**IMMEDIATE RELEASE – TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 6th 2018**

**\*Images attached**

**ADVOCATE KATHY RYAN AND TV3 PRESENTER DERIC Ó hARTAGAIN WILL LEAD THE ALZHEIMER SOCIETY OF IRELAND’S CAMINO ADVENTURE**

Advocate Kathy Ryan and TV3 presenter Deric Ó hArtagáin will be tackling The Alzheimer Society of Ireland’s Camino Adventure to raise funds and public awareness for people with dementia in Ireland during World Alzheimer’s Month in September.

Kathy, who was diagnosed with younger on-set Alzheimer in January 2014 and is Vice-Chair of the ASI’s Irish Dementia Working Group (IDWG), is looking forward to the challenge with Deric and a team of like-minded walkers in Spain from September 8th-15th.

This will be the first time that a person with dementia has taken part in The ASI’s Camino Adventure which is a 115km trek from Sarria to Compostela.

Kathy, who lives in Tipperary, has described the upcoming adventure as a dream come true and is eager to show that her condition is not a barrier and people with dementia can still do the things that others can do.

Kathy and Deric are now spreading the ‘can do’ attitude and are hoping that others will follow in their footsteps by signing up to this unique experience along the Camino de Santiago.

The well-known Camino walk is open to participants are men and women of all ages and if members of the public are interested in joining Kathy and Deric, please follow this link and fill out our form to receive a copy of our Camino Brochure. https://tinyurl.com/y6vckpst

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.

The ASI provides supports and services in local communities around Ireland and provides a range of services including day care, home care, family carer training, social clubs and Alzheimer Cafes.

**Advocate Kathy Ryan said:** “Walking the Camino de Santiago is a dream come true for me. When I was diagnosed with dementia in 2014, I thought my chance of doing something like this was over. But, thanks to The Alzheimer Society of Ireland, I now have the opportunity to take on this challenge and carry a banner for all people with dementia on this epic walk. This challenge shows that people with dementia can still do the things that other people can do. I am looking forward to following a training programme over the coming months and getting ready for the challenge. I must also thank my walking partner, Deric, for putting his heart and soul into this challenge; it means so much to me. September will be World Alzheimer’s Month and we are both looking forward to raising awareness about dementia and how communities around Ireland can be more dementia aware, which means showing basic kindness and respect to people who have dementia and their families and carers in Ireland.”

**TV3 Presenter Deric Ó hArtagáin said:** “‘I’m both privileged and delighted to be trekking the famed pilgrim path of the 'Camino de Santiago' later this September in aid of The Alzheimer Society of Ireland. Living with dementia is a very challenging journey for both the person with the condition and their carers; so our aim will be to break down the barriers and silence the stigma with every step we take.”

**ENDS**

**For more information contact The Alzheimer Society of Ireland Communications Manager Cormac Cahill on 086 044 1214 or** **cormac.cahill@alzheimer.ie**

**About The Alzheimer Society of Ireland (ASI):**

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

**The ASI provides the following services:**

* National Helpline
* Social Clubs
* Support Groups
* Day Care Services
* Home Care
* Dementia Advisor Service
* Mobile Information Bus

**Helpline:** 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.
**Website:** [www.alzheimer.ie](http://www.alzheimer.ie/)
**Twitter:** @alzheimersocirl
**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/TheAlzheimerSocietyofIreland/](http://www.facebook.com/TheAlzheimerSocietyofIreland/)

**About Dementia:**

* The number of people with dementia in Ireland is expected to more than double over the next 20 years, from 55,000 today to 113,000 in 2036.
* Dementia is progressive. There is currently no cure. Dementia is not simply a health issue but a social issue that requires a community response.
* 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.
* 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*