

## **Ireland's Road Safety Champions 2017 Presented with 'Leading Lights in Road Safety' Awards by the Road Safety Authority**

**Wednesday 13 December 2017:** Richard Alcorn who survived a road traffic collision in 2006 and now gives his time freely to delivering road safety messages to young adults, has been awarded the Road Safety Authority 'Gertie Shields Supreme Award' in road safety for 2017. The award was presented to Richard Alcorn by Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport, Shane Ross TD, at the RSA's 10<sup>th</sup> annual 'Leading Lights in Road Safety' Awards in Croke Park.

In 2006, Richard Alcorn was involved in a very serious road traffic incident near his home town of Dunfanaghy, Co Donegal. He lost an arm, broke his neck, shattered his pelvis and broke both hips. He has battled to overcome his horrific injuries and has taken on a new role, advocating for road safety.

Richard delivers the road safety message to young people in Donegal, Mayo, Cavan and Kildare at events including Donegal County Council's Road Safe Road Show, held annually in Letterkenny, Co. Donegal. Richard has given his time freely and is always available to assist any group helping to promote road safety awareness.

A total of 25 individuals and organisations were honoured for their commitment and dedication to road safety at the tenth annual 'Leading Lights in Road Safety' Awards which were presented by RSA Chairperson Liz O'Donnell and RSA Chief Executive Moyagh Murdock in Croke Park today. MC for the day was RTÉ News Correspondent Teresa Mannion, with awards presented in categories including media, education, business, emergency services and public sector.

Minister of Transport, Tourism and Sport, Shane Ross TD said: "Congratulations to everyone who received an award today and on behalf of all road users, thank you for your commitment and dedication to making our roads safer. I'd like to particularly commend Richard Alcorn, a true inspiration. His bravery in not only dealing with the aftermath of such a life-changing incident but also using his experience to teach others, is why he is so deserving of the RSA Leading Lights in Road Safety Supreme Award."

Ms Liz O'Donnell, Chairperson of the RSA presented the awards, saying: "Road safety is about making the roads we share with our family, neighbours, friends and colleagues a safer place. It's about keeping our local communities safe. And that's why we are recognising the great work being celebrated here today. Work that is helping to make communities right across the country safer for all. Work that is making a difference and saving lives."

Ms Moyagh Murdock, Chief Executive of the Road Safety Authority said: "We received over 160 nominations across the Leading Lights awards categories this year. The high quality of projects being entered meant that it was the toughest year yet to pick winners. I'd like to commend those who sent in nominations, who recognised Leading Lights in their school, office or community, who are making a difference, and put them forward for awards. It is thanks to them that we hear about the great work being done around the country to promote road safety."

Among the winners were Donal O'Sullivan, who helped get the Junior Traffic Warden project off the ground in Carlow in 1970, an initiative that is still going strong almost 50 years later. The School Warden project provides a system whereby schoolchildren are conducted safely across the road at lunchtime and again in the evening time.

RTÉ One TV won the National Media award for the documentary 'After the Crash' which remembered every individual life lost on the roads in 2016. Eight families who had lost loved ones in road traffic collisions last year spoke on the programme about the impact of this loss on their lives.

Winners in the Education Award categories included two groups of students who campaigned for improved road conditions close to their school or college. The Student Council of Colaiste Mhuire lobbied the Tipperary County Council to demolish a wall and widen a footpath to make the approach to school safer for students; while students in St. Angela's College in Sligo were successful in having the speed limit on the approach road to the college reduced from 80kmph to 50kmph.

Dublin Bus took home the 'Public Sector' award for their training programme which focuses on improving awareness amongst Dublin Bus drivers in relation to cyclists. They commissioned a cyclist safety awareness video which now forms an integral part of ongoing driver training.

The RSA also presented 'Special Recognition' Awards to people or organisations who have demonstrated a commitment to road safety in their communities.

This year, 'Leading Lights in Road Safety Awards' were presented in the following categories: Education (Preschool, Primary, Secondary, Third Level, Community), Business, Emergency Services, Local Media, National Media, Road Safety Ambassador, Public Sector, CPC Training Organisation of the Year, CPC Trainer of the Year, Approved Driving Instructor (Car, Bus, Motorcycle), Future Award, and 'Special Recognition'. The winners were as follows:

- Business – McCaughey's Service Station, N2
- Education (Community) – Richard Alcorn
- Education (Pre-School) – Kilcloon Preschool, Batterstown, Co Meath
- Education (Primary) – Dunboyne Senior Primary School, Co. Meath
- Education (Secondary) – Colaiste Mhuire, Thurles, Co. Tipperary
- Education (Third Level) – St. Angela's College, Sligo
- Education (Special) – St. Joseph's Boarding, Cabra, Dublin 7
- Emergency Services – Schull Garda Station, Co. Cork
- Local Media – Tessa Fleming, Northern Sound, Monaghan
- National Media – RTÉ One, 'After the Crash'
- Road Safety Ambassador – Donal O'Sullivan

- Road Safety Officer – Caroline Casey, Cork County Council
- Public Sector – Dublin Bus
- CPC Training Organisation of the Year – Robert Ledwith Training
- CPC Trainer of the Year – Sean Cusack
- Future Award – TAILT
- Approved Driving Instructor (Car) – Philip Rice
- Approved Driving Instructor (Bus) – David Cox
- Approved Driving Instructor (Truck) – John Kearney
- Approved Driving Instructor (Motorcycle) – Thomas Tynan
- ‘Special Recognition’ Awards
  - Treacy’s Bar, Portlaoise
  - Operation Enable, Sgt. Peter Woods
  - RTE Drivetime
  - Phil Skelton

### **Leading Lights Winners 2017**

#### **‘Road Safety Ambassador’ Award: Donal J O’Sullivan**

Donal O’Sullivan was a Garda Sergeant in Carlow Town when he developed the Junior School Warden initiative, which began in the latter months of 1969 and was officially launched in 1970.

The objective of the School Warden project was to provide a system whereby schoolchildren were conducted safely across the road at lunchtime and again in the evening time.

Carlow was the first location where the Junior School Warden scheme was introduced however as time went on it was taken up at several locations throughout Ireland. Donal supported this roll-out by giving talks at many centres nationally as well as making a film to promote the system which was shown on RTE. Schoolchildren who participated in the Junior School Warden scheme acquired a sense of responsibility and leadership as well as being conscious about all aspects of road safety.

#### **‘Road Safety Officer’ Award: Caroline Casey**

Caroline Casey is the Cork County Council Safety Officer. She is very active at every level from pre-school to post primary and with the public in general. She completed a H.DiP in Coaching & Coaching Psychology in University College Cork (UCC) this year. Her research project was based on safety education for children & taking the coaching approach.

The coaching approach to safety education is an empowering experience for the children giving them the opportunity to participate in the process of creating new knowledge and accountability for their own attitudes, behaviour and safety in everyday events. Caroline develops educational programmes and materials to engage young people with all aspects of Road Safety.

#### **‘Business’ Award: McCaughey’s Top 24 hour Service Station**

McCaughey’s Top 24 hour Service Station has been promoting road safety awareness for several years as the service station is close to the location of many road traffic fatalities and serious incident. In 2017, in cooperation with Monaghan Road Safety Working Together, McCaughey’s held a Road Safety Awareness Day at the service station. The purpose of the event was to increase Road Safety awareness on the N2, which has a history of fatal head-on collisions above the national average.

#### **‘Education Pre-Primary’ Award: Kilcloon Preschool, Batterstown, Co Meath**

Each year, Kilcloon Pre-school runs a Children’s “Road Safety Awareness Month”. The objectives are to build awareness around road safety, the importance of being safe as there are many cars in and out of the car park and to give the children time to practise what they have learnt. Kilcloon Preschool emphasises the importance of the child’s awareness of road and car safety. This can be seen through the repetition of vocabulary, taking action and demonstrating safety to the children and through all the RSA equipment used throughout the preschool on a daily basis.

#### **‘Education – Primary’: Dunboyne Senior Primary School**

Dunboyne Senior Primary School has a proud tradition of promoting road safety awareness for many years. The school promotes walk to school and cycle to school initiatives as well as road safety awareness. The aim is to ensure that their pupils are thoroughly educated and well informed on all aspects of road safety and that the key safety messages are delivered to the whole school community. The school works collaboratively with their Community Garda, Garda Cathal Walsh, the Parents’ Association, Road Safety Promotion Officer, Sarah O’Connell (RSA), Meath County Council, Generali, Meath Chronicle, Active School Flag, Healthy Ireland Health Promoting Schools and the wider school community.

#### **‘Education – Secondary’ Award: Colaiste Mhuire Thurles**

The student council in Coláiste Mhuire successfully lobbied the local council to have a wall demolished between the school and the nearest cross roads. This involved consultation with the GAA (Semple Stadium), Tegasc and the local council. As a project, it had been mooted several times over a 25-year period as the stretch of road in question was a big safety concern. This team project was proposed and led by the student council in Coláiste Mhuire.

The student council aimed to get the local county council to demolish a wall and widen a footpath to make the approach to the school safer for students. To do this, representations made to the local council. A proposal was written up and presented to the local council. They held a meeting held with local engineers and council representatives. In the last few

weeks their plan has been accepted by the county council and the wall is being demolished. This project is a very good example of students in action.

### **‘Education – Third Level’ Award: St. Angela’s College, Sligo**

The students of St. Angela’s wanted to see the the Lough Gill Loop Road, which leads to the College, upgraded from a local county Road to a main road. They hoped to see the speed limit reduced from 80kph to 50kph and the dangerous bend before the college removed. This was very dangerous particularly for large coaches accessing the college. Darragh Gilmartin, Keith Lynch, Lisa Hughes and Richard Patterson were the students who pioneered the project. With no previous experience, they were required to actively engage in politics in lobbying for change. The campaign has achieved some of its aims. The speed limit was reduced and the dangerous bend is to be removed in 2018.

### **‘Education – Special’ Award: St. Joseph’s Boarding**

St. Joseph’s Boarding is a boarding residence for 22 young deaf boys, ranging from primary to post primary. They are trying to develop life skills with the boys. Part of this life skills programme is road safety awareness. Some of the boys are particularly vulnerable as they are profoundly deaf and do not wear hearing aids or cochlear implants.

The people behind this included a team of staff and a RSA facilitator, who aimed to create more awareness while out on the roads and understanding of road safety and personal safety.

Road safety training is now being delivered to boys of all ages through the staff team, starting with the basics first, pressing the button at traffic lights, looking left and right crossing the road, crossing only at pedestrian crossings on main roads. The overall aim is that boys will be able to travel independently without supervision from staff or older boarders.

### **‘Education – Community’ Award: Richard Alcorn**

In 2006, Richard Alcorn was involved in a very serious road traffic incident near his home town of Dunfanaghy, Co Donegal. He lost an arm, broke his neck, shattered his pelvis and broke both hips.

He has battled to overcome his horrific injuries and keeps delivering the message ‘Remember, the next time it could be you’, to young people in Donegal, Mayo, Cavan and Kildare at road safety events including Donegal County Council’s Road Safe Road Show, held annually in Letterkenny, Co. Donegal. Launched in 2007, it has been seen by thousands of students from Donegal and Northern Ireland. Richard has given his time freely and is always available to assist any group helping to promote road safety awareness.

### **‘Emergency Services’ Award: Schull Garda Station**

The Mizen is policed by three Gardaí who carry out both policing duties and who also dedicate their time to promoting road safety - Jonathan O’Donovan, Jonathan McCarthy and Anthony Roche. They visit the schools in the area several times a year to promote road safety, regularly distribute high visibility clothing and promote cycle safety to the large

groups of cyclists each weekend in the Mizen; and have given out a large number of 1.5 Keep Your Distance window stickers, RSA Lights and Hi- vis materials.

Last year they held a fantastic "safety at land and at sea" project promoting safety of which road safety was a big part. All emergency services were involved and Minister Michael Creed opened the event.

Schull Garda Station play a proactive role in the local community educating people on road safety and making the Mizen a better place for the people that live there.

#### **'Local Media' Award: Tessa Fleming, Northern Sound**

Tessa presents 'The Wider View' programme on Northern Sound FM, and has been heavily involved in road safety campaigns over the last number of years in Counties Monaghan and Cavan. Her show regularly features interviews with local Gardaí, the Co Monaghan Road Safety Officer and other emergency services members aimed at promoting national initiatives including 'Slow Down Day', 'Irish Road Safety Week', 'Check It Fits' etc, as well as focusing on local issues such as the everyday dangers on the N2.

On August 4th 2017, Northern Sound FM outside broadcast unit focused on road safety ahead of a busy Bank Holiday weekend. This nine-hour broadcast was one of many Road Safety initiatives the station has been involved in throughout 2017 and previous years.

#### **'National Media' Award: RTE After the Crash**

##### **Nominated by Seán Mac Giolla Phádraig**

In the second half of 2016, there was a lot of press coverage around an upward trend in the numbers of those being killed on our roads. Knowing that the human impact could sometimes be lost by focusing on the statistics and recognising the impact of previous public service reports on road deaths, RTE producer/director Aifric Ní Chianáin set about making a documentary that would remember every individual life lost in the year. Together with RTE Researcher Anita Ward, Aifric began compiling a definitive list, the names of those who died in road collisions in 2016.

In After the Crash, eight brave families spoke movingly and honestly about the impact of the loss of their loved one on them, while one headmaster spoke of the impact on his school. Each person who partook, did so in the hope their contribution would help save lives.

#### **'Public Sector' Award: Dublin Bus**

The number of cyclists on Dublin City roads has increased significantly over the last 10 years. Approximately 900 buses are sharing road space with cyclists during peak times. Dublin Bus have been proactive by acknowledging and recognising the significant increase in cyclists and the corresponding increased hazard that this can present for their drivers. Dublin Bus wanted to explore innovative methods to further improve the awareness amongst their drivers in relation to cyclists, and also to promote the importance of cyclist safety to a wider audience.

They commissioned a cyclist safety awareness video which now forms an integral part of ongoing driver training. The film was launched in 2016 and was rolled out to all employees

attending their Training Centre for initial driver training, 2-yearly refresher training and Driver CPC.

#### **‘Future’ Award: TAILT**

##### **Nominated by Dr. Matteo Zallio**

As passionate cyclists, the team behind TAILT know that it is important to be seen from all directions, communicate the intention to turn, let the cyclist rely on his own equipment and protect our-self from water and mud. They have developed the world’s first interactive system that provides safety, comfort and improved visibility for all cyclists.

It is composed of a set of responsive LED lights, front and rear, remote controls for turn signals and embedded 180° visibility turn signals as well as an automatic system detects when the cyclist slow down and activate a rear brake light. TAILT would enhance the level of safety, comfort and security for the majority of cyclist, commuters and people that use the bicycle.

#### **‘Special Recognition’ Award: Operation Enable, Sgt. Peter Woods**

Following a conversation with a disabled motorist in December 2016, Sergeant Peter Woods decided to put together an operation to take a closer look at the difficulties caused for disabled motorists by the misuse of disabled parking bays and parking permits in the Dublin City area. Sergeant Woods approached a number of stakeholders, including the Irish Wheelchair Association, the Disabled Drivers Association, Dublin City Council and Dublin Street Parking Services and it was agreed to work together on the project.

‘Operation Enable’ is an ongoing initiative, but since its inception earlier this year, it has proven hugely successful in apprehending offenders abusing the permit system and raising public awareness on the importance of the facilities provided for disabled motorists.

#### **‘Special Recognition’ Award: Treacy’s Bar, The Heath Portlaoise**

Treacy’s Bar & Restaurant is located approx. 5kms from Portlaoise, in a rural setting with no public transport. They provide a free taxi service to all their customers within a 12kms range. Their 8-seat mini bus is PSV licensed and insured. This service has undoubtedly has stopped drink driving and in turn may save lives.

#### **‘Special Recognition’ Award: RTÉ Drivetime**

In 2017, against a backdrop of ongoing concerns over road deaths, drink driving and policing, RTE’s Drivetime radio programme set out to focus on the key issues, speak to affected parties and demonstrate how road safety in Ireland is monitored and implemented. Drivetime’s team of reporters – working with An Garda Síochána and the Road Safety Authority - went out to schools and public events, travelled rural roads with Gardaí and spoke to people directly affected by poor road safety and dangerous driving.

Reporters Brian Lally and John Cooke used a variety of reporting methods to communicate the seriousness of the issues involved and, importantly, to highlight best practice and policy solutions. Brian Lally’s work profiles those people making extraordinary efforts to raise awareness, from children of school going age and their parents to the best

international experts. Drivetime's sustained focus on road safety throughout 2017 has helped to raise awareness of the vital necessity of safe behaviour on Ireland's roads.

The coverage has been nationwide, stretching from the suburbs of the capital to the rural roads of the west of Ireland.

#### **'Special Recognition' Award: Phil Skelton**

Phil Skelton founded the 'Stayin' Alive at 1.5' campaign in 2013 following the deaths of two cyclists in Wexford as a result of collisions with cars travelling in the same direction. The campaign raises awareness of the need to allow sufficient space when overtaking cyclists and campaigns for the introduction of a Minimum Passing Distance Law (MPDL).

Phil has distributed approximately 10,000 car window stickers with the 1.5m message and supported creation of similar stickers in Sligo, Wexford and Kerry. Five local authorities have introduced the 'Stayin' Alive at 1.5' logo on suitable vehicles (Wexford, Kerry, Donegal, Sligo, Mayo).

Phil Skelton has been successful in increasing motorists' awareness of safe overtaking distance. He has shown an outstanding level of commitment to the Stayin' Alive at 1.5 campaign. The range and intensity of activities undertaken requires a huge voluntary time commitment.

#### **'Approved Driving Instructor – Car' Award: Philip Rice**

The 'Approved Driving Instructor – Car' award has been awarded to Philip Rice. Philip trains drivers in the Galway region and has been an ADI since January 2009. Philip has a keen interest in road safety and also works as an industry representative on the RSA's ADI Stakeholder Forum helping the RSA to develop the driving instruction industry and standard of driver training. Philip is also involved in Driver CPC training which is a periodic refresher training for bus and truck drivers.

#### **'Approved Driving Instructor – Bus' Award: David Cox.**

The 'Approved Driving Instructor – Bus' Award has been awarded to David Cox. David commenced work as an ADI training instructor in early 2011. David delivers training in Dublin and is an excellent ambassador of road safety through his work as an ADI.

#### **'Approved Driving Instructor – Truck' Award: John Kearney.**

The 'Approved Driving Instructor – Truck' Award has been awarded to John Kearney. John is a very experienced ADI working in the Longford/Midlands area delivering a high standard of training. John is an ADI since 2009

#### **'Approved Driving Instructor – Motorcycle' Award: Thomas Tynan.**

The 'Approved Driving Instructor – Motorcycle' award has been awarded to Thomas Tynan. Thomas is a vastly experienced motorcycle rider and he trains motorcyclists from the Thurles and surrounding areas. He has been registered as a professional IBT instructor with the RSA since March 2010.

#### **'CPC Training Organisation of the Year' Award: Robert Ledwith Training.**

The 'CPC Training Organisation of the Year' award winner is Robert Ledwith Training. Situated in Drogheda, drivers attending CPC training with Robert Ledwith Training acknowledge the hard work that goes into facilitating quality CPC periodic training to professional drivers by providing very positive feedback through the RSA's training evaluation scheme. For this reason Robert Ledwith Training has been selected as this year's CPC Training Organisation of the Year

**'CPC Trainer of the Year' Award: Sean Cusack**

The 'CPC Trainer of the Year' award winner is Sean Cusack. Sean has been selected as CPC Trainer of the Year following excellent feedback from drivers attending his training sessions. Effective CPC trainers need to engage with drivers, recognise their experience and expertise and to use them as a resource to help ensure key road safety messages are taken on board. Engaging with those experienced drivers can be both fulfilling and challenging at times but Sean who has been an approved trainer since 2010 continuously demonstrates a real flair for doing just that.