



NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 001 APRIL 2024

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January 5th, 2024:

- €1,000 - Mary Knott
- €500 - Trevor & Isobel Bourke
- €250 - Julie Frain

February 2nd, 2024:

- €1,000 - Pat Devine
- €500 - Teresa Prendergast
- €250 - Anne Molloy

March 1st, 2024:

- €1,000 - Mary Rafferty
- €500 - Mary Gannon
- €250 - Mary Regan

Don't forget...the monthly draw is the first Friday of every month...and you've got to be in it to win it!

Next Draw: Friday, April 5th.

Sign up today. Call **094 93 88666**, email draw@hospice.ie, enter online at www.hospice.ie/draw or call into any of our 12 Hospice Shops.



Mayo Roscommon Hospice CEO Martina Jennings, pictured with the Virginia Gallagher Mayo Person of the Year 2024, Rita Casey, at the Mayo Association luncheon in Dublin.

Mayo Person of the Year, Rita Casey

Inspirational, brave and truly amazing...the words don't even come close to describing this year's recipient of the Virginia Gallagher Mayo Person of the Year Award.

A hugely popular winner, Charlestown's Rita Casey was presented with the prestigious accolade at the annual Mayo Association luncheon in Dublin in recent weeks. The mum-of-three was lauded for her relentless courage and positivity, as she continues to battle cancer, endure treatment, and always maintain a smile.

Rita was first diagnosed with cancer back in September 2017, but has always faced her challenges head on. She has continued to pursue her passion for running, continuing to take to the roads during her darkest times to help maintain her mental health and try to live as normal a life as possible. She was also instrumental in forming the East Mayo Athletics Club in Charlestown, which now boasts more than 200 members.

Having undergone gruelling treatment and chemotherapy following her initial diagnosis, Rita was determined to be a positive role model for her three young daughters, teaching them how to approach the biggest battles of life. In 2020, she suffered a major setback when she was told the cancer had returned - this time, stage four inoperable brain and lung cancer.

Determined to live life as best she could, Rita began to work towards her next run and despite facing ongoing difficult treatment, she started to focus on regaining her fitness and stamina. Adamant she wouldn't let her stage four terminal diagnosis define her, she decided - on the off chance - to enter for the Dublin City Marathon last year. In October 2023, she took part in her second Dublin City Marathon, while in remission, and raised a staggering €22,300 for the Mayo Roscommon Hospice Foundation in the process. Moreover, she ran the marathon in just over four hours and was the recipient of the Lord Mayor of Dublin Medal, which is presented to just one runner out of 22,000 participants.

Paying tribute to Rita, Mayo Roscommon Hospice CEO, Martina Jennings, said there had seldom been a more worthy recipient of any accolade. "I am so delighted to see Rita receiving this award and to be present with her on the day. It was incredibly well deserved. We were so proud to see her complete last year's Marathon despite some really huge challenges. She is an absolute inspiration and we are incredibly thankful for all she has done for us. Rita, John, and their three girls, are always in our thoughts," she added.

Together We Can Do So Much

To support our services, visit www.hospice.ie/donate

A Message from our CEO, Martina Jennings

Welcome to our first Newsletter of 2024. I want to start by thanking you all for your ongoing support, which enables us to continue to fund, provide, and develop Palliative Care Services across our region. Without your help, we simply would not be able to continue our vital work in caring for patients and their families across both Mayo and Roscommon.

2023 was an extremely busy year again for our services, both in the community and through our Hospices. To put this into context, our Community Homecare teams received 739 new referrals last year, and we provided Family Support to 67 families. This included Home Help, Night Nursing and financial support.

In addition to our work in the community, there were 258 admissions to the Mayo Hospice last year, and 72 attendances at Day Care. We were delighted to open the doors of our Roscommon Hospice to patients in February 2023, and we looked after 124 patients at the new unit last year.

In both Mayo and Roscommon, our staff in the community and in our Hospices provide care and compassion to all of our patients and their families, and we are incredibly proud of the service they provide. Our Hospices ensure that this care and support is provided in a private and dignified space. One of the constant messages we receive back from families is that our staff made them feel so safe and we are lucky to have such a wonderful team across all of our services in Mayo and Roscommon.

I cannot stress enough that this service would not be possible without the support of so many of you. Whether you organised a fundraiser, donated online or through our Hospices, or supported our shops in any way, we are incredibly grateful.

I hope you enjoy the new look of our Newsletter, and I look forward to updating you again in June.

Warm wishes,

Martina Jennings

Martina Jennings

Chief Executive Officer

Together We Can Do So Much

Sharing the Shamrock...Castlerea Prison donates shamrock crop to Mayo Roscommon Hospice for St Patrick's Day fundraiser

Mayo Roscommon Hospice received a phone call in January from Castlerea Prison. On the other end of the line was Prison Officer, Mark Walsh (Chief Officer II Work and Training) and he had some great news to share.

The prisoners had grown a large quantity of shamrock and wanted to donate it to Hospice for sale around St Patrick's Day.

Naturally, we were thrilled with the offer and in early March, some staff and volunteers from Mayo Roscommon Hospice visited the Prison. Met at the door by Prison Officers, the group was invited to the Boardroom where they were introduced to the Prison Governor, Teresa Beirne.

Teresa gave an informed explanation of the workings of the prison, before leading the group to the polytunnels to see the shamrocks and meet the 15 prisoners that had been tending to them. It was a really interesting and insightful experience for all.

Later in March, Mayo Roscommon Hospice sent vehicles to the Prison to collect the shamrocks, which looked vibrant and healthy, stacked in pristine white cardboard crates. The shamrocks were initially distributed to our 12 Hospice Shops in Mayo and Roscommon, and also delivered to various retail outlets across the two counties.

In the week leading up to St Patrick's Day, there was an extra effort made to sell the shamrocks, with our brilliant volunteers stepping up and selling them in supermarkets across the region.

A special word of thanks to all at Castlerea Prison for their generosity, and of course to our wonderful volunteers who are always willing to roll up their sleeves and get involved.



Mary Gormley and John Russell selling the shamrocks

Celebrating success – Roscommon Hospice Unit marks first birthday

Roscommon Palliative Care Unit marked its first anniversary in operation earlier this year, having provided invaluable care and support to a large number of patients and their families since its opening in February 2023.

The eight-bed inpatient facility also offers full day-care services and was built on a site purchased by the Mayo Roscommon Hospice Foundation.

Both Mayo and Roscommon Hospice Units were developed and paid for by fundraised income, at a combined cost of €15.5 million. Officially opened last year by Health Minister Stephen Donnelly, the Roscommon Unit was completed at a cost of €6.3m. Needless to say, neither would be in place and operational today, were it not for the amazing support shown by the people of Mayo and Roscommon.



Celebrating one year of Roscommon Hospice pictured were, left-right: Ursula Morgan (Director of Nursing, RUH), Martina Jennings (CEO), Mike Smith (Chairperson), Geraldine Keane (Assistant Director of Nursing, RUH), Carol Duggan (Clinic Nurse Manager, RUH), and Marie Doorly (Interim General Manager, RUH).

The Roscommon Hospice is under the governance and operational management of Roscommon University Hospital (RUH), and patients in the Hospice, and their families, have access to care from a range of specialist medical, nursing, health and social care professionals. The Roscommon Palliative Home Care Team, which is under the governance of HSE Community Healthcare West, is based in Roscommon Hospice and works closely with the Unit's inpatient team.

At Roscommon Hospice, the care is fully patient-centred, and is delivered with kindness, consideration and empathy. The environment is one of care and putting the needs of the patient first. The surroundings are relaxing, welcoming and homely, providing an appropriate space for relatives and friends to

gather to support their loved ones.

"It is the day-to-day fundraising carried out in local communities that keeps the Hospice functioning," acknowledged Mayo Roscommon Hospice CEO, Martina Jennings. "We are committed to continuing to fund, support and develop this, along with funding our community palliative care service."

"The staff at Hospice and in our communities go above and beyond for our patients and their families, and we have the best facilities where patients are cared for with dignity and respect. As we celebrate our first birthday, I want to thank all our supporters, volunteers, fundraisers and donors, as well as the team at RUH for their ongoing incredible work," she added.



*A group of friends (20 in total) from around the country climbed Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania in January this year, in aid of Mayo Roscommon Hospice. The group are raising funds through their **Go Fund Me** page and have already surpassed €12,000.*

Ladies Who Lunch

We are so looking forward to our annual fundraising Ladies Lunch at The Lodge at Ashford Castle in Cong, Co Mayo, on Friday, April 19th.

Our Special Guest this year is the fabulous Miriam O'Callaghan, with Dr Mary Ryan (Consultant Endocrinologist and renowned international speaker) as our guest speaker. Our very own Laurita Blewitt will be MC, while Niamh Ryan (joint founder of the amazing Mayo skincare brand Ella and Jo) will educate us on all things skincare. Music will be by the brilliant Kate Heneghan and Galway Tenors, while Mandy Maher from Catwalk Model Agency will lead a stunning fashion show, in association with Carraig Donn. There will be a drinks reception, dinner, goodie bags, a raffle, and guaranteed entertainment throughout the afternoon.

If you didn't manage to get tickets for this year's Ladies Lunch, make sure it's the last one you miss!

Upcoming Fundraisers in Mayo and Roscommon



- **Friday, April 5th** – Monthly Lotto Draw, enter online at www.hospice.ie/draw or call into any of our 12 Hospice Shops
- **Saturday, April 6th** – Car Wash at Crossmolina Fire Station, Mayo
- **Saturday, April 13th** – Westport Marathon, Mayo (individual participants)
- **Friday, April 16th** – Ladies Lunch in The Lodge at Ashford Castle, Mayo
- **Saturday, April 20th** – Kiltoom Concert in Roscommon with St Brigid’s Choir and Mayo Men’s Choir
- **Sunday, April 21st** – Afternoon Tea Party (2pm) in Jack’s Cottage, Islandeady, Mayo (Booking essential: 087 126 1989)
- **Thursday, May 2nd** – Balla Golf Club Event, Mayo
- **Friday, May 3rd** – Monthly Lotto Draw, enter online at www.hospice.ie/draw or call into any of our 12 Hospice Shops
- **Saturday, May 4th** – Tóchar Phádraig Walk (joint fundraiser for Mayo Roscommon Hospice and GOAL), starting at Ballintubber Abbey at 6.30am. For more, call Robbie on 086 823 3330
- **Sunday, May 5th** – Western People West of Ireland Women’s Mini Marathon, Ballina, Mayo (individual participants)
- **Sunday, June 2nd** – VHI Women’s Mini Marathon, Dublin (individual participants)
- **Friday, June 6th** – Monthly Lotto Draw, enter online at www.hospice.ie/draw or call into any of our 12 Hospice Shops
- **Friday and Saturday, June 6th and 7th** – National Sunflower Days for Mayo Roscommon Hospice, across both counties

Please note, dates and details relating to these fundraisers were correct at the time of publication, but like all events, are subject to change. For further information on these fundraisers and others, or to get involved, please call 094 938 8666 or email info@hospice.ie



Thought For The Day

Can I help in any way? Could I spare an hour or two to help in my community on National Sunflower Days (Friday and Saturday, June 7th and 8th) for Mayo Roscommon Hospice?

Any time you can spare over the course of those two days would be much appreciated. Help out in your local town, or wherever suits you best.

Contact us and help make a difference to someone living with a life-limiting illness who needs our care. Call us today on 094 93 88666 or email info@hospice.ie

Would You Meet Me On Clare Island?

If you’ve visited Clare Island, you’ll know all about its stunning landscape and welcoming community. If you haven’t, then it’s time to make that change. Join our annual Clare Island Walk in memory of Kathleen Conneely on Saturday, June 22nd.

For more information, call us on 094 93 88666 or email info@hospice.ie



Ann Hogan, Mayo Roscommon Hospice Shop in Roscommon

Volunteer Focus: Meet Ann Hogan

“There were days I could only sit, but meeting the volunteers and staff was great for me” – Ann Hogan

It's 14 years since Ann Hogan first walked through the doors of the Hospice shop in Roscommon Town and offered her services as a volunteer. At the time, she had just retired and was looking for a hobby or activity to pass a few hours. Ann used to meet a friend of hers for dinner and a catch-up a few times a week and together, they decided to put their free time to good use, and give a helping hand in the Hospice shop.

It was great to volunteer as friends, and to work together for a worthy cause. Sadly, Ann's friend became ill and passed away five years ago, but by then, Ann was very much part and parcel of the shop in Roscommon and although she missed having her friend at her side, she continued volunteering because she loves it so much.

Unfortunately, Ann has had to deal with her own challenges too but since becoming ill in 2021, her voluntary work has been a wonderful distraction. “I felt unwell at the opening of the Roscommon Hospice and had to be taken home. I went to hospital on the following Monday and was diagnosed shortly after that,” she recalled.

In January 2022, Ann had major surgery, with her gallbladder, one kidney, her pancreas and a tumour on her bile duct removed. As if that wasn't enough, she also contracted several infections, including sepsis, and was hospitalised almost every three or four weeks.

“I lost over five stone in weight and I was very ill, but I still loved coming into the shop and volunteering. There were days I could only sit down, but meeting the volunteers and staff was great for me. It meant I could stop thinking about it all for a short time,” Ann explained

A few months ago, Ann suffered another setback when she had a stroke. There were two clots but the biggest one shattered. “Only this week, the doctors told me I would have been paralysed if it hadn't shattered,” she added.

Ann is getting palliative care now and is still on treatment. But even the chemo doesn't keep her from volunteering. “I'm having chemo while we're speaking here. It will be coming off tomorrow, but I just love coming in here. It does me good every time,” she beamed.

As brave as she is generous with her time, Ann is meeting her illness head on, and is delighted to be still volunteering with Mayo Roscommon Hospice. “I know that I will probably end up in the Hospice, but it feels good to have helped fundraise, and getting the Hospice built was great. I love working here and meeting the people, and I'm hoping to keep going for a long time yet,” Ann smiled.



Bernard Tansey and family are pictured here presenting a cheque to Marie McGuinness from Mayo Roscommon Hospice.

Massey Raffle

Bernard Tansey from Castlebar donated a Massey Ferguson, in memory of his wife Gwen, hosting an online raffle for the tractor to raise funds for Mayo Roscommon Hospice. The family managed to raise more than €15,000 through the online raffle.



Did you know?

Our Palliative Homecare teams looked after 739 new referrals in 2023 (517 in Mayo and 222 in Roscommon). Of these, there were 411 with cancer (273 in Mayo, 138 in Roscommon), and 328 non-cancer referrals (244 in Mayo, 84 in Roscommon).

The Mayo Roscommon Hospice Foundation provided Family Support to 67 families in 2023. This included Home Help, Night Nursing and financial support.

In 2023, there were 258 admissions to the Mayo Hospice, and 72 attendances at Day Care.





Members of Roscommon Drama Group presenting a €1,500 cheque to Mayo Roscommon Hospice CEO, Martina Jennings – the proceeds from a raffle held at their recent production of Calendar Girls. Pictured left-right: Bernadette Stapleton, Dermot Cox, Margaret Madden, Martina Jennings, Kieran Madden, Bernie Maher and Sylvia Kílcine.



Padraig Walsh raised €7229.98 online in memory of David Walsh and Cian Geraghty. Padraig is pictured here with family and friends presenting the cheque to Mayo Roscommon Board Director Seamus Moran



Martin Geraghty presenting a cheque to Marie McGuinness (Mayo Roscommon Hospice) from funds raised at Flynn's Bar Castlebar through the Michael Geraghty Memorial Cup Darts competition. The event raised €500 for Mayo Roscommon Hospice. Pictured left-right: Michael Ruane, Martin Geraghty, Marie McGuinness and Tony Flynn.

Did you know?

The Roscommon Hospice opened in 2023, and looked after 124 patients in total last year.



Ann Sherlock, Mayo Roscommon Hospice Shop in Roscommon

Volunteer Focus: Meet Ann Sherlock

“People stop and talk to me on the street...they know me from the shop” – Ann Sherlock

Ann Sherlock first arrived at the Mayo Roscommon Hospice Shop in Roscommon Town as part of a Back-to-Work Scheme some eight years ago. What began as a one-year placement soon took on a life of its own, and Ann has been a welcoming face in the store almost every day since.

A native of Dublin, she moved to Roscommon 20 years ago and thoroughly enjoys working in the Hospice shop. “I love volunteering. It gives me a reason to get dressed up, put on some makeup, and head out of the house,” she explained.

Getting involved with the charity was one of the best things Ann has ever done. “It has been great for me. Before I started volunteering in the shop, I knew no one and really only spoke to my own family. Since I started volunteering here, I know lots of people. People stop and talk to me on the street now; they know me from the shop,” she continued.

As well as helping such a worthy cause, Ann really enjoys her time in the store. “I love the work, of course, but I also love chatting to the other volunteers and the staff. We work away and have a laugh at the same time. It really never feels like work,” Ann added.



Well-established Roscommon store marks 15 years in business in 2024

The Hospice store in Roscommon Town has long been a focal point in the community and later this year, will mark an impressive 15 years in business. Located in the Castle Street carpark, opposite Hynes' Pharmacy, the shop is home to an eclectic mix of clothes, household items, and other products, and is a regular haunt for its diverse international community, both from a donor and a consumer perspective.

Despite welcoming a mix of clientele through its doors each week, women's clothing remains a best seller, followed by men's attire and then bric-a-brac. Children's clothes are another big seller in Roscommon, and of course shoes, jewellery, handbags and accessories will always be in demand.

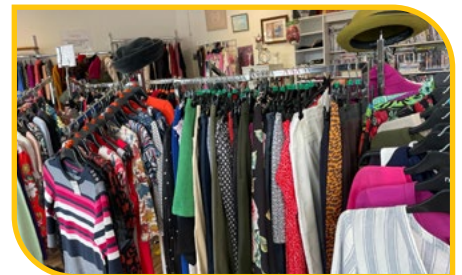
When it comes to the bric-a-brac section, there's really something to suit all tastes. All sorts of household items arrive on the shelves in Roscommon, and if you're on the hunt for cutlery, ornaments, fine china, placemats, cups, saucers or anything else for the kitchen cupboards, look no further than the Mayo Roscommon Hospice shop.

According to Kathy Grogan, Area Manager for the Hospice Shops across the two counties, it's always interesting when there's a new consumer trend, and the shops tend to follow suit. "In all of our shops, Roscommon included, we find that

donations and demands are in line with societal trends. For instance, there's a good demand at present for vinyl and old records," she explained.

Despite always receiving great support from the community in Roscommon, there's always need for more, and the Hospice shop would be delighted to see new donations come through the doors, as well as new customers.

"Every single euro that we raise through our stores is so important, helping to fund our palliative care and to keep our services and our Hospice going in the county. From providing funding for the home palliative care team, to helping with the maintenance costs and services at our Hospices in Roscommon and Mayo, every single donation and cent raised counts," Kathy added.



Of course, volunteers are hugely important when it comes to keeping the shops up and running and Mayo Roscommon Hospice simply could not manage without its volunteers. In the Roscommon Town store alone, there are 16 volunteers, but of course, there's always room for more. "Our volunteers keep our shops alive and for many, there's a vital social side to it too. People get involved for all sorts of reasons and often, they come for one reason and stay for another," Kathy explained.

If you're in Roscommon and you have clothes or other items that you'd like to donate to Mayo Roscommon Hospice, please get in touch or pop into the store. The Roscommon Hospice Shop is located in the Castle Street carpark (opposite Hynes' Pharmacy), 15 Castle Street, Ballypheasan, Roscommon Town, F42NR79.

Breedge and Joe lead the way with St Brigid's Crosses for Hospice

If we look back to our school days, the chances are, we all remember learning to make St Brigid's Crosses.

It was a lovely tradition and the crosses sat proudly in our homes for many months – often only replaced 12 months later when a new creation came home in our schoolbags. For one Claremorris couple, however, the tradition never dwindled, with Mayo Roscommon Hospice benefiting greatly as a result.

This year, Breedge and Joe Nolan made more than 1,400 crosses for sale in the run up to St Brigid's Day, raising a massively impressive €4,500 for palliative care services in the process. And, as if the 1,400 crosses weren't enough to make, Breedge even held

a one-day training event in the Claremorris Family Resource Centre, showing others how to make them too.

For the last number of years, Breedge and Joe have been going to their local fields each January, harvesting the rushes required to make the St Brigid's Crosses. They then clean and sort the rushes, with only the very best crop making the cut. Needless to say, this in itself is no small task, and once the rushes are sorted, they are placed into crates ready to be transformed.

For St Brigid's Day this year, more than 1,400 crosses were distributed in shops throughout Claremorris, while additional volunteers were also engaged to help sell them in local supermarkets.

Looking to the future, Breedge – who is also a Hospice Shop volunteer – would love to



Breedge and Joe Nolan with their crates of St Brigid's Crosses

expand the project even further in 2025, with a view to having enough St Brigid's Day Crosses to sell across all 12 of our Hospice Shops throughout Mayo and Roscommon. She's definitely a woman on a mission... watch this space!

A huge thank you to Breedge and Joe for their incredible efforts, and indeed to all the volunteers who helped sell the Crosses.

Annual Sunflower Days take place in June

It's hard to believe we're approaching that time of the year again, but at Mayo Roscommon Hospice, we're already gearing up for our National Sunflower Days.

Taking place on Friday and Saturday, June 7th and 8th, these are two really important fundraising days for us and your support would be greatly appreciated.

Across the two days, volunteers will be present across both Mayo and Roscommon selling Sunflower pins, pens, trolley tokens and teddies. Whether you can spare a few euro or a few hours, we welcome all support. Remember – every euro raised locally, stays

locally. This means that your donation will go directly to your local hospice in Mayo and Roscommon, so that we can continue to provide person-centred, holistic, loving care to our patients and their loved ones.

If you can spare a couple of hours on either Friday or Saturday, June 7th or 8th, we would absolutely love to hear from you. Call us today on 094 938 8666 or email info@hospice.ie

SUNFLOWER DAYS

7TH & 8TH JUNE 2024



Ashford Castle selects Mayo Roscommon Hospice as Charity of the Year

We are delighted to announce that Ashford Castle and The Lodge at Ashford have chosen Mayo Roscommon Hospice as their 2024 Charity of the Year.

Receiving support like this is hugely important to us and we are extremely grateful to the team at Ashford for selecting us this year.

The Mayo Roscommon Hospice Foundation funds, supports and delivers palliative care services in Mayo and Roscommon all through fundraised income. It is important to note that 100% of fundraised income goes back into our palliative care services, and indeed that our services are free and available to everybody who needs them in our region.

Would your company or organisation like to partner with Mayo Roscommon Hospice and to help fundraise for the vital services we provide across the region? If so, we'd love to hear from you. Call us today on 094 93 88666 or email info@hospice.ie