



€500,000 Prize Fund Announced as Six Finalists Named in 2010 Social Entrepreneurs Ireland Awards

Supported by NTR Foundation, categories include mental health, education, young people, community and active citizenship

(Tuesday, 25th May 2010): Six inspiring individuals from varying areas of society working to drive social change have been nominated as finalists in this year's Social Entrepreneurs Ireland Awards Programme. The finalists include **Frances Black, The RISE Foundation** supporting families with loved ones in addiction; **Carmel Dunne, Ceol** providing music opportunities through education and performance for teachers of young children; **Dara Hogan, Fledglings Early Years Education** promoting early years education and care for disadvantaged communities; **Michael Kelly, GIY (Grow it Yourself)** creating and connecting a network of food growers across Ireland; **John Lawlor, Bridge to College** bridging educational divides and inspiring young people to learn; and **Paul Mooney, Jobcare** providing real opportunities for ex-offenders to forge a new path for themselves in life.

Three Awards will be made in October 2010 from this initial shortlist of six, who were selected after in-depth interviews. The shortlisted projects announced today, will now undergo a four month Finalists programme with Social Entrepreneurs Ireland, providing them with the opportunity to work on a critical business issue. This consultation and engagement process will help determine the 2010 Social Entrepreneurs Ireland Award Winners. This year, a new and significantly enhanced Awards structure called the High Impact Programme, has been announced, which will provide targeted, in-depth support to the winners. Each Award winner will receive over €165,000 over a two year period which will enable them to maximise their impact in addressing social issues across Ireland through directed support, developing their networks and communicating their achievements.

Established in 2004, the annual Social Entrepreneurs Ireland Awards have disbursed over €3.44 million to over 142 people and organisations who have developed their innovative ideas to drive social change in Ireland. In that time, it is estimated that over 400,000 people have benefited through those projects across Ireland.

The need for people with entrepreneurial and innovative skills to create solutions amid a vast amount of social and environmental challenges is more apparent today than ever before with the current social and economic crisis in which we see ourselves. Those who can think and act creatively, are passionate and resourceful, and willing to take risks to tackle steep challenges are the people who will be most effective in driving social change and focusing society on the needs around us.

Announcing the finalists, Sean Coughlan, Chief Executive of Social Entrepreneurs Ireland said, "The €3.44m we have invested since our first Awards in 2005 has had a real impact across a wide range of social issues in our society. Moving forward in today's challenging climate we believe that we can make even greater impact by providing much more targeted support to our Award winners and hence this year we are announcing a shortlist of six from which three will be chosen to receive extensive financial and strategic support over a two year period. We believe this will deliver significant and sustainable social benefits."

The Social Entrepreneurs Ireland 2010 Awards are supported by the NTR Foundation under a three year partnership as a practical means of injecting support for those people who are prepared to take risks for social change. Tanya Harrington, Director of the NTR Foundation said: "NTR Foundation is delighted to support the 2010 Social Entrepreneurs Ireland Awards and those who have the desire and vision to effect social change. The entrepreneurial and innovative thinking demonstrated by the six finalists announced today is in keeping with the entrepreneurial ethos of NTR plc and the NTR Foundation. Social entrepreneurship is an important driver in modern economies and we wish the finalists every success in their endeavours. The NTR Foundation looks forward to proactively engaging with them in the coming months."

Social Entrepreneurs Ireland supports innovative and system changing projects across all sectors including Young People & Children, Older people, Education & Learning, Community & Active Citizenship, New Communities & Travellers, Environment & Sustainability, Mental & Physical Health, and Disability.

To date social entrepreneurs have made a significant contribution to the economy by starting new enterprises and are filling an increasingly important role in solving social issues. They have stepped up to the mark, and are actively making a difference and igniting change and need to be encouraged and supported to do so now more than ever.

Notes to Editor:

Extended biographies and photography of each of the 2010 Finalists is available.

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For further information:

Gill Madden, Fleishman-Hillard

T: 01 6188414/ 086 2309070

E: gill.madden@fleishmaneuropa.com

Ailbhe Byrne, Fleishman-Hillard

T: 01 6188407/ 086 1994006

E: ailbhe.byrne@fleishmaneuropa.com

About Social Entrepreneurs Ireland

Social Entrepreneurs Ireland, established in 2004, is a privately funded, not-for-profit organisation that believes that innovation and social change in Ireland will be driven by exceptional people with exceptional ideas. They have developed a support model that helps these social entrepreneurs grow their ideas from concept to reality. For more information about Social Entrepreneurs Ireland, visit www.socialentrepreneurs.ie.

About NTR plc's Partnership With Social Entrepreneurs Ireland

NTR plc has committed €450 thousand in support of Social Entrepreneurs Ireland over a three year period from 2008 to 2010. NTR executives also provide mentoring support to awardees and where possible, help awardees apply their commercial entrepreneurial insights to broader social change. NTR sees in Social Entrepreneurs Ireland a means of providing important practical injection of support for those people who are prepared to take risks to fulfil their ambition for fundamental social change in Ireland.