



15 September 2008

GRANTS FOR SPORT & PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FOR OLDER PEOPLE

Go for Life - the National Programme for Sport and Physical Activity for Older People – is pleased to announce that €350,000 has been allocated under the eighth **National Grant Scheme for Sport and Physical Activity for Older People**. The Scheme promotes opportunities for older people to participate in sport and physical activity. Since 2001, over 3,500 grants totalling in excess of €2 million have been distributed to clubs and organisations to enable their older members to become more involved in **sport and physical activity**.

Go for Life is an **Age & Opportunity** initiative funded by the **Irish Sports Council**.

Speaking at the allocation of the grants last year, the late Séamus Brennan TD, and then Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism said,

“Our older people have contributed enormously to the building of modern 21st century Ireland. We must continue to recognise and reward that contribution by ensuring our older people are given every opportunity to remain active in their community and sport has a pivotal role in achieving this. These grants allow older people to decide for themselves how they choose to be more active and they are making a huge contribution to improving the physical, social and psychological well-being of those getting on in age.”

Any local group seeking to provide increased opportunities for older people to participate in sport and physical activity may apply for a grant. Grants range from €500 - €3,000 and are typically used by groups to purchase equipment or so that members may explore a new sporting activity. Last year 627 groups nationwide shared just under €350,000 as part of the seventh phase of the scheme. Successful applicants included active retirement associations, senior citizens clubs, ICA guilds, sports clubs, day centres and community centres in 26 counties.

The eighth grant scheme is launched at a time when a recent report by IPSOS MORI that was commissioned by Go for Life and the Irish Sports Council has found that 58% of older adults lead sedentary lifestyles. The Go for Life programme aims to raise awareness of the benefits of physical activity as we age and to create opportunities for older people to engage in a wide range of physical activity and recreational sport in local, safe and sociable environments.

The Go for Life Programme was developed by Age & Opportunity and the Irish Sports Council and is overseen by a Steering Committee that also includes representatives of Active Retirement Ireland, the Irish Senior Citizens Parliament and the National Council on Ageing and Older People. The National Grant Scheme is a central element of the Go for Life Programme which also provides workshops for members of community groups around the country to give them information and skills which enable them to lead sport and physical activity sessions within their groups.

Application Forms are now available from Go for Life c/o Age & Opportunity Marino Institute of Education, Griffith Avenue, Dublin 9. Phone 01 805 7733 or email gfl@mie.ie.

Details and Application Forms are also available from Age & Opportunity at www.olderinireland.ie and from the Irish Sports Council at www.irishsportsCouncil.ie.
Closing date for receipt of applications is 5pm on Wednesday, 22nd October, 2008.

Note for Editors: Go for Life is the National Programme for Sport and Physical Activity for Older People. The programme aims to get more older people more active more often. Go for Life aims to challenge stereotypical notions about sedentary lifestyles for older people.

Some Physical Activity Facts:

The benefits of physical activity can be enjoyed even if regular practice starts late in life. For people of all ages, physical activity improves quality of life in many ways:

- it can help relieve the disability and pain associated with common diseases among older people (like cardiovascular disease, arthritis, osteoporosis, and hypertension.)
- it can also contribute greatly to the management of some mental disorders such as depression.
- it improves self-confidence and self-sufficiency—qualities that are the foundation of psychological well-being.

World Health Organization, Extract from Factsheet: Physical Activity and older people

