

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ALONE ANNOUNCES DISTINGUISHED SPEAKERS FOR “FORUM ON AGEING”

Charity will host a special forum on ageing issues on May 6th in the Mansion House Dublin

Dublin, 4th May 2010. ALONE has announced details of guest speakers at their Forum on Ageing that will coincide with the 20th anniversary of the death of the organisation’s founding member, Willie Bermingham. The Forum on Ageing will be held in The Mansion House Dublin on May 6th from 10am to 2pm with the Lord Mayor of Dublin, Emer Costello in attendance. The forum will feature high-profile speakers on pertinent issues affecting older persons, and will address the challenges faced by the organisation in continuing to carry out the work of Willie Bermingham.

Forum Speakers include: Professor Davis Coakley from St. James’ Hospital; Anne Connolly, Director of the Ageing Well Network; Melina Ziegel, the Programme Manager of Trinity College’s Longitudinal Study on Ageing (TILDA) and Sean Moynihan, CEO of ALONE. Professor Coakley is a Consultant Physician in Geriatric Medicine at St James’s Hospital, Dublin and Professor of Medical Gerontology at Trinity College Dublin. He has written or edited a number of books on Geriatric Medicine, Medical History and literature. Ms. Connolly is the Director of the Ageing Well Network, a leadership group comprising the heads of 50 organisations, who between them have the authority, responsibility and influence to make the changes necessary to realise a shared vision of “an Ireland that is a great country to grow old in”. Ms. Connolly’s presentation is entitled “The Positive Ageing Agenda”. Melina Ziegel has been the Programme Manager for TILDA, The Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing, for two years and she has gained a wealth of experience on managing and facilitating multi-disciplinary, multi-institution research under government auspices in previous research positions – her presentation will deal with “Understanding Ageing Trends in Ireland.”

Sean Moynihan, CEO of ALONE, commented “We’re very excited to have such distinguished line-up of speakers at this event, which we’ve organised to commemorate Willie Bermingham on the 20th anniversary of his passing. 80 prominent professionals and academics working with older people in Ireland will gather in The Oak Room in The Mansion House to discuss the challenges they face in carrying out their vital work on a daily basis, and we plan to provide a space where organisations and individuals can consider how best to work together in the future.”

Willie Bermingham was a household name in Dublin in the 1970s – as Dublin’s most celebrated fireman, he brought the plight of vulnerable older persons living alone into the public eye. During the course of his work, Willie was moved and enraged by the circumstances in which he found many forgotten older people living. In late 1976, within a few weeks of each other, eight older people were found dead in their Dublin homes – Willie was appalled by this, and began a campaign to raise awareness about vulnerable older people living alone. In 1977, the organisation ALONE was founded to combat loneliness and isolation among older persons.

Over the years since the organisation was established, thousands of Dubliners have lent their support and volunteered their time to ALONE, and this spirit of volunteerism continues to thrive today. The organisation continues to this day to work on behalf of forgotten older people, offering housing, support, advice, assistance, and of course, a vital befriending service.

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