**IMMEDIATE RELEASE – Thursday, 3rd May 2018**

**\*Pictures available from Maxwell Photography**

**RIVERDANCE HELP TO PUT THE KETTLE ON TO CELEBRATE THE ALZHEIMER SOCIETY OF IRELAND’S TEA DAY 2018**

The Alzheimer Society of Ireland (ASI) is thrilled to announce that the world renowned phenomenon Riverdance have become our latest charity partner for the first time.

To celebrate the beginning of this collaboration, Riverdance performed live at the ASI’s National Tea Day 2018 event at The Orchard Day Care Centre in Blackrock, Co Dublin earlier today. This performance launched Riverdance’s summer season at the Gaiety Theatre.

Riverdance was accompanied at National Tea Day event by very special musical guests. Riverdance’s lead soloist Edel Murphy accompanied the The Forget Me Nots choir, an inclusive community choir for older people, family, friends and neighbours.

Riverdance, in association with the ASI, will be hosting a number of other dance related events throughout the summer as well.

Alzheimer’s Tea Dayis the ASI’s largest annual fundraising campaign, supported for the third year by Medtronic, a global leader in medical technology.

Since the very first Alzheimer’s Tea Day in 1994 almost €8 million has been raised to provide essential support to the 55,000 people living with dementia in Ireland today.

Every year, thousands of people host tea parties in their homes, offices and schools. All funds that are raised locally from Tea Day events will stay locally.

There is nothing we Irish love more than sharing a cup of tea with friends and families, where the issues of the day are discussed.

With one in two people in Ireland knowing someone who has been diagnosed with dementia, calling around for a cup of tea is also a great way to bring a little light into the day of someone who may be isolated in their own community.

The ASI is the national leader in advocating for and providing dementia-specific supports and services. Each year it provides more than one million hours of community-based dementia-specific care throughout Ireland.

**Speaking of the announcement today Julian Erskine said:** “We are delighted and proud to be in partnership with The Alzheimer Society of Ireland during our summer season in The Gaiety Theatre. We hope that singing and dancing together will help raise awareness and much-needed funds to support those living with dementia. We all have been touched by or know people with dementia, including our ex-Director of Operations Ronan Smith, and so this is a cause close to our hearts. Starting with our performance today at the ASI’s Orchard Day Care Centre in Blackrock for National Tea Day 2018, we look forward to helping increase understanding and empathy for everyone affected by dementia.”

**Mairéad Dillon, Head of Fundraising with The Alzheimer Society of Ireland said:** “We are delighted to announce our charity partnership with Riverdance. We are looking forward to working alongside such a well recognised international brand and raising awareness about dementia in Ireland. Our launch today was a very special event, not only marking Alzheimer's Tea Day but also the start of this exciting new partnership. This event involved many of our clients showing how that people with dementia can live well and stay involved with their communities and pastimes that they enjoy such as ceili dancing.

**The Alzheimer Society of Ireland CEO Pat McLoughlin said:**“The funds that Tea Day generates make a real and lasting difference to the lives of people in local communities living with dementia and their family carers. We are delighted that everyone is supporting our Tea Day this year.  All funds raised by this fundraising campaign that are raised locally will stay local and will help to support vital lifelines across our range of services including Day Care, Home Care, Family Carer Training, Dementia Advisers and our Alzheimer National Helpline. It is estimated that there are 55,000 people with dementia in Ireland and for every one person with dementia three others are directly affected. The number of people with dementia is expected to more than double over the next 20 years to 113,000 in 2036. This is a pressing issue for our society.”

**Bronwyn Brophy, Vice President EMEA, Early Technologies with Medtronic said:** “Medtronic is proud to support the Alzheimer Tea Day campaign, which has played a significant role over many years in boosting public awareness of the disease. Tea Day is supported through the Medtronic Healthy Communities Fund, which promotes healthcare and well-being in communities, in line with the Government’s ‘Healthy Ireland’ framework. Our partnership is enhanced by the support of our Irish employees who have dedicated much time and energy to a cause close to the hearts of many families in the communities where we operate.”

**For more information or to register for Alzheimer’s Tea Day fundraising pack, visit** [**www.teaday.ie**](http://www.teaday.ie) **or call 1800 719 820**

**Ends**

**For more information, please contact Paul O’Connell on 087 9862691 or** **paul.oconnell@alzheimer.ie**

**Notes to the Editor:**

The number of people with dementia in Ireland is expected to more than double over the next 18 years, from 55,000 today to 113,000 in 2036.

* Dementia is an umbrella term used to describe a range of conditions which cause changes and damage to the brain.
* Dementia is progressive. There is currently no cure. Dementia is not simply a health issue but a social issue that requires a community response.
* The majority of people with dementia (63%) live at home in the community. Over 180,000 people in Ireland are currently or have been carers for a family member or partner with dementia with many more providing support and care in other ways.
* Each year over 4,000 people develop dementia. That’s at least 11 people every day and anyone can get dementia - even people in their 30s/40s/50s.
* 1 in 10 people diagnosed with dementia in Ireland are under 65.
* The overall cost of dementia care in Ireland is just over €1.69 billion per annum; 48% of this is attributable to family care; 43% is accounted for by residential care; formal health and social care services contribute only 9% to the total cost.
* The Alzheimer Society of Ireland National Helpline is open six days a week Monday to Friday 10am–5pm and Saturday 10am–4pm on 1800 341 341.
* Figures referenced to Cahill, S. & Pierce, M. (2013) *The Prevalence of Dementia in Ireland*

**About Riverdance:**

The Riverdance summer season at the Gaiety Theatre, Dublin runs from 12th June to 9th September with seven performances each week. Composed by Bill Whelan, produced by Moya Doherty and directed by John McColgan, the original stage spectacular Riverdance has travelled the globe for more than two decades captivating a worldwide live audience of over 25 million fans. Critically acclaimed as “*The Original …The Best”* the show features the exceptional talented Riverdance principal and troupe dancers, musicians and singers and international artists from Spain, Russia and the USA. www.riverdance.com

**About The Forget-Me-Nots:**

The Forget-Me-Nots Organisation is a registered charity in Ireland (No. 20144661) offering an inclusive community choir for older people, family, friends and neighbours. It is especially welcoming to those affected by dementia and memory loss. Participants are drawn from the neighbourhood, the local HSE Day Care centres, the Alzheimer Society of Irland’s Social Clubs in the region, local residential nursing homes, and from the wider Dublin North-East community.

**About Medtronic:**

Medtronic plc ([www.medtronic.com](http://www.medtronic.com/)), headquartered in Dublin, Ireland, is among the world’s largest medical technology, services and solutions companies – alleviating pain, restoring health and extending life for millions of people around the world. Medtronic employs more than 88,000 people worldwide, serving physicians, hospitals and patients in approximately 160 countries. The company is focused on collaborating with stakeholders around the world to take healthcare Further, Together.

**About Tea Day:**

Alzheimer’s Tea Day, which is held on Thursday, May 3rd 2018 is the largest annual fundraising campaign in The Alzheimer Society of Ireland’s (ASI) calendar and is supported for the third year running by Medtronic. Since the very first Alzheimer’s Tea Day in 1994 almost €8 million has been raised to provide essential support to the 55,000 people living with dementia in Ireland today. Every year thousands of people host tea parties in their homes, offices and schools. This year we’re asking you to join them and register to host your very own Tea Day. For more information, go to [www.teaday.ie](http://www.teaday.ie)