



PRESS RELEASE - WATER SAFETY IRELAND

16th September 2020

Henry Hopes To Make History And Swim Around Ireland Two National Charities Set To Benefit From Fundraising Efforts

Renowned expedition leader Henry O'Donnell will launch Finswim 2020, a first of its kind round Ireland swim on Thursday September 17th at 2pm, in Co. Donegal. Henry is raising much needed funds for national charities Water Safety Ireland and the Irish Cancer Society by finswimming around the entire coast of Ireland. The event is due to launch from the beach at Henry's homeplace of Carrickfin and will strictly adhere to the latest HSE and Government public health guidelines.

The two chosen charities of Water Safety Ireland and the Irish Cancer Society share the common goal of preventing fatalities and have formed a strong bond with the O'Donnell family over recent years. Speaking about the selection Martin O'Sullivan, Chairman of Water Safety Ireland commented ***'Henry is a truly remarkable man, with years and years of expedition experience. When he outlined the idea of Finswim and the challenge he was looking to undertake, we were thrilled to be included as a charity partner. The Finswim Expedition is a fantastic opportunity to raise awareness of water safety and drowning prevention over the course of the next 12 months and we look forward to supporting Henry in his endeavours.'***

Finswim highlights the positive health benefits of safe open water swimming in our seas, rivers and lakes. A trained lifeguard with Water Safety Ireland, diver and swimming instructor, Henry alongside his support team have put safety at the centre of the expedition, realising the tricky conditions the open water can present. 105 people lost their lives in Ireland's waters in 2019, while 30 children have died in 10 years. Henry is hoping to draw attention to child water safety education during Finswim; continuing a rich tradition of water safety training which he received in his early years from family members and WSI. ***'Finswim encapsulates the very spirit of Water Safety Ireland's drowning prevention ethos. Ireland's aquatic environments are there to be enjoyed by all, but like Henry, inform you and your loved ones, especially children, about safe swimming. Recognise and appreciate the dangers of the sea and get the knowledge to do so safely from trained Water Safety Ireland teachers and instructors'*** explained Martin O'Sullivan, Chairman of Water Safety Ireland.

Charities' fundraising abilities have been decimated because of the Covid-19 pandemic, which has left many unable to source donations in the usual ways. This novel concept is a unique approach to raise funds, all the while maintaining public health safety guidelines to the highest standard. Henry is supported by a group of volunteers, who understand how difficult it has been for charities to operate in 2020 and are committed to giving their spare time to help reach the target of €100,000 for these two admirable causes. People can donate at www.idonate.ie by searching 'Finswim 2020'.

For more information, visit www.finswim2020.com or to get involved with the conversation online search 'finswim2020' on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

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Notes to the editor:

- For further water safety advice, visit www.watersafety.ie. To call our head office contact LoCall 1890 420 202, Tel: (091) 564400.
- Henry O'Donnell has undertaken several challenging land-based expeditions and sea swims to raise funds for charities and other worthy causes over the years. He loves sport in general, healthy living and has a close affinity with the sea and nature. He successfully completed demanding expeditions around the world including lowest to highest points on four continents: Africa, Europe, America and Australia.
- All money raised will go directly to Water Safety Ireland and the Irish Cancer Society. People can donate at https://www.idonate.ie/fundraiser/11390779_fin-swim-2020-s-page.html.
- Finswim starts on Thursday 17th September, 2020 at 2pm from Carrickfin beach Co. Donegal. The event will take place in the latter months of 2020 and will continue into 2021, depending on weather conditions.
- Every effort has been made to ensure the launch adheres to up to date public health guidelines.
- The expedition has safety at its core. The swimmer and crew have the latest training and equipment to securely attempt the journey. Covid-19 Protocols have been put in place to ensure the utmost wellbeing of all volunteers.