



UACHTARÁN NA hÉIREANN  
PRESIDENT OF IRELAND

### MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT MICHAEL D.HIGGINS

We are very fortunate, in Ireland, to have so many active citizens willing to engage in making our country a fairer place in which to live, work, and belong. I am delighted, therefore, to have this opportunity to send my best wishes to all those who, by freely giving of their time and skills, are helping to shape a society which is inclusive and welcoming to all its members. Because of our generous army of volunteers, and the sense of human decency that lies at the heart of all they do, the lives of many individuals, families and communities across the country have been transformed, enriched and enabled to move forward in new and better directions.

The work of our volunteers signifies a real commitment to active citizenship. Such work also demonstrates an understanding that inclusive and ethical societies can only grow from communities that are ethical in their structure and practice; communities that work together, in solidarity, recognising the needs of all their members including, in particular, those who are vulnerable and marginalized. As a nation we must continue to seek to create spaces in which active citizenship can flourish and grow, and to ensure that the well-being of all our members is embedded into the policies that guide our society.

This year, as we face the great global health emergency presented by the Coronavirus pandemic, we have witnessed many examples of the extraordinary generosity and empathy that exists in abundance amongst our citizens.

I have, indeed, been very inspired by the many imaginative and thoughtful ways in which assistance and support has been maintained and extended within our society throughout this difficult time. By working to assist those who are vulnerable, isolated or most at risk, or to ensure the continued provision of valuable community connections and cultural outlets, our volunteers are testament to the spirit of community that is so critical to the crafting of a society that is just and ethical.

I thank you all for the many acts of solidarity you have extended to your fellow citizens, ensuring that together we can navigate our way safely towards a shared and brighter future.

May I also take this opportunity to encourage all citizens to resolve, during this National Volunteering Week, to seek ways in which to make their own unique and valuable contribution to the creation of places of belonging and sharing for those with whom they share a community.

Go raibh míle maith agaibh go léir.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael D. Higgins". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'M' and a stylized 'H' at the end.

Michael D. Higgins  
Uachtarán na hÉireann  
President of Ireland