtual badges.

“We’ve been working on this project for the past three years and we can’t think of a more fitting way to launch the app,” he continued. “We hope our involvement can assist IGG with their goal of fitting out their new National Training Centre over the coming months.”

IGG Chief Commissioner Amanda O’Sullivan said she was thrilled that Brendan Morrissey had chosen to partner with the organisation in their fundraising drive. “Our members are never afraid to take on a challenge,” she said. “However, €363,104 is a huge amount to raise and we are thankful to have the support of Brendan and his fantastic new app to help us reach our target. It’s an excellent example of using tech for good and enables us to also teach our members about using apps safely.

“We always encourage our members to undertake outdoor adventure challenges and to engage with STEM and our Mishon Moon initiative successfully combines both these areas while at the same time allowing us to fundraise for our new centre. We have outgrown our current premises and we believe the new facility will assist us in our aim to help girls grow in confidence, independence, resilience, teamwork and leadership skills and, ultimately, to empower the next generation of female leaders.

“We are keen to encourage our members to pursue STEM subjects in school and to consider careers in STEM. We have over 120 interest badges that girls can earn, which include STEM, Engineering, Science Investigator, Techno and Online Surfer. Thanks to an ongoing partnership with Dublin City University, hundreds of our members have taken part in LEGO Robotics courses during which they designed, built and programmed autonomous motorised LEGO. One challenge included using their robots to complete a series of tasks on a simulated moon surface, so they are no strangers to the topic!”

IGG Ambassador Dr Niamh Shaw, who is planning to get to space as a communicator and artist, said, “I love the notion of collectively getting to the Moon together using this app. Not only does it reflect the true spirit of all human space exploration, but also the ethos of the Irish Girl Guides. “I have had a fantastic time being the IGG Ambassador and will hopefully end magnificently this summer in achieving our space-themed fundraising goal,” she said.

“All of history's major achievements have succeeded from the shared passion and united will of thousands of people daring to dream bigger. It's fitting that the necessary funds for the new centre will be raised by this collective adventure mission and, coincidentally, reflects so much of what I try to communicate in my own personal work. I'm delighted to be involved.”

The Mishon Moon app has been trialled in recent weeks by Amanda’s local Guides in Lucan. “The girls love using it, especially for plotting their way, undertaking challenges, finding crates and earning virtual badges,” said Amanda. “We are in no doubt that other IGG members will enjoy it just as much and, in fact, that girls and young women across the world will love it too.

“We deliberately chose 22nd February to launch this initiative because it is World Thinking Day when the 10 million Girl Guides throughout the globe think of one another. We are

reaching out to our sister Girl Guides in 150 countries, asking them to help us reach our target by completing kilometres too.”

The Mishon app is free for anyone to download and Amanda said she hoped members of the public would also support IGG’s fundraising drive by doing kilometres and seeking sponsorship using the hashtags #GirlGuidesWalktotheMoon and #MishonMoon. She said, “This is a very exciting time in our organisation’s 109 year history and we hope as many people as possible will join us by downloading the Mishon app, clocking up kilometres and spreading the word to support our girls and young women.

“We will be crowdfunding €1 per kilometre with every kilometre tracked through the [Donate button on the Irish Girl Guides website](#),” said Amanda. “You’ll be able to watch the tracker as it rises and we get nearer to our 363,104km target!

“We are also inviting corporates to join us on our adventure to the Moon. They can help us reach our target by sponsoring an outdoor challenge on the app, by donating €1 per kilometre or by becoming a title sponsor with full app takeover until Mishon Moon is completed and a branded dedicated area in the National Training Centre in Tallaght.”

Irish Girl Guides welcomes new youth members from age 5-30 and volunteers from age 18+. No previous Guiding experience is necessary and training and ongoing support is provided. To find out more, see www.irishgirlguides.ie or 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 1,500 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 full potential and to become responsible citizens. Girls from age 5+ can choose to earn a wide range of badges, including Aviation, Climate Action, Community Action, Cultural Diversity, Disability Awareness, Drug Awareness, Engineering, Europe, Responsible Consumerism, Science Investigator, STEM and Global Traveller.

