

**Irish Girl Guides press release**

6 April 2021

## **Irish Girl Guides' mental health programme receives boost from ESB Energy For Generations Fund**

**- €10,000 grant will support mental health programme for five to 30-year-olds –**

Members of Irish Girl Guides (IGG) were delighted to hear ahead of World Health Day [7 April] that their youth mental health programme is to receive a boost of €10,000 from the ESB Energy for Generations Funding.

The grant will go directly towards promoting positive mental health for youth members by upskilling volunteer leaders in delivering the IGG Healthy Mind programme, by sponsoring 3,000 Healthy Mind badges for girls and young women aged five to 30 and by funding a special mental health edition of the IGG magazine *Trefoil News*.

To earn a Healthy Mind badge, youth members complete the IGG Healthy Mind programme, which involves age-appropriate activities that help them develop positive mental health. Ladybirds (aged five to seven) and Brownies (aged seven to 10) are encouraged to identify positive qualities in themselves, discuss feelings and express them appropriately. They learn various relaxation techniques, including mindfulness and yoga.

Guides (aged 10-14) and Senior Branch members (aged 14-30) learn strategies for dealing with different emotions and how to identify signs of stress in themselves and ways to deal with these stresses. They also learn positive communication skills, including how to give affirmations to others and how to accept them in return.

**IGG Chief Commissioner Amanda O'Sullivan** said, "We were delighted to be awarded €10,000 through the ESB Energy For Generations Fund. This money will be put to good use in promoting the mental health of our youth members. Covid-19 has impacted children and young people at least as much, if not more, than older generations. They need our support now more than ever and our Healthy Mind programme gives them the tools they need to cope in times of adversity and to enable them to reach their full potential, no matter the circumstances."

**Emma Dowd (age 12), an IGG member in Carrigaline, Cork**, said, "The Healthy Mind programme helps us discover amazing things about ourselves and to know that unusual feelings are completely normal and how to deal with those feelings in a healthy way, like talking to someone."

**Emma Lynch (age 7), also an IGG member in Carrigaline**, said, "To earn the Healthy Mind badge, we learned that no matter what feelings you have, you can talk to somebody about it. And you can do breathing techniques, yoga and exercise to help too."

**Fergal Fitzgerald, Electric Aid Group CSR Co-ordinator**, said, "Through our Energy for Generations Fund, our aim is to support organisations such as Irish Girl Guides and the important work they do in promoting positive mental health. We commend them on the roll out of the Healthy Mind programme, and we are proud to support this initiative. Each year ESB's Energy for Generation Fund contributes €1m to organisations working in the areas of suicide prevention, homelessness and educational access and support."

*Irish Girl Guides welcomes youth members from age five-plus and adult volunteers from age 18+. No previous Guiding experience is necessary and ongoing training and support is provided. For further information, see [www.irishgirlguides.ie](http://www.irishgirlguides.ie) or tel: 01 6683898.*

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**Notes for editors:**

**Irish Girl Guides** has approximately 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 full potential and to become responsible citizens. Girls from age 5+ can choose to earn a wide range of badges, including Community Action, Climate Action, Cultural Diversity, Disability Awareness, Drug Awareness, Engineering, Europe, Science Investigator, STEM and Global Traveller. [www.irishgirlguides.ie](http://www.irishgirlguides.ie)