

Minister Harney Launches National Awards Celebrating Carers' Contribution

Minister for Health, Mary Harney TD launched The Emergency Response Carers of the Year Awards 2008 on behalf of The Carers Association's 2008 in Dublin. Joined by TV presenter Mary Kennedy, patron of The Carers Association, Minister Harney is launching the awards to recognise and reward the contribution of Ireland's family Carers.

"The work of family Carers is truly inspirational and often goes unpaid and unrecognised", says Enda Egan, CEO of The Carers Association. "Ireland's 161,000 family Carers provide over 3.5 million hours of care every week for their loved ones, those with special needs and those terminally ill. Our national Carers of the Year Awards is a celebration of the phenomenal contribution of these carers".

The Awards are based on a national nomination process, whereby members of the public are invited to nominate their chosen carers for the Awards. All carers nominated will receive special commendation and from this process 4 regional award recipients will be chosen. The overall Carer of the Year 2008 will be presented with their Award at a special ceremony in October. A new Carer's award was also announced called The Young Carer of the Year Award (under 18) in recognition of Ireland's 5,000 teenagers and children who provide care in the home.

Emergency Response, main sponsors of the awards, expressed their delight to be associated with such a significant and rewarding event for family Carers. Director of Operations, James Doyle, said "Emergency Response look forward to working with The Carers Association on the Carers of the Year Awards and urged the public to nominate and acknowledge family Carers for the inspirational work that they do".

"While the caring role can be very rewarding and fulfilling many family Carers if unsupported can experience much stress, frustration and isolation" says Mr. Egan. "The nomination process will give the nation the opportunity to appreciate and celebrate the enormous contribution of family Carers and we are encouraging everyone to nominate their choice for the Carers of the Year Awards".

Nominations forms are available from Carers Association centres nationwide, through the National Careline Freefone 1800 24 07 24 or are available to download from www.carersireland.com.

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