

## OUR RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS

Nobody could have predicted the challenges that would face us all this year with the COVID-19 pandemic. The restrictions in place around funerals and social distancing impacted bereaved parents profoundly, causing them to feel further isolated with their grief and loss, not knowing where to turn. Anam Cara had to respond quickly to the needs of these parents where the traditional supports and comforts would not be available to them.

Anam Cara developed and produced 8 online Bereavement Support video vignettes to help bereaved parents at this very difficult time. The clips complement the Anam Cara videos and information Pack already available on [anamcara.ie](http://anamcara.ie)



Anam Cara also needed to find a way to support the parents who were already engaged with our services as all face-to-face meetings and events had to be cancelled. After a process of implementing technical and online group facilitation training, we launched our online group supports for parents in May 2020. We now have 8 online groups operating monthly serving parents who usually attend the face-to-face monthly meetings at all 12 of our locations.

In line with all other live events, our Annual Training and Review workshop was also cancelled and it too was brought online. This was a very successful event with all of our Professional Facilitators and many of our Volunteer Parents taking part and upskilling so that they are prepared for the needs of parents and the issues that the pandemic and lockdown will have raised for them as we hopefully get back to face-to-face groups in the Autumn.

### DONEGAL GROUP FOCUS

*"Donegal Anam Cara is a very welcoming group. Meeting sizes can vary from 2-10 people. Most of our parents come from the northern part of the county - Barnesmore Gap seems to be the cut-off point.*

*Brid McGettigan is our very empathetic professional facilitator and I volunteer, with one other bereaved parent, as parent facilitators.*

*We meet on the second Thursday of every month in the Radisson Hotel in Letterkenny, where we are served homemade chocolate-chip cookies - unfortunately, I prefer a digestive.*

*From wild rainy Donegal!"*

*Maeve McHardy (Volunteer Parent)*

Call us at 01 404 5378 if you would like more information



### SUPPORTING ANAM CARA

Our Annual Report for 2019 has been published and last year was a hugely successful year in terms of support for Anam Cara. Both Government funding and every cent raised by the public, ensured our work with bereaved parents continued Nationwide.

We held 137 events, attended by 2135 and we welcomed 666 new parents at the beginning of their Anam Cara journey. Thank you to each and every person, company and government department that donated to us, we are deeply grateful.

Our text donate is always open -  
Text REMEMBER to 50300 to donate €2





## INTRODUCING OUR NEW BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT EVENINGS

Our annual Parent Survey in 2019 showed that some parents who attended our Bereavement Information Evenings felt that they needed more information and support than was available at these events. Some wanted to be with parents who had suffered a similar loss to them, particularly those whose child had died close to birth or those who had lost a child through suicide.

In response, we collaborated with Pieta and Féileacáin to host Bereavement Support Evenings, where all three organisations were available at the event to provide information and support to all of the parents who attended.

We piloted two events in September 2019, one in Dublin and one in Cork. We also ran one in February 2020 as part of our planned services for 2020. Feedback was very positive and we hope to make these events a part of our regular bi-annual information evening schedule bringing them to more locations nationwide in the Autumn.

## Sophie's Ball

### SOPHIE'S BALL NYE 2019

On New Year's Eve 2019, Sophie's sisters, Stephanie and Abbie, and her many friends organised a Ball in her memory and raised funds for three charities, including Anam Cara Galway.

This is the second year that Anam Cara has benefited from the Coll Family's generosity.

It was a fabulous evening and testimony to how much Sophie is loved and missed by her family and friends.

On behalf of the parents who attend Anam Cara Galway a huge thank you for your support of our group, who meet on the first Wednesday of each month at the Clayton Hotel in Ballybrit.



### VHI WOMEN'S MINI MARATHON

This year is a little different and the Mini Marathon will operate a little differently than before. From October 1st-10th, the paths, pitches and parks of Ireland will be flooded with women completing their 10km - walking, jogging or running.

We may not be gathering in Merrion Square at the starting line, getting drenched by the firemen in Donnybrook or enjoying a refreshment with our friends afterwards but, together apart, we can make a difference.

Please consider Anam Cara as your chosen charity for this wonderful event and contact us now for your fundraising pack.

Drop Karen an email on [k.oshea@anamcara.ie](mailto:k.oshea@anamcara.ie) for more information



### LIGHT UP THE NIGHT NYE 2019

Light Up the Night held their 4th annual Tractor & Truck run on New Year's Eve 2019 to highlight suicide awareness, mental health issues and the help and supports available locally and Nationwide.

Participation in the event this year was huge and saw 520 vehicles depart Ballyragget, lighting up the roads of North Kilkenny and South Laois spreading awareness as they moved through the route.

The event raised over €15,000 and Anam Cara Tipperary were honoured to be one of the nominated charities to receive funds. A big thank you to all who organised and participated, and donated to the event.



### ANAM CARA EXPAND THEIR TEAM

We are delighted to welcome Karen O'Shea to the Anam Cara Team to head up our Fundraising and Communications moving forward.

Karen will have responsibility for funding opportunities that arise through both government and corporate bodies along with raising the profile of Anam Cara nationwide. We wish her the very best of luck in this exciting role.