



## **Press Release**

**Monday 21 November 2011:**

### **Carers of the Year Awards launched as latest research counts cost of caring in Ireland**

The Carers of the Year Awards 2012 are being launched today by The Carers Association, whose members took the opportunity to highlight the physical, emotional and psychological cost of caring for their loved ones in the home.

The Carers of the Year Awards and Young Carer of the Year Award 2012, sponsored by Emergency Response, celebrate the dedication shown by family carers in Ireland to providing care in the home to their loved ones. Recognising the commitment made by Ireland's family carers, the awards are based on a national nomination process, with the public invited to nominate their chosen family carers. All entries will receive a commemorative certificate and four regional winners are chosen. The National Carers of the Year 2012 will be announced at a special ceremony in May next year.

The Carers Association patrons Mary Kennedy and Marty Whelan were joined at the launch by the current 'Carer of the Year' Anne McGrath and 'Young Carer of the Year' Kelly Farrell. Anne from Thurles, Co. Tipperary is a Mother of six children. Two of her children have died from Canavans Disease, a fatal neurological disorder, and Anne now dedicates her life to caring fulltime for daughter Tamara (12), who also suffers from the disease. Young Carer of the Year Kelley, from Daingean, Co. Offaly has cared for her Mum Nuala, who has serious mobility issues, since she was nine years old. As an only child and with her Dad working fulltime, Kelley plays a key role in her Mum's care in their home.

Recent research conducted by RTE's "Primetime Investigates" on the plight of Ireland's family carers, showed that over 82 per cent of family carers had been severely affected by cutbacks in State services. 23 per cent of family carers surveyed said that an overburden of caring work had led to their own physical disabilities, while the research also identified the stress of caring and how many Carers feel deep despair, anxiety and suffer severe depression, as a result of a lack of supports and Government cutbacks.

Additional research undertaken by The College of Psychiatry in Ireland highlighted that well over 50% of Irish family carers are mentally & physically "drained" by their caring role, resulting in medical problems, with back injuries cited most commonly. More than half of those surveyed said anxiety and depressive disorders were the mental health conditions they associated most with their caring role.

"While the work of family carers in caring for their loved ones in the home can be rewarding and a real labour of love, the cost of that care in physical, emotional and psychological terms

can be immense. At a time when Ireland's family carers are under renewed pressure in the wake of State cutbacks, the Carers of the Year Awards offer a tangible way of recognising and rewarding them for the vital work they do. We urge people across the country to nominate their carer of the year" says Catherine Cox, Communications Manager, The Carers Association.

There are an estimated 161,000 family carers in Ireland, providing over three million hours of care per week and saving the state almost 4 billion every year. According to the Census 2006, there are 5,500 young carers under 18 caring for relatives, a figure The Carers Association finds a huge underestimation in comparison to per capita figures from the UK and Scotland.

**To nominate your family carer for the Carers of the Year Awards 2012 see [www.carersireland.com](http://www.carersireland.com).**

**ENDS.**

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*Family carers from a variety of caring situations are available for interview.*