

GALWAY HOSPICE

# newsletter

SPRING 2025



**CLIMBING  
CROAGH  
PATRICK  
FOR  
GALWAY  
HOSPICE**

# Welcome

As we approach the longer summer days ahead, it is always a pleasure for me to be able to share with you, our supporters, what has been going on both in the Hospice and in the community over the past few months.

Demand for our services continued to increase. More and more people are looking to Galway Hospice to provide them with support and care at a difficult time in their lives. Our Specialist Nurses are providing more care to people at the end of life in their own homes than ever before. As you can see from the following graph, the workload of our Community Palliative Care Team has more than doubled over the past ten years.

In recognition of the continued increase in demand for our community services, we have added a Senior Occupational Therapist and Senior Physiotherapist to the community team in the latter part of 2024. Our Senior Physiotherapist has commenced with a new Breathe Better program for community patients this month and our Senior Occupational Therapist is working with colleagues in a Hospice in Dublin to introduce the EMPOWER program to assist patients coping with anxiety. You can read more about both initiatives on page 11 of this newsletter.

We continue to work hard to improve and adapt the services we deliver to meet the changing needs of our patients. A key element to ensuring we can continue to do this is research. Therefore, we were delighted to appoint Niall Manktelow as our Research Manager late last year and you can read more about our vision for research on page 7. Our Social Work team facilitated a very successful second Claddagh Camp

for bereaved families in September 2024 and the team received a commendation from the HSE for the initiative.

You can find further details of this on page 6.

The demand for Bereavement Services also continues to grow and the supports provided by the Medical Social Work team increased by over 50% during 2024. The team have established a Bereavement Café, which meets monthly in The Secret Garden located on Dominick Street, to assist with meeting this increased demand. The 'Walk and Talk' support group continues to meet fortnightly. The team also supported three other Hospices to introduce the initiative in their areas during 2024. Our Bereavement Co-ordinator also delivered a poster on the Walk and Talk initiative at the European Grief Conference last October.

We are continuing to work towards building the much needed new Hospice in Galway and we are in active discussions with the HSE about a potential site. If we are successful in these discussions, we would hope to commence the design process for the new Hospice later this year.

I hope you enjoy reading our news as much as we enjoy sharing it with you. I want to thank you once again for being there for us, so we can be there for you.

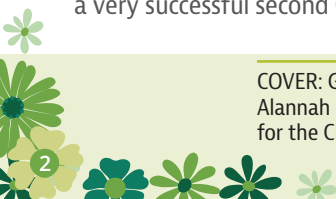
Ní neart go cur le chéile



**Mary Nash**  
Chief Executive



COVER: Galway Camogie Player and Galway Hospice Occupational Therapist Alannah Kelly helps launch the Croagh Patrick Climb for Galway Hospice. Sign up for the Climb at [galwayhospice.ie/climb](https://galwayhospice.ie/climb) or call Galway Hospice on 091-770868.



# Galway Hospice Care in 2024



6,981

**Home Visits by  
Community Team**

Cuairt Baile tugtha ag  
Foireann an Phobail



1,017

**People Cared for at  
Home**

Cúram curtha ar fáil do  
1,017 Duine sa Bhaile



325

**Patients Admitted  
to the Inpatient Unit**

Tugadh 325 Othar  
Isteach chuig an Aonad  
Othar Cónaitheach



4,232

**Therapy Sessions  
Delivered**

Seisiún Teiripe curtha ar fáil



27,282

**Calls Made by the  
Community Team**

Thug an Fhoireann  
Pobail 27,282 Cuairt

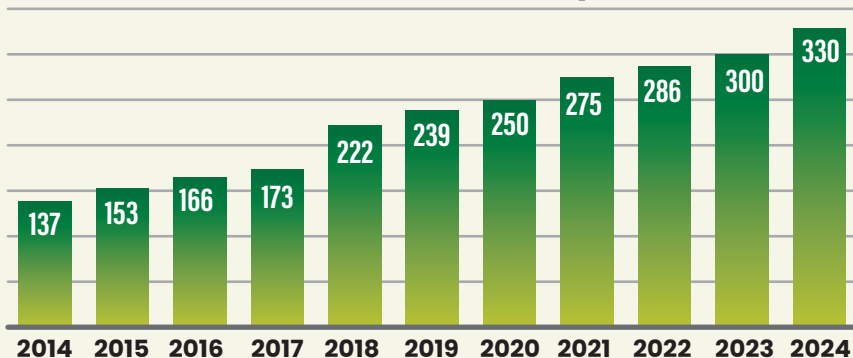


87%

**of Community  
Patients Died at Home**

Fuair 87% d'Othair  
Phobail Bás sa Bhaile

## No. of Active Community Patients







# Genevieve Carter

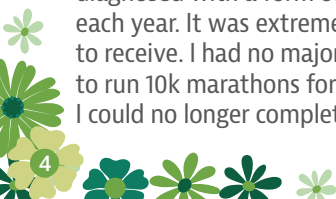
*"This isn't a place of endings - it's a place of living."*

As I prepared Christmas dinner in 2023, I felt a sharp pain which then lingered for weeks. This was diagnosed as sciatica and I was given a prescription to alleviate the pain. The following April, I was ready to get a flight off to America, until I collapsed onto the floor. I literally lost the power of my legs. After visiting A&E, I was advised to have an MRI. My husband carried me into the car and up the stairs of a local clinic in Galway. After that, I was sent to Beaumont for a surgical review, followed by a PET scan a few weeks later. Suddenly, I found myself facing a diagnosis that would change my entire life.

What had been previously misunderstood as sciatica for four months turned out to be a rare and aggressive leiomyosarcoma - a rare malignant smooth muscle tumor. Approximately two hundred people are diagnosed with a form of sarcoma in Ireland each year. It was extremely shocking news to receive. I had no major symptoms. I used to run 10k marathons for charity. When I could no longer complete them due to

fatigue, I knew something was different, but I didn't expect it would be cancer. I don't smoke or drink and cancer has not been common in my family. Thankfully, my parents are currently healthy and in their seventies. I worked abroad for years, but came home during COVID-19 to be closer to them.

In my case however, they found a stage three grade A tumour, that was ten centimetres wide. I was in the hospital for four months. A dear friend of mine was admitted the same day in the Acute Medical Unit. I went to primary and secondary school with her, attended her wedding, and visited her and her husband in Florida. But over time, we lost touch. Until one day, from across the curtain, I heard "Is that you Genevieve?". In a wheelchair, the porter brought me over to her and we gave each other a huge hug. She had stage four lung cancer, so she couldn't breathe, but she could walk. I couldn't walk, but I could breathe. We just had this connection. Then all of our friends from school came



in to see us and we had a lovely reunion together. She passed away peacefully at the Galway Hospice in August 2024, where I was able to say goodbye. The team took great care of her.

Unable to have an operation, I was sent back to Galway for twelve sessions of high-intensity radiotherapy, which thankfully reduced the tumor by three centimeters. I felt great and following a CAT scan they advised me "Go live your life for now. The primary tumour is dormant." But before my partner and I could visit his family in Turkey, Christmas came along and I fell sick again while at home. My mother called the Community Palliative Care Team and a nurse from Galway Hospice visited me immediately for an examination and called an ambulance. My primary tumour had woken up again and a new two millimetre cancer was found in the same area. In January, I began a course of chemotherapy, which is still ongoing.

That is when I experienced the powerful support of Galway Hospice, which began with their Community Palliative Care team. I met the lovely Dr. Orla, who helps me breathe through the pain when I am at home and cannot travel. Even if I need additional help to peel potatoes at my table, they are there. Those things mean so much to me.

The district nurse told me about the Day Care service at the Hospice, which is an unbelievable service. From the moment I walked through the doors, I was met with warmth. They take care of everything. I receive a wide range of supports in the one day and all at the same place, including therapies and access to their medical team. The Day Care Manager, Lesley, is able to identify the needs of any patient straight away. Amazing volunteers like Brid taught us to weave St. Brigid's crosses. I gave one to my mother, which now hangs proudly over her door. She recently baked a delicious

tea brack for my mum to enjoy because she knows she loves it. Another volunteer, Mary, sends me special prayers because she knows how important my faith is to me. There are many people that come here that are not able to cook for themselves, so they're offered a variety of meals here too.

Over my time here at Day Care, I have built a wonderful connection with the staff, volunteers and other patients. The kindness and generosity of the team was demonstrated when they organised a Christmas shopping day for patients. We linked arms, they carried my bags, and we shared many laughs. That was a godsend to me. They understand patient ethos and have such empathy for each person. I also have the opportunity to hear similar experiences others have had, which is both encouraging and admirable. It is a safe place to discuss hard issues.

I recently had a party to celebrate my 50<sup>th</sup> birthday, with the theme 'Dressed to impress - glitz or glam, whatever your charm.' We

had many different wigs that the adults and children could take pictures wearing. It reminded me how lucky I am to have so many wonderful people fighting for me and my recovery. I would like to thank my parents, my brother, my work colleagues, my closest friends and relations, and of course my husband Gokhan, who has been my rock through it all.

When I first heard the word "Hospice," I recoiled. But the wonderful team here has redefined what it means for me. This isn't a place of endings - it's a place of living, of being seen and supported in ways I will be forever grateful for. My cancer may be rare, but the compassionate care I've found at Galway Hospice is anything but. Today, as I prepare for my fourth round of chemotherapy, I carry their support with me.

**Genevieve Carter**





## Claddagh Camp Award

### Medical Social Work Team honoured for work with bereaved families

We are proud to announce that the Medical Social Work Team has been honoured with a 'Commendation' under the prestigious HSE Excellence Award in recognition of our dedicated work with bereaved children and families.

The 'Claddagh Camp' was identified as prioritising quality and patient safety, considering the additional needs of children in the design and incorporating feedback from children and families into the redesign in year 2. This commendation highlights our commitment to providing compassionate, professional, and essential emotional support during some of life's most difficult moments.

The Community Foundation of Ireland funded the delivery of 'The Claddagh Camp'. The children and family bereavement camp is a specifically designed programme delivered by the Medical Social Work team from Galway Hospice and Mayo Hospice. A total of twenty-three families, over two weekends in both 2023 and 2024 came together in a safe and nurturing environment where children and their caregivers could process their grief, build resilience, and find comfort in a community of others who understood their experiences.

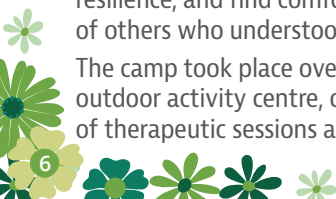
The camp took place over a weekend at an outdoor activity centre, offering a balance of therapeutic sessions and recreational

activities. All accommodation and food was funded. Families participated in creative activities such as pottery, art and group therapeutic activities. These activities help children express their emotions in a healthy way and provide caregivers with tools to support their child's grieving process. In addition to emotional support, the camp included fun and confidence-building activities like ropes courses, a ninja course, mini jeeps, climbing walls, challenge rooms and a Walk & Talk for caregivers. These activities help children rebuild confidence, foster friendships, and experience joy, reinforcing that it is okay to have fun while grieving.

A key benefit of 'The Claddagh Camp' is the opportunity for families to bond and feel less alone in their loss. By connecting with others facing similar challenges, they have built lasting support networks that continue beyond the camp weekend. These camps provide a space for healing, remembrance, and hope for the future.

This recognition from the HSE underscores the importance of the bereavement support provided by the Medical Social Work team. It acknowledges our innovative practice and commitment to quality. We are grateful for the nomination by Vanessa in our Quality team.

Thanks to the HSE for this recognition and to all the families who have entrusted us with their care.



# Research at Galway Hospice

RESEARCH

Our vision in Galway is to be a leading example of excellence in the provision of Specialist Palliative Care to people living with advanced life-limiting illness. As part of this vision, we are committed to performing evidence-based research to help develop, adapt and advance palliative and end-of-life care, ensuring that our services will meet the ever-changing needs of our patients, their family and their carers.

We aim to carry out research that is "close to practice" and seeks to resolve real and important issues for our patients. We focus on ensuring that any research conducted within Galway Hospice is patient-centred, ethical, and robust and we adhere to strict guidelines regarding data protection and confidentiality.

Many different members of our diverse Multi-Disciplinary Team are involved in research, reflecting the holistic nature of the care we provide. Our staff are motivated and enthusiastic about being involved in contributing to the knowledge base in palliative care and it is part of my role to support staff hoping to conduct research and help build their research skills. Our involvement in research represents

an investment in the future; we are ensuring that we continue to deliver the best possible quality of palliative care throughout our service, while also leading the way by sharing our research findings through conference presentations and journal publication.

In February, a number of staff pictured below attended the IAPC conference to present their research. This was an exciting day that featured two oral presentations and five poster presentations from Galway Hospice staff – including the winner of first prize for best poster that went to Dr. Geena Kelly for her work exploring the associations between red cell concentrate transfusion and changes in the symptoms of fatigue and breathlessness in the palliative care setting.

If you would like further information on research at Galway Hospice, or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.



**Niall Manktelow**  
Research Manager



*Members of our team attending the Irish Association of Palliative Care Education and Research Seminar in February 2025.*





# Boston Scientific employees raise €1.5m for Galway Hospice

Boston Scientific employees have marked a collective milestone in their support for Galway Hospice, with contributions through the Galway Hospice Weekly Draw now exceeding €1.5 million.

Since 1997, employees have had the option to participate in the Galway Hospice Weekly Draw by making voluntary payroll donations. Many have chosen to support this initiative over the years, reflecting a shared commitment to our mission of providing compassionate care to those facing life-limiting illnesses. Contributions from Boston Scientific



Left to Right: Boston Scientific's Dave Lally, Galway Hospice Board Chairperson Dr. Jim Browne, Galway Hospice CEO Mary Nash; James Lyons, VP of Operations at Boston Scientific Galway; Claire Joyce and Louise Hynes of Boston Scientific; Orla Keady-Giblin, HR Director at Boston Scientific; Mairéad Murrihy, Quality & Projects Manager at Galway Hospice, and Mairead Carr, Director of Nursing and Therapy Services at Galway Hospice.

employees who have opted to donate has played a significant role in sustaining Galway Hospice's ability to provide vital services. Due to the funds raised from

organisations like them, we can ensure that families in the community can rely on our care and support when they need it most. We are so incredibly grateful to have the loyal support of their staff and look forward to continuing our work together with Boston Scientific and other local employers as we further develop palliative care services in Galway.

*"This milestone belongs to the employees who have chosen to support Galway Hospice through their contributions, as well as the wider Galway community. We are deeply grateful for their generosity and proud that this initiative reflects Boston Scientific's core values of caring, collaboration, and a winning spirit."*

**James Lyons**, Site Vice President of Operations at Boston Scientific Galway.

## Join the Weekly Draw!

YOU CAN SIGN UP TO THE WEEKLY DRAW TODAY AT [galwayhospice.ie/draw](https://galwayhospice.ie/draw)

Members are in with a chance to win €1,000 or €100 each week.





# Listening to Patients: Improving Together

As part of our ongoing commitment to enhancing the quality of care and the service we provide, we are delighted to have established our first Patient Engagement Council.

The Patient Engagement Council is an evidence-based initiative supported throughout healthcare to ensure that the voices of our patients, families, and the community are at the centre of what we do.

The Patient Council is a forum where patients and their loved ones can offer feedback, share their experiences, and collaborate with our staff to continually progress the service we provide. Person-centered care is at the heart of everything we do, and we recognise that each patient's journey is unique; their needs and perspectives are invaluable in helping us continually improve our services. By establishing the Council, we aim to build and progress open dialogue between our patients, their families, and the team providing care.

We are excited to embark on this journey of improvement with the support and involvement of our patients and their families. Together, we can shape a future where every patient's experience is not only supported but enhanced, creating a more holistic approach to Hospice care.

We look forward to the positive impact this Council will have in shaping the future of our care and services.



**For further information on this initiative, please contact:**

**Vanessa Butler**  
vbutler@galwayhospice.ie

**Niamh McKeon**  
nmckeon@galwayhospice.ie

## PAYROLL DEDUCTION SCHEME

Employees can join the **Galway Hospice Weekly Draw** by authorising their employers to deduct €1.27 per week or €5.51 per month from their wages.

Payroll Deduction Schemes are subject to agreement with employers.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE PAYROLL DEDUCTION SCHEME, CONTACT FUNDRAISING ON  
091-770868 or [draw@galwayhospice.ie](mailto:draw@galwayhospice.ie)**

# Specialist Massage Course for Cancer and Supportive Care

Ann Marie McGrath is an Aromatherapist at the Galway Hospice.

She started her career as a registered nurse, before completing further studies in BSc Complementary Medicine in Healthcare, Cert in Community and Adult Education and is a Professional Member of the Irish Massage Therapists Association (IMTA).

Ann Marie has over twenty years experience providing complementary therapies (including aromatherapy and massage/touch therapies) in cancer support, palliative care, and care of older person settings.

In 2017, she designed and developed a continuing education course for already qualified Massage Therapists. This is a unique programme, and one that is only available in the west of Ireland.



## Massage and Touch Techniques for Cancer and Supportive Care

Facilitated and delivered by Ann Marie, the course includes online eLearning, followed by four days of practical in-person training days in the Hospice, including a client clinic. The client clinic is one of the most invaluable aspects of this programme. The patients attend a free complimentary massage and give real-time feedback to the participants.

The aim of this course is to develop a Massage Therapist's knowledge, confidence, and practical skills to offer safe and effective massage therapy to clients living

with cancer or with a history of cancer; including clients undergoing and following cancer treatment, cancer survivors, and clients receiving palliative care.

We offer a huge congratulations to Ann Marie, who has been recently shortlisted as a finalist for the Healthcare Initiative – Patient Education / Lifestyle Project at the Irish Healthcare Centre Awards, for the development and implementation of this programme that she delivers at Galway Hospice.

***One of the best massages.***

*– Patient feedback from the client clinic*

***The course was so much more than I expected.***

*– Participant feedback from the course*

### THERE ARE 2 COURSES RUNNING IN 2025:

**Fri. 23<sup>rd</sup> May** (10am -11am) Practical Training: Fri. 20<sup>th</sup> June – Mon. 23<sup>rd</sup> June inclusive (9am to 5pm)  
**Fri. 5<sup>th</sup> Sept.** (10am -11am) Practical Training: Fri. 26<sup>th</sup> Sept. – Mon. 29<sup>th</sup> Sept. inclusive (9am to 5pm)  
 All details are on the Galway Hospice online shop at [galwayhospice.ie/shop](https://galwayhospice.ie/shop) · Contact us at (091) 770868.



## Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy Service for Community Patients

The Galway Hospice Community Palliative Care (CPC) team has expanded its Allied Health support with the addition of Jessica, Senior Occupational Therapist, and Maria, Senior Physiotherapist. They are delighted to join the team and contribute to enhancing holistic care for patients and families in the community.

A key focus of their work is aligning with the Galway Hospice Strategic Plan to influence future service planning and ensure comprehensive and equitable access to allied health input. This includes how Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy complement existing services in Inpatient Unit and Day Care, identifying areas where they can add value, and easing the movement between services for our patients and their families at all stages of the palliative care journey.

Jessica and Maria are attending weekly MDT meetings with the CPC teams, reviewing data to gain deeper insight into patient and carer needs and using that information to inform referrals, as well as establishing new referral pathways, criteria, and documentation. Jessica and Maria are assessing how their roles work alongside existing HSE community services and identifying gaps where specialist supports are needed. This involves building relationships with primary care colleagues to enhance integration and communication, mapping out existing services, and identifying

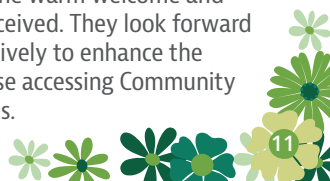
areas for development.

There is a new 'Breathe Better', physiotherapy-led group programme, which runs for five weeks, now underway. This combines education sessions given by different members of the Multi-disciplinary Team, along with exercise to improve breathing control. It supports individuals experiencing breathlessness, as well as their carers.

Additionally, Jessica is preparing to launch the EMPOWER Group, an occupational therapy-led initiative forming part of a multi-site national study. This group will focus on anxiety management, to improve symptom management and enhance quality of life.

Finally, there is a commitment to strengthen the relationships and engagement with educational institutions so-as to enhance the overall understanding of Allied Health in Palliative Care. To this end, education sessions for Community teams have been arranged, they have welcomed visits from a full class of 4<sup>th</sup> year Occupational Therapy students and are currently hosting a 3rd year student placement.

Both Jessica and Maria extend their gratitude to the CPC team for the warm welcome and support they have received. They look forward to working collaboratively to enhance the quality of life for those accessing Community Palliative Care services.



# Climb Croagh Patrick for Galway Hospice



Take on the Croagh Patrick Climb for Galway Hospice on Saturday, 21<sup>st</sup> June.

This annual event brings together families, friends and colleagues from Galway and beyond to conquer the iconic reek in Westport, all while raising vital funds for Galway Hospice.

Register now for the Croagh Patrick Climb at [galwayhospice.ie/climb](http://galwayhospice.ie/climb) or call **091-770868**.

## Day Care at Galway Hospice

### What our Patients Enjoy

*"The friendliness of the staff and lots of laughter. The care from all the team. I feel safe."*

*"I love the interactions with other people and nice food on arrival."*

*"All the staff are very kind and compassionate to my situation."*

*"I found the service to be very beneficial and useful."*

*"The company of people and the staff was excellent."*

### Recent Activities







## Education Nursing Home Education Days

Galway Hospice hosted a Study Day for staff working in Nursing Homes in October 2024. The study day covered a variety of essential activities and attendees had the opportunity to engage in discussions, practical demonstrations, and case studies that highlighted the latest evidence-based practices for pain management.

It was a great opportunity that brought together healthcare professionals to enhance their knowledge and skills, particularly for end-of-life care. The day was supported by the Multi-Disciplinary Team

of Hospice staff, including members from the Medical, Nursing, Physiotherapy, and Occupational Therapy teams.

Feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive, with many noting how invaluable the event was in helping them better understand the complexities of pain at the end of life. The hands-on approach allowed participants to gain practical insights that they could immediately apply in their own practice, ultimately benefiting the residents in their care.

*"The Study Day was brilliant. I feel equipped to go back to the nursing home to support the residents and sharing the learnings with my colleagues."*

– Attendee

*"The knowledge I gained will have a lasting impact on the people I help as a nurse and I hope to attend more of these study days."*

– Attendee

Due to the success of this Study Day, the Hospice is pleased to announce that four additional Nursing Home Study Days will be held in 2025 which are being organised in collaboration between Vanessa Butler (Quality Assurance Co-Ordinator) and Nuala Logue (Education Manager). These sessions will continue to focus on enhancing specialist knowledge around end-of-life

care and will provide more opportunities for healthcare professionals to develop the skills required to deliver the highest standard of care for those that they care for.

The Hospice looks forward to continuing to offer these important educational opportunities in the future. Stay tuned for further details and registration information for the upcoming 2025 Study Days.

**For further information,  
please contact:**

**Vanessa Butler**  
vbutler@galwayhospice.ie

**Nuala Logue:**  
nlogue@galwayhospice.ie

# Celebrating National Recognition for Volunteer Excellence

The Galway and Mayo Hospices are proud to announce that they have achieved the prestigious Investing in Volunteers (IiV) quality standard - the national benchmark that recognises best practice in volunteer management in Ireland and the UK.

This is the first time our volunteer programme has been externally assessed, with the Galway and Mayo Hospices being one of the few Hospices to hold this accreditation and the first Hospices in the west of Ireland to receive this excellence award. This external recognition is a powerful affirmation of the value we place on volunteering and the outstanding contribution the volunteers make every day.

The standard was awarded following a rigorous assessment process, reflecting the commitment of our staff, volunteers, and leadership team to creating a welcoming, inclusive, and high-quality volunteering experience.

The assessment team praised the integrated and strategic approach to volunteering across both sites, who are seen as **"the link to the community for the patients"** and **"the backbone"** of the service.

Both Hospices met all standards across six areas, with several areas of outstanding practice identified.



***"Achieving this accreditation is a testament to the dedication and compassion of our incredible volunteers. Their generosity of time, kindness, and support is at the heart of everything we do, and this recognition celebrates the vital role they play."***

*– Galway Hospice Volunteer Co-ordinator*

## WORDS FROM OUR VOLUNTEERS

*"It's the best day of the week for me. I always come away happy."*

*"We're treated like part of the team from day one."*

*"The atmosphere is so uplifting, it's like a big family."*

This achievement is not just about meeting a standard - it is a celebration of the meaningful relationships that exist between volunteers, staff, patients, and families.

As we look ahead, we are committed to building on this success. Future plans include expanding volunteer roles across new services, enhancing feedback opportunities, and recognising volunteer contributions in even more visible and meaningful ways.

From driving patients, supporting reception, assisting in Day Care, to offering companionship and kindness in countless ways, volunteers are central to the delivery of our services.

**To every volunteer who brings warmth, kindness, and commitment - this award is yours. Thank you for making a difference in the lives of so many.**



## Gerry Molloy: Forever Part of the Hospice Family

Galway Hospice would like to pay tribute to volunteer Gerry Molloy from Threadneedle Road, Salthill, who passed away on 7th March, aged 90.

Gerry was a warm and familiar face at Galway Hospice over the past fifteen years. He first joined Galway Hospice as a volunteer after the passing of his wife of Hospice years, Mary, in the care of the Hospice.

Over the years, he has represented the Hospice at countless cheque presentations in schools and businesses across Galway, delivered coffee packs to hosts across the city and county, been a friendly face at our Memorial Walk in Salthill, and much more.

***Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam.***





# 2025 EVENTS



**APR  
18**

**Car Raffle**



**JUN  
6 & 7**

**Sunflower Days**



**JUN  
21**

**Croagh Patrick Climb**



**SEP  
14**

**Memorial Walk**



**SEP  
25**

**Coffee Morning**



**NOV  
30**

**Tree of Lights Celebration**

**Galway Hospice**  
Dublin Road, Renmore  
Galway - H91 R2T0

091 770868  
[info@galwayhospice.ie](mailto:info@galwayhospice.ie)  
[www.galwayhospice.ie](http://www.galwayhospice.ie)

CHY 8837 • RCN 20022150 • Company No.: 136115

