

**IMMEDIATE RELEASE – Tuesday, 25<sup>th</sup> January 2022**

## **Two Times ‘Dancing with the Stars’ winner Pasquale La Rocca backs Denim Day for Dementia campaign, in memory of grandparents**

- Denim Day for Dementia held on Friday, 4<sup>th</sup> March
- Register for Denim Day pack on [www.alzheimer.ie](http://www.alzheimer.ie)
- The ASI must raise over €3 million every year to keep services going

***\*Free images attached, high resolution images available on request and issued to photo desks by Photocall Ireland***

Two times ‘Dancing with the Stars’ winner, Performer and Choreographer Pasquale La Rocca is calling on members of the public to support The Alzheimer Society of Ireland’s (The ASI) annual nationwide Denim Day for Dementia fundraising campaign, kindly supported by Fujitsu, on Friday, March 4<sup>th</sup> to raise funds for vital dementia supports and services.

The new ambassador for The ASI is asking everyone from around Ireland to don their denims – to crèche, school, their place of work or wherever they are – on Friday, March 4<sup>th</sup> and donate just €2 to support the 64,000 people living with dementia and their carers.

The ASI welcomes Fujitsu, the global information and communication technology (ICT) company, as the first ever sponsor of Denim Day for Dementia.

The ASI is excited to bring the popular fundraising campaign back for its fifth year, after it was cancelled in 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

To get involved, members of the public are being encouraged to order their Denim Day for Dementia pack by registering online at [www.alzheimer.ie](http://www.alzheimer.ie) or by contacting The ASI’s fundraising team on [fundraising@alzheimer.ie](mailto:fundraising@alzheimer.ie) or (01) 207 3800.

The ASI needs to raise €3.2 million each year just to maintain vital supports and services for people living with dementia and their family carers across the country, and this campaign aims to raise €30,000 to support people with dementia and their struggling families. One in 10 people diagnosed with dementia in Ireland today is under the age of 65.



Since the Covid-19 public health crisis took hold in Ireland, The ASI has continued to support people with dementia and their families, providing a range of services including Home Care, Day Care, Dementia Advisers, National Helpline, Online Family Carer Training and Online Social Clubs and Alzheimer Cafés.

***Two times ‘Dancing with the Stars’ winner and latest ASI Ambassador, Pasquale La Rocca said:***

*“I’m honoured to team up with The Alzheimer Society of Ireland and show my support for Denim Day for Dementia. We can all do our part and wear our denims on Friday, March 4<sup>th</sup> to raise vital funds for the 64,000 people living with dementia and their carers. My two beloved grandparents had Dementia and passed away only last year, within six months of each other, so this is something that is very close to my heart. Through my grandparents’ diagnosis of dementia, I understand how difficult and emotional it can be for families. I have learned that we really shouldn’t waste a second with our loved ones; time is just so precious. My grandparents were my biggest influences and supporters – my grandpa used to take me to rehearsals and competitions – so to get behind this worthy campaign is special to me. Each year, over 11,000 people develop dementia. That’s at least 30 people every day and anyone can get dementia – even people in their thirties, forties and fifties. I would encourage everyone to support this campaign by registering for their Denim Day for Dementia pack on [www.alzheimer.ie](http://www.alzheimer.ie).”*

***The Alzheimer Society of Ireland Head of Fundraising, Mairéad Dillon said:***

*“We are delighted to welcome Pasquale La Rocca as The Alzheimer Society’s latest ambassador. We’re very grateful he is supporting this year’s Denim Day for Dementia, in memory of his grandparents, to assist The Alzheimer Society of Ireland to raise much-needed funds for people with dementia and helping us bring the subject of dementia out of the shadows, especially amongst a younger generation. Fundraising is essential for the charity so we can keep our vital services going each year – in fact, €3.2 million needs to be raised each year just to keep them going. Having had to cancel Denim Day for Dementia in 2021 due to Covid-19, we’re excited to bring it back this year and we’re delighted that Fujitsu have come on board as the campaign’s first ever sponsors. It is an easy and fun campaign to take part in and I would ask the public to support Denim Day for Dementia by signing up on [www.alzheimer.ie](http://www.alzheimer.ie) today.”*

***Fujitsu Ireland CEO, Tony O’Malley said:***

*“We at Fujitsu are delighted and honoured to lend our support to Denim Day for Dementia. Events like this are a vital part of The Alzheimer Society’s fundraising efforts and we are proud to continue our long-standing partnership with the ASI by becoming the first ever Denim Day for Dementia sponsor. The Society does absolutely incredible work supporting people with dementia, their families, carers,*

*and supporters in communities all over Ireland. Everyone at Fujitsu Ireland will be wearing their denim with pride on Friday March 4<sup>th</sup>, and we'd love for everyone from around Ireland to join us.”*

## **ENDS**

**For more information, please email ASI Communications Officer Niamh Burke at [niamh.burke@alzheimer.ie](mailto:niamh.burke@alzheimer.ie).**

## **NOTES TO THE EDITOR**

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

The Alzheimer Society of Ireland is the leading dementia specific service provider in Ireland. The Alzheimer Society of Ireland works across the country in the heart of local communities providing dementia specific services and supports and advocating for the rights and needs of all people living with dementia and their carers. Our vision is an Ireland where people on the journey of dementia are valued and supported. A national non-profit organisation, The Alzheimer Society of Ireland advocates, empowers and champions the rights of people living with dementia and their communities to quality support and services. The Alzheimer Society of Ireland also operates the Alzheimer National Helpline offering information and support to anyone affected by dementia on 1800 341 341.

### **The ASI turns 40 (1982-2022):**

The Alzheimer Society of Ireland celebrates 40 years in 2022. There have been so many milestones achieved since 1982 when carers Winifred Bligh and Imelda Gillespie held their first meeting and changed the face of dementia care in Ireland forever. 40 years on, and The ASI is now a national organisation providing support, services and care to the 64,000 people living with dementia and their family carers in Ireland today. In 2022, we want to mark this milestone and our many achievements together with our staff, branches, volunteers and supporters.

### **Alzheimer National Helpline:**

For more information on our supports and services during this challenging time, please contact The Alzheimer Society of Ireland National Helpline. The Helpline is open six days a week Monday to Friday 10am–5pm and Saturday 10am–4pm on 1800 341 341. Email at [helpline@alzheimer.ie](mailto:helpline@alzheimer.ie) or via Live Chat at [www.alzheimer.ie](http://www.alzheimer.ie)

## **ABOUT DEMENTIA**

- There are 64,000 people with dementia in Ireland and the number of people with the condition will more than double in the next 25 years to over 150,000 by 2045.\*
- There are 11,000 new cases of dementia in Ireland each year. That's at least 30 people every day and anyone can get dementia - even people in their 30s/40s/50s.\*\*
- 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.
- 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.

*Figures referenced to Cahill, S. & Pierce, M. (2013) The Prevalence of Dementia in Ireland*

*\*Figure referenced from Alzheimer Europe (2020) Dementia in Europe Yearbook 2019 'Estimating the prevalence of dementia in Europe'*

*\*\*Figure referenced from Pierce, T., O'Shea, E. and Carney P. (2018) Estimates of the prevalence, incidence and severity of dementia in Ireland.*