



UACHTARÁN NA hÉIREANN
PRESIDENT OF IRELAND

Mr. Larry O'Neill
South Dublin Partnership
Block 3
Belgard Square North
Tallaght
Dublin 24

22 Bealtaine, 2020

Larry, a chara

Mar Uachtarán na hÉireann, as the President of Ireland, I would like to thank you most sincerely for the hard work, solidarity and active citizenship that you have demonstrated for the duration of this pandemic, which has been such a challenge for the whole country. Through you, I would also like to commend and thank all of those who have been working together with you to ensure that those residents of Dublin South who are vulnerable to COVID19 have been in a position receive support and encouragement at this time of crisis.

You have been part of such a great combined effort across Ireland. For over two months, community groups and individuals have been out in numbers supporting people in their local areas, in what has been such an uplifting demonstration of their commitment to their communities. Under the umbrella of *COVID-19 Community Outreach*, an inspired initiative of Irish Rural Link and The Wheel, community and voluntary organisations across the country have been working in unison to ensure that their energies are directed to where they are most required and that the needs of the most vulnerable are addressed.

For so many, having necessary supplies such as groceries, medicines and other essential items delivered to their door has been a lifeline. As important as these vital deliveries have been, what has also been provided has been a reassurance that help is at hand. Knowing that someone will call, that someone is looking out for them, that they will see a friendly face has meant so much to those who are alone or who are isolated at this time.

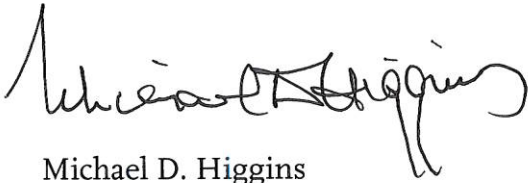
Some of the volunteers are giving of their time for the first time. Many have long been making valuable contributions in the communities and it is their networks and contacts that have been so valuable in the past months. None of you seek recognition but I believe that now, more than ever, you deserve it, for you represent the best of the Irish response to this crisis.

The ethos of volunteering and actively engaging with fellow citizens is the lifeblood of our society. Active citizenship is surely a most durable insurance against any sense of helplessness or indifference, which might prevent us from reaching out to our neighbours who are in need. The actions of thousands of people like you over these past several weeks have shown that this sense of solidarity is still very strong across Ireland.

You, and all who have been working with you in *COVID 19 Community Outreach* over the past weeks and months have answered the call of your communities. You have made an enormous difference and are continuing to perform a vital service as we slowly emerge from the dark of the pandemic and into the light of a better, shared future.

Molaim sibh agus gabhaim buíochas libh.

Beir beannacht

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael D. Higgins', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Michael D. Higgins
Uachtarán na hÉireann,
President of Ireland