

ALONE LAUNCH CHRISTMAS CAMPAIGN “SHARE THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT” ASKING PUBLIC TO SUPPORT THEIR WORK DURING WINTER

Campaign launched in Dublin today with ALONE service users and Miriam O’Callaghan on board to support

Dublin, November 26th 2012 ALONE is encouraging members of the public to support its Christmas campaign this December, “Share the Christmas Spirit”. The charity, which works with the one-in-ten older people in need of assistance, is calling on people to share the Christmas spirit by checking on older people living alone in the community. The campaign was launched today in Dublin by broadcaster Miriam O’Callaghan alongside two older people who use the services of the charity. ALONE are highlighting the fact that 120,000 older people live alone across the country.

During the Christmas period ALONE volunteers will distribute food hampers to 500 older people in need. On Christmas Day, the volunteers will also bring hot Christmas dinners to older people living on their own. The charity’s Christmas social dinner dance, a vital social outlet for older people who use the services of ALONE, will be attended by over 150 older people.

Seán Moynihan, CEO of ALONE, commented “We really hope that the public will support our campaign and our work over Christmas and the winter months. Miriam O’Callaghan’s generous support for our campaign this year will certainly help us get our message to the public. We find our resources are particularly stretched during the Christmas period, when many older people can feel isolated. We are asking people to spend some time supporting older people in their community who might be at risk of isolation. A quick visit to check on levels of heating and food, or just to spend some time in company with an older person and to ‘share the Christmas spirit’ can really make a huge difference.”

Commenting on the increased demand for services during Winter, Moynihan commented, “We try to make sure that we respond to every call for assistance quickly, but as the number of calls increases, we find it more difficult to do so. The support of the public is critical to us at this time of year, and we’re sure we can count on their support as in previous years. At this time of year everyone can support the work of ALONE; the general public help by visiting older people in their community and companies and businesses by providing financial support to us to keep our vital services going.”

To celebrate their 35th anniversary this year, ALONE Christmas cards are on sale to the public. These cards, produced and designed in Ireland, are available for purchase online or from the ALONE offices costing €7.99 for a pack of 10. Proceeds from the sale of these cards go directly to benefit older people in need. The cards were produced to give people the opportunity to have a traditional way to share the Christmas spirit with an older friend or relative.

ALONE provides a crucial befriending service to older people who are isolated, along with providing permanent housing to almost 100 older people. The most vital area of service provision during the winter months is the Community Response service, which deals with emergency calls for assistance.

ALONE has a small, dedicated team of staff who work on the ground daily with older people. It receives no Government funding and is solely funded from donations from companies and members of the public. The charity has 150 volunteers, many of whom will be working during the Christmas period. The charity can be contacted at www.alone.ie or on (01) 679 1032.