

City memorial garden set to blossom

Chicago comes in as major sponsor for twin city Galway’s new commemorative garden

THE National Commemorative Garden to Organ Donors – planned for Salthill later this year – has received a major boost with the announcement that the Galway Committee of Chicago Sister Cities International is to become its major sponsor.

This garden, called Circle of Life, will be located in Quincentennial Park, Salthill, and is being developed by Strange Boat Donor Foundation, in partnership with Galway City Council.

Chicago Sister Cities International (CSCI), is part of the Sister Cities Programme, a major initiative instituted by the Eisenhower Administration after the second world war.

It is designed to cultivate, foster and promote international understanding and relations through a broad programme of inter-city educational, cultural, social and business exchanges.

Galway, which became one of the 28 sister cities in 1997, has enjoyed a very active relationship with Chicago, and was described by Mayor Rahm Emanuel as the “jewel in the crown” of the Sister Cities Programme.

Galway native Billy Lawless, who has lived in Chicago for many years and is Vice Chairman of the Chicago/Galway Committee of CSCI, said “our decision to support the commemorative garden project is indicative of our commitment to increasing community, cultural, artistic and philanthropic engagement with the city of Galway”.

Denis Goggin – one of the founders of Strange Boat Donor Foundation – said the support and endorsement of the project from such an influential body as CSCI will add immeasurably to the

stature and standing of this very deserving national garden.

“The project, which is funded almost entirely through voluntary and philanthropic donations, corporate sponsorship, and local, national and international fundraising events, has now reached 75% to 80% of its total funding requirement of €150,000,” he said.

Meanwhile, the Irish Air Corps will undertake a very innovative 40 hour charity non-stop marathon, between May 16 to 18, pushing a light aircraft from Baldonnel to Galway to raise awareness for organ donation and funds for the Circle of Life commemorative garden.

“The project is funded almost entirely through voluntary and philanthropic donations, corporate sponsorship, and local, national and international fundraising events”

The push starts in Baldonnel at 8pm next Thursday evening, travelling through the night to Leixlip, Maynooth, Kilcock, Enfield, Clonard and on to Kinnegad for around 7am on Friday. Then to Miltownpass, Rochfortbridge, Tyrrellspass, Kibbeggan, Horseleap, Moate and Athlone, arriving about 5.30pm.

From Athlone, the group will pass through the small villages of Kilty, Cornafulla, Doohan and Ballydangan to arrive in Ballinasloe around 1am on Saturday morning.

They will then continue through the night, arriving Loughrea about 7am, before heading to Craughwell, Derrydonnell Beg, on to Oranmore, arriving in Galway City around 2.30pm and making their way to Quincentennial Park, Salthill for 3pm.

In 2012 the Air Corps, which provides an international air ambulance service for the people of Ireland, completed 99 Air Ambulance missions, including national, international and transatlantic transfers of patients, of which 20 related directly to Organ Donation.

“We are delighted to be in a position to help promote organ donor awareness and to bring the public’s attention to this wonderful national commemorative garden project” said Capt. Brendan O’Dowd who is organizing this charity event in conjunction with Strange Boat Donor Foundation.

A significant feature of the Air Corps’ push is that the aircraft will carry a heritage-associated stone which will represent Dublin organ donors, and which will be handed over in Salthill by the Air Corps, for inclusion in the planned garden development. Procurement of the stone was facilitated by the Office of Public Works.

Heritage-associated stones from the other counties are also being sourced, representing donors from those counties, and anyone or group wishing to have an association with a particular county stone is invited to contact Strange Boat Donor Foundation.

The Circle of Life commemorative garden will remember and give thanks for the generosity of spirit of the over 2,200 people in Ireland who have given the gift of life through organ donation. It



Denis and Martina Goggin in the park where they are developing the Circle of Life Commemorative Garden to Organ Donors. PHOTO: JOE O'SHAUGHNESSY.

will be a special place of comfort and inspiration and healing for all, but of particular significance to those affected by organ donation and transplantation.

The project has the support of the Irish Organ Procurement Service; Transplant Services and David Hickey, Director of Transplantation at Beaumont Hospital; the Irish Donor Network; the Irish Kidney Association, the OPW, the GAA, and many others.

Strange Boat Donor Foundation is an Irish registered charity (CHY 19469) whose aim is to raise awareness of the importance of organ donation, and to give comfort, consolation and support to all those affected by organ donation and transplantation.

It was established by the parents of Éamonn Goggin, a young Galway man whose organs were donated following a road crash in 2006.



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Labour TD and city councillor on a collision course

BY DECLAN TIERNEY

A LABOUR councillor and her senior party colleague are on a collision course following remarks she made in relation to the lack of care for the elderly and disabled.

It is understood that Deputy Derek Nolan is livid over comments made by party colleague Cllr. Colette Connolly criticising the Government for slashing funding for these groups.

Party sources have told the

Galway City Tribune that Deputy Nolan is angry that cuts in housing adaptations and aid for the disabled was lambasted by Cllr. Connolly.

The Galway City Central councillor took issue over the fact that the City Council’s allocation for the Disabled Persons Grants has been cut from over €1 million last year to little over €300,000 and that “budget for 2013 has already been exhausted”.

She maintained that the Gov-

ernment were forcing families to place their elderly or disabled relatives into full time nursing care and that this was a situation that could have been avoided.

Cllr Connolly said no explanation had been offered by the Department of the Environment as to why the grant was cut, despite a written request for information by Director of Services for Housing, Kevin Swift, dating back to March 6.

According to the councillor, the actual 2012 allocation was

€928,352 received in February, plus an additional €130,000 in October 2012. This made a total of €1,058,352, including the council’s own contribution of €211,670.

As a result the council was able to process 173 grants covering housing adaptations, mobility aid grants, and housing aid for the elderly.

The allocation for 2013 is €301,280 including the council’s own contribution of €60,256. This figure has meant the coun-

cil was only able to process 56 grants. A further 66, totalling €446,600, remain unprocessed as there is no funding.

Cllr. Connolly’s outburst has not gone down well with Deputy Nolan and it has resulted in a serious rift between the two politicians – who up until recently served together on Galway City Council.

“We believe that Deputy Nolan did not take kindly to her remarks and she will be kept out in the cold as far as he

World heavyweight boxing hopeful on Galway visit to meet his cousins

BY DECLAN TIERNEY

THE six foot nine inch son of a Galwayman who aims to be the next heavyweight boxing champion of the world is on his way to the city next week.

Tyson Fury is the guest of the Olympic Boxing Club in Westside where he will view ten bouts next Wednesday evening, but now fellow members of the Travelling community are hoping that he will also visit Tuam, the birthplace of his father.

They are currently liaising with both the city boxing club and those who are organising Fury’s trip to Galway to determine if he could spend a few hours in Tuam where he has a huge fan base.

The colossus has won all of his 21 professional fights with 15 knockouts and may be just a fight away from a world title bout.

Recently he made his US debut where he defeated Steve Cunningham in a bruising battle at Madison Square Garden.

And since that victory, he has been inundated with con-



Tyson Fury poses after his seventh round KO of Steve Cunningham on April 20 at Madison Square Garden.

gratulations from his extended family with some of his closer relations in Loughrea and Clifden particularly delighted with his success.

Cllr. Martin Ward told the *Galway City Tribune* that major “behind the scenes” efforts were being made to try and bring him to Tuam on Wednesday afternoon to meet with local boxers.

“We also plan to give him a tour of the town and show him where his father was born. It would be great if we could organise a civic reception as well, but it is all early days,” Cllr. Ward added.

Fury is the current Irish heavyweight champion and former British and Commonwealth champion whose father, Gypsy Joe Fury, was born in Tuam but the family moved to Manchester where Tyson was born.

However, he has always considered Ireland as his spiritual home.

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