

Press Release

Wednesday 27th March, 2024

Pieta and Electric Ireland Launch 2024 Darkness Into Light in Leinster to Raise Vital Funds for Pieta's Suicide Prevention Services

- *Sports Broadcaster Alan Quinlan and Singer Songwriter Aaron J Harte Join Pieta and Electric Ireland for 2024 Connaught Launch.*
- *100,000 People expected to participate in the 16th annual Darkness Into Light Event.*
- *Fundraising Event to Take Place in over 230 Locations at dawn on Saturday, 11th May, 2024.*
 - *Every €26 sign-up fee enables Pieta to answer two calls to their 24/7 helpline.*

Darkness Into Light, Pieta's annual fundraising event to raise money for lifesaving suicide and self-harm support and sponsored by Electric Ireland, is back at 4.15am on Saturday, 11th May, 2024. With 100,000 participants expected at more than 230 official walks across four continents and many more taking part to fundraise in their own way, Darkness Into Light 2024 will bring communities together for the most important sunrise of the year, beginning in darkness and continuing through to dawn, symbolising the journey from despair to hope. Launched today by Alan Quinlan and Aaron J Harte, the ambassadors are calling on the public to sign up today and support Pieta's flagship fundraiser.

Speaking at the launch, Darkness Into Light 2024 ambassador, Alan Quinlan, said: *"I am a huge supporter of Darkness Into Light and I am beyond proud to work with Pieta and Electric Ireland to support the campaign this year. Mental health is a hugely important topic for me and every year myself and my family participate in what truly is the most important sunrise of the year and I look forward to taking part again this year."*

To put into context the scale of services provided by Pieta and the ongoing need for donations, last year in Leinster alone, the charity provided almost 30,000 hours of therapy and saw over 4,000 clients across the province. The charity also supported almost 500 families and households bereaved by suicide across the province.

Pieta depends on the funds generated by Darkness Into Light, with over 85% of the charity's annual income coming from public fundraising. Pieta's 300 qualified Therapists, Suicide Bereavement Liaison Officers and support staff across the country rely on this essential income to continue their lifesaving work.

By participating in the event, supporters can make a real and tangible difference, as the €26 sign-up fee for Darkness Into Light can enable Pieta to answer two calls to their 24/7 helpline, providing immediate support and guidance to those in crisis.

Stephanie Manahan, CEO, Pieta, emphasised: *"With around 100,000 crisis calls and texts to our helpline last year, we are under pressure to make sure we can continue to provide this vital service and keep our promise to those in their darkest hours that there will always be somewhere for them to turn. Together, with Electric Ireland's support and the collective efforts of our participants, volunteer committees and communities across Ireland, we can continue to shine a light on the importance of mental wellbeing and provide support to those in crisis. Darkness Into Light is not just an event; it is a beacon of hope, guiding us towards a future where every individual feels supported and valued."*

Pat Fenlon, Executive Director, Electric Ireland, commented: *“Electric Ireland is very proud of our ongoing support for Pieta and Darkness Into Light over the last twelve years of our partnership. Each year, we work with Pieta to create marketing and fundraising campaigns to promote awareness of this incredible event and encourage as many people as possible to participate and donate. The power of Darkness Into Light is in its ability to bring hope and consolation to communities across the country and to raise much needed funds for the vital service provided by Pieta. This movement reflects our values as an organisation and our determination to make the world brighter for our customers, staff and the communities we serve.”*

Calling on people to sign up at www.darknessintolight.ie, Pieta and Electric Ireland are reminding people across the country that by getting involved in the event, they are making a valuable contribution towards Pieta’s vital therapy and support services for those impacted by suicide.

Pieta provides an easily accessible, free of charge service which is available online, by phone or in person. Support is open to people from all walks of life and Therapists provide assistance to individuals from 8 to 88 years old. Darkness Into Light plays a crucial role in enabling Pieta to uphold its commitment to providing suicide prevention, intervention and bereavement support services, ensuring that help is always within reach when it is needed most.

In addition to supporting Pieta’s lifesaving services, Darkness Into Light is a global movement dedicated to raising awareness of the issues surrounding suicide and self-harm and funds essential mental health and suicide prevention services offered by Pieta’s 28 partner charities across the world. Be it walking, running, swimming or sharing their sunrise with family and friends, this event provides an important opportunity for people all around the world to come together, foster a Misense of hope and raise crucial funds for suicide prevention.

Sign up today at www.darknessintolight.ie.

#DIL2024

-Ends-

For more information contact:

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How to contact Pieta: To avail of Pieta services, visit www.pieta.ie or call 0818 111 126. Pieta provides 24/7 support via the Freephone crisis helpline on 1800 247 247 or text HELP to 51444 (standard message rates apply).

ABOUT DARKNESS INTO LIGHT: Darkness Into Light is organised by Pieta and is proudly supported by Electric Ireland since 2013. It is a global movement dedicated to ending suicide and supporting those who engage in self-harm. By taking part in Darkness Into Light, participants play an important role in removing the stigma around suicide and self-harm as well as raising vital funds to fight suicide. Darkness Into Light, Pieta’s flagship annual fundraising and awareness event, started with approximately 400 people walking the 5km course in Dublin’s Phoenix Park in 2009 and has since grown into a global movement with hundreds of thousands of people taking part in 200 locations, in 14 countries across four continents.

ABOUT PIETA: Founded in Dublin in 2006, Pieta was established to provide free, accessible one-to-one counselling to people suffering from suicidal ideation, engaging in self-harm or to those bereaved by suicide. With over 200 qualified Therapists and support staff across 24 centres, Pieta does everything it can to ensure that help is available to those in crisis.

ABOUT ELECTRIC IRELAND AND DARKNESS INTO LIGHT: Electric Ireland is recognised as Ireland's leading energy provider, with a mission to create a brighter future for the customers and communities it serves. Electric Ireland has a close and longstanding relationship with Pieta and a long-term commitment to the issue of suicide and mental health in Ireland. Electric Ireland, as part of the ESB group, has supported Darkness Into Light since 2013, working with Pieta to bring hope to customers, staff and communities across Ireland that have been affected by suicide. Due to the combined efforts of Pieta and Electric Ireland and the support of the Irish people, the event helps raise millions of euro in funding every year, allowing Pieta to continue to operate their free of charge lifesaving services.

For further information or to arrange an interview with ambassadors, Pieta representatives or Electric Ireland representatives, please contact: