



24th September 2012

President Higgins launches national campaign to bolster community and voluntary activity

BETTER TOGETHER CAMPAIGN IS DEVELOPED AND RUN BY THE WHEEL WITH THE SUPPORT OF EBS

DUBLIN, 24 September 2012: President Michael D Higgins today, joined The Wheel and EBS, to launch the national campaign, Better Together, to encourage voluntary activity and to help build support for community and non-profit organisations across Ireland.

The Better Together campaign was developed by The Wheel, a national body representing over 900 charities, and is supported by EBS. The campaign provides Ireland's 11,000* or more community and voluntary groups, clubs and associations with an opportunity to showcase their activities and attract new supporters through short online videos posted on a website, www.bettertogether.ie.

The public are encouraged to support their local charities, clubs and associations by visiting the website, locating groups on an interactive map, voting for their favourite videos or donating online. The 30 causes that attract the most votes will be shortlisted for three cash prizes of €3,000.

The Better Together campaign, run by The Wheel and supported by EBS, is also an opportunity to celebrate the unsung heroes in our communities - those who made an extraordinary contribution to good causes in a voluntary capacity - and nominations are now being sought for Ireland's Charity Hero Award. The winner will win €1,000 to donate to their favourite cause. Nominations can be submitted at www.bettertogether.ie

Launching the Better Together campaign, President Michael D Higgins said:

"In communities up and down the country, people are selflessly helping others; playing their part in making Ireland a fairer, more inclusive and better place to live in. I welcome the launch of the Better Together campaign as it looks to build on the ground-swell of good work being done in our communities and encourages the wider public to get involved."

Commenting on the launch of the Better Together Campaign Deirdre Garvey, CEO of The Wheel said:"Charities, community and voluntary groups are facing their toughest challenge yet: not only is the demand for their services increasing, but their income levels are dropping. The Better Together campaign aims to turn the tide on this and strengthen local groups by showing the public the amazing work happening in their communities and what they can do to help."

Speaking at the launch of the Better Together Campaign Des Fitzgerald, CEO of EBS said: "EBS is delighted to be involved in this worthwhile and impactful project. This is the second time that EBS has partnered with The Wheel to deliver the Better Together campaign. We are delighted to be part of a campaign that celebrates and encourages the great work that is being done by volunteers in community and non-profit organisations across Ireland. I would encourage everyone to log on to the website and to submit an entry or choose a cause close to their home - or to their heart - and to support this great campaign."

The campaign will culminate with the Better Together Awards on 6 December when the winners will be announced and Ireland's Charity Hero for 2012 will be named. See www.bettertogether.ie for details.