

Press Release

World Polio Day . Book Launch *How We Survived and Surprised!* Polio Survivors tell their inspiring and uplifting stories

For Immediate Release . 15 October 2015

World Polio Day will take place on the 24th October and to highlight the legacy of Polio in Ireland, the Post Polio Support Group will launch a collection of writings by Irish Polio Survivors, called *How We Survived and Surprised!* on Monday 19th October, at 2:30pm, at the Fitzwilliam Hotel, Dublin.

This book, a collection of inspiring and entertaining stories (fiction and real-life) poetry and images will be launched by Marian Harkin MEP and acclaimed novelist, Geraldine O'Neill, herself a Polio Survivor. Geraldine's latest novel *A Letter from America* features a main character with polio.

"I am delighted to have been the editor of this creative collection from my fellow Polio Survivors. The book highlights the bravery and tenacity of the group, as well as being an enjoyable read, filled with beautiful imagery and a good dash of humour," says Geraldine O'Neill.

"Many people would not be aware of the struggles, both physically and emotionally, that survivors endured growing up with Polio. Some children spent long periods away from education and their families," she continues. "In spite of the limitations that Polio caused, *How We Survived and Surprised!* draws attention to their achievements and the valuable lives that people have led in spite of it. It is something I am proud to have been part of."

The Post Polio Support Group is working to raise awareness of the continuing difficulties faced by those who survived the original virus in Ireland in the 40s and 50s, during the polio epidemics. 7,000 Survivors of Polio are estimated to live in Ireland today, with many people still living with disabilities brought on by the disease. Others are suffering from the late effects of Polio, also known as Post Polio Syndrome, significantly increasing their disability and causing pain and fatigue later in life.

World Polio Day, October 24th, is marked by Polio Support organisations throughout the world, including the European Polio Union, and the Rotarian Action Group - Polio Survivors & Associates.

World Polio Day was established by Rotary International over a decade ago to commemorate the birth of Jonas Salk, who led the first team to develop a vaccine against poliomyelitis. This year is the 60 year anniversary of the vaccine, which was the first step towards eradication of the disease.

About the Post Polio Support Group

The Post Polio Support Group was established for Polio Survivors by Polio Survivors in 1993. We are the only organisation in Ireland providing practical support (and sometimes more importantly a listening ear) to those unfortunate enough to have contracted Polio when babies or young children.

We provide stair lifts, calipers, bespoke footwear, electric scooters and wheelchairs. We also help Survivors access Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy and Respite Breaks, as well as

other supports. The group works to raise awareness, provide information on Polio and its late effects and to ensure Polio Survivors can live with dignity.

For further information, copies of 'How We Survived and Surprised!' or to get in touch with Polio Survivors, please contact:

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