



Irish Girl Guides press release
Friday 5 March 2021

Irish Girl Guides Choose To Challenge to mark International Women's Day

- Girls and young women are challenging gender inequality, gender-based violence, climate change, malnutrition and other injustices –

- Irish Girl Guides and International Women's Day both celebrate 110 years of empowering girls and women this year -

Members of Irish Girl Guides (IGG) are among 10 million girls and women across 152 countries taking part in a Choose To Challenge campaign ahead of International Women's Day (IWD) this Monday 8 March 2021.

As part of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS), a partner organisation with IWD, IGG members are joining a global call to end gender bias, discrimination and inequality around the world.

Girl Guides are taking up the 2021 IWD theme of Choose To Challenge by sharing #ChooseToChallenge posts on social media saying what injustice they are choosing to tackle. These include gender inequality, gender-based violence, climate change, plastic pollution, period poverty, malnutrition and other areas where they see injustice.

IGG volunteer Jemma Lee, who is a WAGGGS Ambassador for IWD this year, says Girl Guides are encouraged from a young age to think for themselves, to advocate for change and to transform challenge into change. She says, "IWD provides us with a platform and opportunity to celebrate the achievements of girls and women but also to come together across sectors to raise awareness of the need for greater progress. We are looking forward to sharing what our members will Choose to Challenge this year.

"Personally, I #ChooseToChallenge gender inequality. This might sound like a huge thing, but really we're doing it every week at our Guide meetings. Every time we ask a girl to be a patrol leader, we are empowering a future female leader. Every time we do activities for the STEM, Aviation and Engineering badges, we are breaking down stereotypes and encouraging girls to explore the full range of their skills and talents.

"Every year our members get involved in IWD," she continued, "And this year is a special one as both IGG and IWD are celebrating 110 years of empowering girls and women!"

Rachael Woods (age 14), an IGG member from Drogheda, is choosing to challenge the stigma of mental health issues facing teens. She says, "I believe that many teenagers are having issues with their mental health through the trials and tribulations of Covid lockdowns. Many are suffering in silence. I want to find new ways to give them a voice and show them how to find resources to help. We are all in this together."

IGG is holding a **Soul Sisters well-being and resilience event** on their [YouTube channel](#) from 12-1pm on Saturday 6 March. Members of the public are invited to join them in taster sessions of tai chi and

chair yoga as well as warm-ups and stretches with IGG's Honorary Ambassador, hockey trail-blazer Shirley McCay. Joanna Fortune of *Newstalk FM* will also share tips for well-being and resilience. A recording of the event will be available on YouTube following the event.

Irish Girl Guides welcomes members from age 5+ and volunteer leaders from age 18+. To find out more, see www.irishgirlguides.ie or tel: 01 6683898.

ENDS

Photo captions:

Jemma Lee, who is one of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts' Ambassadors for International Women's Day 2021, striking the Choose To Challenge pose. Jemma is choosing to challenge gender inequality and will be joined by Irish Girl Guides across the country who also #ChooseToChallenge.

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Notes for editors:

Irish Girl Guides - 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 full potential and to become responsible citizens. Girls from age 5+ can choose to earn a wide range of badges, including Aviation, Community Action, Cultural Diversity, Disability Awareness, Drug Awareness, Engineering, STEM, Science Investigator, Climate Action and Global Traveller. www.irishgirlguides.ie