



MAYO ROSCOMMON HOSPICE FOUNDATION



NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 007 APRIL 2025

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...And so
much more

Monthly Draw Results

March 2025:

- €1,000 - Mary McGing
- €500 - Ann Murphy
- €250 - Marian McGovern

April 2025:

- €1,000 - Nina Pilbrow
- €500 - Mary Hoare
- €250 - Kathleen McDonagh

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, May 2nd.

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.



At the Launch of Sunflower Days 2025 at the Mayo Roscommon Hospice Foundation's Ladies Lunch in Cong; Laurita Blewitt, Martina Jennings, Prof Afif El Khuffash and Miriam O'Callaghan. Photo: Michael McLaughlin

Sunflower Days fundraiser plans unveiled at Ladies Lunch in Cong

The sunflowers were in full bloom at Mayo Roscommon Hospice Foundation's Ladies Lunch in Cong on April 11th, and with the sun beaming down, it proved the perfect occasion to launch the 2025 Sunflower Days.

A hugely important annual fundraiser for the charity, this year's National Sunflower Days for Hospice will take place on Friday and Saturday, June 6th and 7th. On each of the days, volunteers will be present in shops and on the streets - weather permitting - all over Mayo and Roscommon, and your support would be greatly appreciated.

Right now, the Mayo Roscommon Hospice Foundation is also looking for volunteers to get involved. If you can give a few hours of your time on June 6th or 7th, please get in touch today. Simply call 094 938 8666 or email info@hospice.ie.

As always, there will be lots of gorgeous sunflower products to choose from, including tote bags, sunflower seeds, pens, coffee cups and lots more. Remember, your donation will go directly to your local hospice in Mayo and Roscommon, to enable Mayo Roscommon Hospice Foundation to continue to provide person-centred, holistic, loving care to patients and their loved ones.



If you're not around on June 6th or 7th, but you'd still like to support the Sunflower Days, you can donate online at www.hospice.ie/donate or by calling the office on 094 938 8666

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 second Newsletter of 2025! It has been a really busy couple of months in both our Mayo Hospice and Roscommon Hospice, as well as in the Community Palliative Care Services.

We held our Annual Ladies Lunch fundraiser on April 11th 2025 in The Lodge at Ashford Castle, and the event was a resounding success. We were blessed with beautiful weather, and we were so lucky to have such inspirational guests speaking on the day.

Our Annual Sunflower Days fundraiser takes place on June 6th and 7th this year, and we are so grateful to all our volunteers throughout both counties, who help us out on these busy days.

As always, thanks so much to all of you who have held fundraisers so far this year. We don't take it for granted that you do this in your own time, and it is because of people like you that we have two state-of-the-art hospices in our region, along with an amazing community palliative care service.

Best wishes,



Martina Jennings
 Chief Executive Officer

Together We Can Do So **Much**

“I am immensely proud of what we have achieved” – Paul Foxe

Roscommon's Paul Foxe has been involved with the Board of the Mayo Roscommon Hospice Foundation since late 2012 and is immensely proud of all that has been achieved during this time.

A chartered accountant and chartered tax advisor, from just outside Roscommon town, Paul first got involved with the organisation after being approached by Oliver McGuinness, who is currently the longest serving member of the Board.

“At the time, the Board largely consisted of pharmacists and medical professionals and they were looking to fill a gap, so to speak, in the finance and governance sector. I had recently started my own business, and Oliver approached me to see if I would be interested in getting involved. Immediately, I was eager to do whatever I could to help. Once he knew I was interested, he brought the suggestion to the Board and I was ratified towards the end of 2012,” he recalled.

Like all his fellow Board members, Paul leads a busy personal and professional life, but is always more than happy to dedicate time to the organisation. Paul and his wife Aidín, who also hails from Roscommon, have five small children – Seoidín (7), Donncha (5), Siún (3), Iarlaith (2), and Sadhbh (3 months). And so, when it comes to this Roscommon man, there's certainly truth in the old saying...if you want something done, ask a busy person!

For Paul, there is great satisfaction in knowing that you're making a real difference. “I often speak with groups and various fundraisers and one of things I always say is that their efforts are so important to the organisation. Whether they're raising €30, €300, €3,000 or €30,000 – every single euro is so important. Every effort and every bit of support we receive from local fundraisers goes towards providing palliative care services for people in their community; people they know,” he said.

Of course, one of the proudest moments for Paul over the last few years was the opening of the Roscommon Hospice. “It was an incredibly proud day for all of us. For a long time, we were talking about a dedicated Hospice facility for Roscommon so it was really fantastic to get that over the line,” Paul remarked.

“As a Board and as an organisation, we are constantly fundraising for the provision of vital services in our communities, so to now have that physical space in Roscommon – and indeed in Mayo – is so important. Of course, there's the incredible benefit to patients and their families, but also, it helps



Paul Foxe, Member of Mayo Roscommon Hospice Foundation Board

communities all over the region understand and appreciate the need for our ongoing fundraising activities,” he reasoned.

“Being involved with the Mayo Roscommon Hospice Foundation and knowing that you're actually making a real difference is something that we're all really proud of. I am immensely proud of what we've achieved, and of the truly wonderful services being provided by our hospice care teams throughout counties Mayo and Roscommon,” Paul added.



Sheila and ‘Senior Strong’ ladies gear up for Camino Frances

An amazing group of Castlerea women will take Camino Frances by storm this month. Covering more than 125km in just six days, this inspirational group – who are aged from their 40s to their 80s – will prove that age is no barrier once you train and adapt a positive mental attitude.

The Camino Challenge was the brainchild of Sheila Rose, who runs The Workshop in Castlerea – a fitness studio focussed on pilates and yoga. Sheila has years of experience working in the field of personal training and, during one of the ‘Senior Strong’ classes around this time last year, the seed was sown.

At the time, Sheila had just returned from a solo Camino and was telling the group about her experience. In conversation, a few of the ladies expressed an interest in taking on a Camino Challenge and the rest, as they say, is history.

In May 2024, the ladies began to work towards their goal, following a training plan to gradually increase the length and number

of walks. After almost a year of planning and training, Sheila and 14 amazing ladies are ready to set off on their French adventure.

The ladies will walk more than 125km of the Camino Frances this month – also known as St James’ Way – and in so doing, will fundraise for Mayo Roscommon Hospice Foundation and Cancer Care West. All funds raised will go directly to the two local charities.

Not surprisingly, Sheila is immensely proud of the effort, dedication, and training the ladies have undertaken ahead of embarking on Camino Frances, and she hopes this wonderful group of ladies will be an inspiration to others.

A challenging route with roads, lanes, trails, some mighty hills...and of course, the fatigue of walking day after day... the Castlerea ladies will take the following route:

Day 1: Sarria to Portomarin

Day 2: Portomarin to Palas de Rei

Day 3: Palas de Rei to Melide

Day 4: Melide to Arzua

Day 5: Arzua to O Pedrouzo

Day 6: O Pedrouzo to Santiago de Compostela (St James Cathedral)





Amazing achievement for Ballina's Lainey running 100 miles in less than 24 hours

Ballina's Elaine Cloonan – or Lainey as she is best known – has achieved a fantastic fundraising feat, running 100 miles in less than 24 hours and raising money for two fantastic charities. The Mayo woman completed the gruelling challenge a few short weeks ago, and has set her sights on a €12,000 fundraising target. All money raised will be divided between the Mayo Roscommon Hospice Foundation and SHOUT (Sligo Hospital Oncology Unit Trust).

In February 2024, Lainey was out for a run on her late father's birthday, when she began to conceive the idea. 'Run for Richie' soon grew legs and before long, she had committed to the daunting challenge. Lainey decided to remember both her mum and dad in the fundraising efforts, dividing the money between the two organisations who cared so well for the late Eileen and Richie.

Lainey began training for the 100-mile run almost immediately after hatching the plan. From the outset, her focus was on consistency, and intense training and mileage, ramping up the preparation and intensity during the latter six months.

When it came to her race plan, Lainey adopted the Scout's motto to always be prepared. From experience, she knew it was always a good idea to have a Plan B...and sometimes Plan C and Plan D...but it wasn't necessary. Undoubtedly, she had a strong team cheering her on from above, and the run went pretty much according to Plan A.

At 2pm on February 28th, Lainey began her mammoth challenge at Ballina Athletic Track. Of course, it was a particularly poignant date for her, as it was that of her late father's

birthday. Sticking with her plan, Lainey used a run/walk technique up to the 100 km mark, and from there, it was more comfortable and sustainable to walk a little more than run.

There were perfect weather conditions on the day – dry, cool and fresh mostly, with low winds and only a little drizzle that night. Again, she definitely had a helping hand in this department. "Mam must have had the Child of Prague out above for me," she said with a smile.

When it came to nutrition, it was a bit of a mixed bag. Lainey's tummy was a little nervous for the first half, and her usual fuel didn't want to go down. Instead, Muller Rice, bananas and run gels took her through, amazingly. It certainly doesn't seem like much for that distance, but it worked, and that's the main thing. Thankfully, the usual long distance runner fears of gut disturbance didn't materialise.

Hydration came in various forms...a small vodka and white in honour of her Dad started her off, and a Captain and coke (courtesy of T. Breathnach) perked her up half way through. But, despite these somewhat unusual drinks for a 100-mile run, it was

mostly electrolytes that kept her going.

While Lainey had set a tough 24-hour time scale for her challenge, she managed to come in ahead of schedule, finishing her 100th mile at 23 hours and 27 minutes. An absolutely incredible achievement by all accounts.

Along the way, family and friends cheered her on and joined her for sections of the run, and Lainey was absolutely delighted with every bit of support she received before, during and after the run.

"I hope that the funds I raised will benefit many more people in the future. I have to say I was completely overwhelmed by all the support, good wishes and positivity I received in the run up to this event. From family and friends, to people unknown to me, I have received incredible kindness and incredibly generous donations. You all have raised an amazing amount of money. I am beyond grateful to each and every person who contributed in so many different ways to the success of this event...so many people shared cash, miles, wisdom, services, expertise, etc. Just know it is appreciated so very much," Lainey commented.



If you would like to support Lainey's fundraising efforts, there's still time to get involved. Visit www.idonate.ie/crowdfunder/RunForRichie to donate today.



Pictured, left to right: Martina Jennings (CEO, Mayo Roscommon Hospice Foundation), Michael Geraghty, Majella Geraghty, Padraig Walsh, Margaret Walsh and Brendan Walsh.

Memorial Walk raises €6,635

An impressive €6,635 has been raised by Mayo's Padraig Walsh in memory of his two nephews. Last year, Padraig once again completed an 18km memorial walk in loving memory of his nephews, David Walsh and Cian Geraghty. The walk began from David's grave in Burrishoole Cemetery and finished at Cian's grave at Aughavale Cemetery.

Through online donations and sponsorship, Padraig raised an incredible €6,635 for the Mayo Roscommon Hospice Foundation. In February, Padraig and members of the Walsh and Geraghty families attended a cheque presentation with Mayo Roscommon Hospice Foundation CEO, Martina Jennings, at the Hospice Shop in Westport.

St Brigid's Crosses raise almost €5,000

Claremorris couple Breedge and Joe Nolan have, once again, pulled out all the stops for the Mayo Roscommon Hospice Foundation for St Brigid's Day this year. With the help of another local volunteer, Kathleen Mooney, the pair made 1,200 St Brigid's Crosses, for sale in Hospice Shops and in local retail outlets in Claremorris.

This isn't the first time the Nolans have been responsible for the St Brigid's Day fundraiser. 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.

Every last one of the crosses sold, resulting in almost €5,000 raised for the Mayo Roscommon Hospice Foundation. A huge thank you to Breedge, Joe and Kathleen, and to all of the wonderful volunteers who helped make this fundraising event possible.





ATTENTION

Help Your
Local Hospice...
Give A Little of your Time
on
Sunflower Days
6th/7th June
Call 0949388666
E: info@hospice.ie

THANK YOU
Local Hospice Services Depend on You



Upcoming Events

Ballina Golf Classic

Ballina Lions Club are organising a fundraising Golf Classic at **Ballina Golf Club on May 30th.**

A special word of thanks to the Lions Club for choosing Mayo Roscommon Hospice Foundation as one of the beneficiaries.



Shamrocks survive the storms as Castlerea Prison comes up trumps

Hospice shops across Mayo and Roscommon were awash with vibrant shamrocks last month, thanks to the dedication from the prisoners and staff at Castlerea Prison.

For the second year in a row, the prisoners had grown a large quantity of shamrock and wanted to donate it to the Mayo Roscommon Hospice Foundation for sale around St Patrick's Day. Despite two storms, and the seasonal frost, wind and rain, the plants were in fantastic condition. Once again, Mayo Roscommon Hospice Foundation was delighted and so grateful to receive the consignment of fresh, vibrant pots of shamrocks. Certainly, there are lots of green fingers at work in the polytunnels at Castlerea Prison.

Liam Donohue, Acting Chief of Work and Training at Castlerea Prison is pictured here presenting a pot of shamrock to Kathy Grogan, Area Manager for Mayo Roscommon Hospice, and Sean Moran, Manager of the Hospice Household Shop in Castlebar. Kathy and Sean were thrilled to collect the donation and distribute the shamrocks throughout the Hospice shops and outlets in Mayo and Roscommon.



Roscommon Rose chooses Hospice Shop dress for New York Parade

Roscommon Rose, Rachel Hastings, is well known for her passion for sustainability and when she travelled to New York for the St Patrick's Day Parade this year, she chose to wear a gorgeous green gúna from the Hospice Shop in Castlerea.

A native of Ballyforan in Co Roscommon, Rachel is a farmer and lecturer and is currently pursuing a PhD in Education for Sustainable and Responsible Living. In keeping with her beliefs, she popped into the Hospice Shop last month and found a fabulous green dress to wear on St Patrick's Day in New York.

Of course, the team in Castlerea were thrilled to welcome Rachel to the shop and to help her choose a suitable dress for the prestigious occasion. Rachel then complimented her outfit with a stunning fascinator and neckpiece from local Roscommon designer, Janiemac.



Monthly Draw

WIN
€1,000
JACKPOT

2nd Prize
€500

3rd Prize
€250

Sign Up Now At [Hospice.ie/draw](https://www.hospice.ie/draw) Or Call Instore
Tel. 094 9388666 Email draw@hospice.ie Website www.hospice.ie



Mayo Roscommon
Hospice
Foundation

Help Support Our
Hospice for just
€10
a month



Kilglass Gaels GAA Club recently presented a cheque to members of Mayo Roscommon Hospice Foundation's Rooskey Support Group following the club's Christmas Jumper Night fundraiser, which raised an incredible €3,578.39. Pictured at the cheque presentation were Niall Kilcrann, Eunice Langley, Gabriel McHugh, Nicola Tully, Monica Mahon, Fintan Cruse and Evelyn Hanley.



A special thanks to Phyxers Golf Society who held a golfing event at Castlebar Golf Club on St Stephen's Day for the Mayo Roscommon Hospice Foundation and raised €1,220. Martina Jennings is pictured here receiving the cheque from Frank McHale.



Members of Castlebar Castlebar Macra organised a table quiz fundraiser to support the Mayo Roscommon Hospice Foundation, at the Clew Bay Hotel, Westport. The event raised €350. Macra members are pictured here presenting the cheque to Martina Jennings from the Mayo Roscommon Hospice Foundation.



Bernie Naughton is pictured presenting a cheque for €1,070 to Martina Jennings (CEO, Mayo Roscommon Hospice Foundation) – the proceeds from a Christmas raffle at PJ's Bar, Castlecoote, Co Roscommon. Thanks to Bernie and all the team for their kind efforts.



Smile-A-While Poetry Book, written by Seamus Dockery, raised an impressive €2,500 for the Mayo Roscommon Hospice Foundation. The book is full of poems and original short stories, and is a really great book for all ages. Seamus and Martina Dockery are pictured here presenting the €2,500 cheque to Martina Jennings, CEO of the Mayo Roscommon Hospice Foundation.

Delia marks 70th birthday with €6,000 fundraiser

The lovely Delia Hughes has been fundraising for the Mayo Roscommon Hospice Foundation for over 20 years and for her 70th birthday this year, she decided to do something extra special for the organisation.

To mark her milestone birthday, Delia set up an online fundraising page using the iDonate platform. Originally, the birthday girl set her sights on a €750 target but she very quickly surpassed this and has now closed out the fundraiser at a staggering €6,000.

Over the last two decades, Delia has raised significant funds for the Mayo Roscommon Hospice Foundation by hosting a Coffee Morning each September on the charity's National Coffee Morning Day. Her latest fundraiser once again highlights her generosity and dedication to the cause.

The Mayo Roscommon Hospice Foundation is so thankful to Delia for everything she has done for the charity over the last two decades. Delia, you are incredible, and an inspiration to us all.



Run, Jog or Walk for Mayo Roscommon Hospice Foundation

Calling all runners, joggers and walkers! Come and join us in participating in this year's Western People West of Ireland Women's Mini Marathon this May Bank Holiday weekend. The event takes place on Sunday, May 4th, from The Mall in Castlebar at 12noon, with all ages and fitness levels welcome to take part.

Sign up today and get involved. Set up an online fundraising page and tag your friends, family and work colleagues. Or, if you'd prefer to ask people in person, you can request a sponsorship card from our office. Simply call us on 094 93 88666 or email info@hospice.ie

By taking part in this Women's Mini Marathon in Mayo, you will be helping our Hospice teams to continue to provide essential palliative care services, free of charge, to people who need our care.

If the May Bank Holiday doesn't work for you, why not take part in the VHI Women's Mini Marathon in Dublin on June 1st. Sponsorship cards and t-shirts are available to participants of both events. Contact us today and get ready for a really great day out.

Mayo Roscommon Hospice Foundation announced among Ireland West Airport charity partners for 2025

The Mayo Roscommon Hospice Foundation is delighted to have been announced among Ireland West Airport's charity partners for 2025.

The charities were selected by staff at the Mayo airport. In addition to the Mayo Roscommon Hospice Foundation, the other charities to benefit this year will be the Connacht SBHI (Spina Bifida Hydrocephalus) Branch, Dillon Quirke Foundation, Order of Malta (Knock Branch), The National Breast Cancer Research Institute, and Western Alzheimer's.

Several events will take place during the year, which will engage passengers and staff to raise as much money as possible for the six charity partners. The headline event will again be the annual Portwest 5k runway fun run, which will take place on the runway at Ireland West Airport in September.

In a new charity initiative for 2025, the airport has also designated a section of its bins in the airport to recycle plastic bottles and tins under the Re-turn scheme. This provides a facility for passengers to support the six charity partners by using these bins to return their empty bottles and cans. All the proceeds raised from the returned bottles and tins will be donated to the charity partners for 2025.

Ireland West Airport's Charity of the Year Programme is an annual initiative that supports selected local and Irish charities through employee-led activities and donations from passengers travelling through the airport. Through the funds raised annually, the airport supports the vitally important work these fantastic charities do in the community and beyond.



Launching the Charities of the Year Programme for 2025, Joe Gilmore, Managing Director, Ireland West Airport, said, "Last year the airport was delighted to raise a record amount of 46,500 for our six charity partners - ACT for Meningitis, BUMBLEance, Down Syndrome Ireland (Mayo Branch), Irish Red Cross, Mayo Mountain Rescue, and Western Care Association. The money raised yearly through our charity programme contributes positively to the fantastic work these charities do in our local communities."

"We are now in our ninth year of the programme, and we look forward to working with our six new charities and hopefully breaking a new fundraising record in 2025," he continued.

Since its launch in 2017, the Ireland West Airport Staff Charity programme has raised almost €300,000 for Irish charities.



Brian Coultry from Killala is pictured here presenting a cheque for €760 to Martina Jennings, CEO of the Mayo Roscommon Hospice Foundation - the proceeds from a concert in Killala Church over the Christmas period.



Employees encouraged to donate one hour of their salary

Companies across Mayo and Roscommon are being encouraged to sign up to an innovative new corporate fundraising initiative this month. The fundraiser – Your Finest Hour For Hospice – is running all over the country throughout the month of April, and all money raised in this region will be spent locally.

Together For Hospice, the national hospice movement which represents 24 hospices nationwide, has introduced Your Finest Hour for Hospice for the first time in April 2025 to support local hospices to raise funds and support patients and their families. With this in mind, the Mayo Roscommon Hospice Foundation is asking businesses to bring the whole workforce together for just one wonderful hour to raise funds for the organisation.

The concept is simple, employers are asked to give an hour of time to employees, on a date of their choosing throughout the month of April 2025, or indeed at any time that suits the company. In exchange, employees are asked to donate an hour of their salary to the Mayo Roscommon Hospice Foundation.

The initiative aims to give people an opportunity to take an hour out of their busy work days to reflect and acknowledge what

just one hour can do for their local hospice, whilst also appreciating the value and gift of time for themselves.

Anyone who has experienced hospice services, whether in a hospice, or in their own home knows that it is truly special. By taking part in Your Finest Hour For Hospice and donating just one hour of your time, you will be giving the gift of compassion, kindness and dignity to those that need it most at a time they need it most.

In doing so you will ensure that the Mayo Roscommon Hospice Foundation can continue to provide essential palliative care services to the people of Mayo and Roscommon. As a company, you can sign up today and ask your colleagues to join you. Upon registering, you will be provided with a digital pack with everything you need to know to get involved.

Your Finest Hour For Hospice allows both businesses and employees to support Mayo Roscommon Hospice Foundation by simply donating an hour of their time.

For more information on how you can get involved, visit finesthour.ie or contact Audrey Duffy, Corporate Partnerships Officer at the Mayo Roscommon Hospice Foundation on **087 3458986** or by email to audrey@hospice.ie



There's always a warm welcome in Westport's Hospice Shop. Westport store manager, Mary Canning (right), is pictured here with sales assistant Jackie Maloney.



Locals and tourists flock to Westport Hospice Shop for affordable fashion

Since opening its doors in June 2014, the Westport Hospice Shop has been attracting a mix of locals and visitors to the town. Located on James Street – and the ninth Hospice Shop to open in the region – the store is in a popular tourist destination and as a result, has become a favourite with holiday makers from both Ireland and abroad.

As with all the Mayo Roscommon Hospice Foundation's shops, the Westport premises offers access to very affordable items – something that has become particularly important in challenging economic times. Whether it's a summer jacket for a trip, a party dress for night out, a book to escape into, or something new in household goods, the Westport Hospice Shop ensures there is something to suit all tastes.

In an age of fast fashion and disposable goods, the Hospice Shops – collectively – quietly fight waste. Donations of clothes, furniture, and household items are given a second life, diverting tonnes of usable items from landfill each year. And, as if that wasn't reason enough to hand over your unwanted clothes and other items, there is a wonderful added bonus that you are helping to fund vital Palliative Care Services in Mayo and

Roscommon. All donations are very much appreciated.

Of course, at the heart of every Hospice Shop are its people, and in particular, the volunteers. The Mayo Roscommon Hospice Foundation is very grateful for the 13 volunteers in the Westport Shop. Retired, semi-retired, or young people seeking experience, the volunteers bring much more than just their time. They bring compassion, conversation and community. They become a family and they help beyond the walls of the shop, in national events such as the Sunflower Days in June, and also with other local fundraisers. Every volunteer plays a crucial role in keeping the shop running and welcoming the many customers.

Westport's Shop Manager, Mary Canning, joined the team in March 2022 and hit the ground running. Mary brought with her many years' experience in retail and has

proven a wonderful asset. As caring as she is competent, Mary ensures the volunteers are happy in their work and that they always feel appreciated. Part of volunteering is getting to know other people, making friends and sharing stories over a cup of tea and a biscuit or two, and certainly, that tradition is alive and well in Westport.

The Westport Hospice Shop has a real boutique feel to it, and is neatly laid out, making everything so easily accessible. Walking through the door, customers find a space of inclusivity, where age, background, and income matter much less than kindness and community. There is always a great buzz about the place and team members who are always happy to help.

Whether shopping or donating, there'll always be a warm welcome at the Hospice Shop in Westport. Why not pop in and see for yourself.





Photo: Michael McLaughlin

Exciting plans for new Children's Hospice announced at Ladies Lunch in Cong

The CEO of the Mayo Roscommon Hospice Foundation has announced exciting new plans to build the first dedicated Children's Hospice outside Dublin. Martina Jennings was speaking at the annual Ladies Lunch at The Lodge at Ashford Castle, where guests were treated to a virtual tour of the planned facility.

Major fundraising will be needed to develop the new Children's Hospice, with both inpatient and respite facilities in the plans. The Mayo Roscommon Hospice Foundation also intends to include myriad vital services in the new Children's Hospice, such as support for the entire family, and specialist short break care. In addition, there are plans for the provision of specialist therapies, including physiotherapy, occupational, play and music therapy, psychology, and much more.

More than 200 women were in Cong on April 11th for the fundraising Ladies Lunch, where RTÉ broadcaster Miriam O'Callaghan was, once again, the special guest. A long-time supporter of the Mayo Roscommon Hospice Foundation, Miriam took time out to speak with guests, pose for hundreds of photos, and enjoy the sun-drenched setting that The Lodge at Ashford provided.

Laurita Blewitt was brilliant as MC for the event, and spent some time speaking with Charlestown's Rita Casey whose relentless courage and positivity was evident, as she continues to battle cancer, endure treatment, and always maintain a smile.

Edel Hyland also spoke about her journey. Diagnosed in December 2021, she has been bravely battling breast cancer for more than three years and after attending last year's Ladies Lunch, was inspired to organise her own fundraiser in October, raising more than €60,000 for the Mayo Roscommon Hospice Foundation.

Glitz and glamour were the order of the day among the guests and the delicious three-course meal was punctuated with an amazing performance by The Galway Tenors, a fabulous fashion show by Catwalk Modelling Agency, and some touching and inspiring stories from the floor.

Bringing formalities to a close, Miriam O'Callaghan led a really interesting panel discussion, featuring Prof Afif El Khuffash – Professor of Paediatrics and Consultant Neonatologist at the Rotunda Hospital, International Board-Certified Lactation

Consultant and co-host of the Baby Tribe podcast.

The panel also included Geraldine Keane, Assistant Director of Nursing with the Roscommon Hospice, and Laura Coleman, Family Therapist with the Mayo Roscommon Hospice Foundation. Not surprisingly, one of the main focus points from the panel was the planned Children's Hospice and the huge need for such a facility in the West.

Prof Afif spoke of his experience with neonatal hospice care – an area very close to his heart – and the importance of compassionate, family-centered support for babies with life-limiting conditions.

Geraldine Keane spoke about the work being done by the Mayo Roscommon Hospice Foundation, and particularly her experience in Roscommon Hospice. She stressed the all-embracing nature of hospice care and the close relationships that are built between patients, families and the hospice care team. Laura Coleman, meanwhile, talked about her work with patients and their families, and the very many lessons and memories shared along the way.

As CEO, Martina Jennings thanked the people of Mayo and Roscommon for their ongoing unwavering support for the organisation. "Our annual Ladies Lunch is always a sell-out and we are incredibly grateful for the continued support from the local community. Events like this help us fund and develop essential palliative care services across Mayo and Roscommon and every donation goes towards expanding our support for people living with life-limiting illnesses and their families," she said.

"Everyone deserves the very best care, and we are committed to walking that journey with them every step of the way. We built two Hospices in Mayo and Roscommon in the space of five years and now, our focus is on developing a new state-of-the-art Children's Hospice for the region. Our young people and their families deserve this facility and we are committed to making this dream a reality," she added.



MAYO ROSCOMMON HOSPICE FOUNDATION

SPRING

LADIES LUNCH

2025



Photo: Michael McLaughlin





Photos: Michael McLaughlin





Photos: Michael McLaughlin





Photos: Michael McLaughlin





Photos: Michael McLaughlin





MAYO ROSCOMMON HOSPICE FOUNDATION

COMMUNITY
PALLIATIVE CARE

MAYO
HOSPICE

ROSCOMMON
HOSPICE

TOGETHER WE CAN DO SO MUCH



Mayo Hospice



Roscommon Hospice

Together We Can Do So **Much**



**MAYO ROSCOMMON
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