

Leading Irish cancer charities collaborate to launch “Face Up To Cancer”

A unique digital campaign to fund critical cancer research and support services for a disease to which we lose an average of one person per hour in Ireland

Three of Ireland’s leading cancer charities, namely Breast Cancer Ireland, Breakthrough Cancer Research and the Marie Keating Foundation, have joined forces for the first time ahead of World Cancer Day (Sunday 4th February) to launch an innovative new campaign entitled ‘Face Up To Cancer’, which will raise significant funds for cancer research and support services across the island of Ireland, whilst also humanising what can be a hugely isolating experience for those diagnosed.

In Ireland almost **42,000 new cases of cancer are diagnosed each year**, which means that sadly one person is diagnosed with cancer **every 15 minutes**, and as a country we lose, on average, **9874 people each year to cancer – an average of one person every hour**.

Face Up To Cancer is a digital fundraising campaign, aiming to engage thousands of people to upload their selfies and make a donation at www.faceuptocancer.ie, in support of cancer research and support services in partnership with 3 leading Irish cancer charities.

Each individual image will ultimately form part of a unique facial mosaic, using the thousands of selfies submitted, to form a series of eight portraits in total, showing the faces of some of those that have been affected by cancer, and some of the experts working tirelessly to change the future of cancer care and treatments. **Presenter Miriam O’Callaghan is a proud Ambassador** for the campaign, having lost a sister aged just 33 to the disease, as is Presenter **Bobby Kerr** of Newstalk and RTE’s **Evelyn O’Rourke**, both of whom are survivors of cancer. Well-known TV presenter **Craig Doyle** has also lent his support by voicing the campaigns TV and radio commercials. **Conor Ferguson**, husband of much-loved journalist and RTE presenter Keelin Shanley, who sadly passed away from cancer in early 2020, and **Stephen Teap**, a close friend of Vicky Phelan, who lost his wife Irene to cervical cancer in 2017, are also supporting this nationwide initiative.

The campaign aims to put a face to cancer through the portraits, and to bring the country together through the simple act of ‘donating a selfie’, with the final resulting mosaics being revealed across digital platforms once the campaign comes to a close at the end of February.

The monies raised will be used to make a significant impact on the lives of the one in two people living in Ireland who will be diagnosed with cancer in their lifetime. Specifically, funds will be channelled into three critical areas:

1. **Investment in Breast Metastatic Disease Progression Research:** Advancing the understanding and treatment of breast metastatic disease progression to the brain.
2. **Research for Hard-to-Treat Cancers:** Funding research to develop better ways to detect and treat lung, pancreatic, ovarian, oesophageal, and other hard-to-treat cancers.
3. **Cancer Awareness and Support Services:** Providing on-the-ground support for individuals and families living with or beyond cancer.

The campaign will also create a story that inspires a sense of unity and shared commitment to tackling cancer on multiple fronts.

Speaking at the launch, **Aisling Hurley, CEO of Breast Cancer Ireland** said: *“We’re asking the people of Ireland to become part of the Face Up To Cancer story, helping us to collectively fight this disease through world class research and development of new treatments and drug therapies. Long-term survival from cancer has greatly increased, and overall, Ireland is making good progress in terms of survival improvements for all cancers, but we still need to continue our investment in order to change the landscape positively for those diagnosed and transform this illness into a treatable illness for **all** of those impacted.”*

Orla Dolan, CEO of Breakthrough Cancer Research added *“There are new discoveries and new ideas being developed every day to detect and treat cancer and save thousands of lives in Ireland that are simply awaiting funding. We’re asking the people of Ireland to be part of the future, to get involved in the Face Up to Cancer campaign, so we can ultimately help bring those future treatments to fruition”*

Lastly **Liz Yeates, CEO of the Marie Keating Foundation** added *“We’re delighted to partner with Breast Cancer Ireland and Breakthrough Cancer Research, leveraging our collective strength for this unique campaign during which we are asking the nation to show their support and solidarity for people with cancer and their families. By standing together, and through our collective efforts, we not only raise funds but we also raise hope. Together, we can make a difference and redefine the future of cancer care. Let’s face up to cancer together, because united, we are stronger than this disease.”*

Participation is simple... go to www.faceuptocancer.ie, upload your selfie, then choose your donation amount. Then share your selfie across your social channels to show your support using #FaceUpToCancer and #DonateASelfieSaveLives. For those wishing to donate directly, you can do so on the website.