**IMMEDIATE RELEASE – Monday, April 16th 2018**

**Pictures attached**

**‘DANCING WITH THE STARS’ JUDGE LORAINE BARRY JOINS THE ALZHEIMER SOCIETY OF IRELAND AS THEIR NEW AMBASSADOR FOR TEA DAY 2018**

With over 50 national and international dance champion titles to her name; Loraine Barry knows a thing or two about a thing or two about lifting a cup. And now RTÉ’s ‘Dancing with the Stars’ judge will be helping with a different kind of cup as she becomes The Alzheimer Society of Ireland’s (ASI) newest ambassador for the 2018 Alzheimer’s Tea Day.

Alzheimer’s Tea Dayis the ASI’s largest annual fundraising campaign, supported for the third year by Medtronic, a global leader in medical technology and Loraine will be helping Dáithí Ó Sé to out the kettle on for The Alzheimer Society of Ireland’s Tea Day on Thursday, May 3rd.

Loraine has kindly agreed to donate a green dress, which she wore on the judging panel on ‘Dancing with the Stars’ recently, during a raffle at The Alzheimer Society of Ireland’s national Tea Day event at The Orchard Day Care and Respite Centre in Blackrock, Co Dublin on Tea Day 2018.

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 are asking you to join them. All funds that are raised locally from Tea Day events will stay locally.

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.

There is nothing we Irish love more than sharing a cup of tea with friends and families, where the problems of the day are tackled. With 1 in 2 people in Ireland knowing someone who has been diagnosed with dementia, calling round for a cup of tea is also a great way to bring a little light into the day of someone who may be isolated.

**The Alzheimer Society of Ireland Ambassador Loraine Barry said:**  “I would like to raise awareness of the benefits of dancing. As you probably already know, my love, and my life, is devoted to dancing. Dancing is wonderful for so many reasons; one of the biggest is because of the benefits to brain health. When you dance you need your brain to coordinate to the body to sound of the music. There is counting of timing, rhythm and coordinating of the body, and that of another body, if you dance as a couple. Research has proven that dancing is a benefit to people for health, loneliness and also well-being. I’m honored and privileged to be a part of Tea Day 2018 and to put a spotlight not just on dementia and the amazing work of The Alzheimer Society of Ireland.”

**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.”

**Head of Fundraising with the Alzheimer Society of Ireland Mairéad Dillon:** “We are pleased to welcome the addition of ‘Dancing with the Stars’ judge, Loraine Barry as an official ambassador for The Alzheimer Society of Ireland.  We’re very grateful to Loraine for joining our team and taking time out of her schedule to help raise awareness of dementia and assist us in removing the stigma associated with the condition in Ireland. We look forward to working with Loraine in the coming months.”

**For more information or to register for Alzheimer’s Tea Day fundraising pack, visit** [**www.teaday.ie**](http://www.teaday.ie) **or call (01) 207 3833**

**Ends**

**For more information 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 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)

**Ends**