



Youth Work Ireland



Press Release

Saturday June 30th, 2019

Minister Katherine Zappone and former President, Mary McAleese march alongside LGBTI+ young people at Dublin PRIDE Parade

Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Katherine Zappone and Former President of Ireland, Dr Mary McAleese will march alongside hundreds of LGBTI+ young people at the Dublin Pride Parade tomorrow.

Youth Work Ireland and BeLong To Youth Services will facilitate the largest ever single group of young people marching under the banner 'Transforming Young LGBT+ Lives' with over 400 young people expected to march. This celebration comes alongside the launch of the National LGBTI+ Youth Strategy on Friday, highlighting the need for additional supports for LGBTI+ young people across Ireland.

According to 2017 research commissioned by BeLong To Youth Services and GCN Magazine, some 70% of LGBTI+ people do not feel safe at school. Growing up LGBTI+ can have harrowing effects on the mental health of young people when they are not accepted. According to 2016 LGBTIreland Report, LGBTI+ young people are three times more likely to attempt suicide, and two times more likely to self-harm than their non-LGBT+ friends because of anti LGBTI+ stigma, social exclusion and bullying.

Youth Work Ireland and BeLong To Youth Services host LGBTI+ support groups around Ireland providing essential spaces where young LGBTI+ people are equal, safe, valued and have access to the supports they need.

Minister Katherine Zappone for Children and Youth Affairs said:

"This Pride we gather under the banner 'We are Family' and I am proud to march alongside some of its younger members. Together we will celebrate what has been achieved in our country while also showing solidarity to those at home and abroad still confronted by inequality, prejudice and hate.

Together with young people the Government is confronting these divisions by launching and implementing the new LGBTI+ Youth Strategy, it will over the next three years set us on a path to becoming a country with full equality for all. Making this Pride one of the happiest of all!"

Former President of Ireland Dr Mary McAleese reflects on joining Dublin Pride for the first time:

"The 2018 Pride theme 'We are Family' has encouraged us to join the parade as a family which has members who are gay and members who are not. It is a great opportunity to showcase the diversity and inclusivity, the love and solidarity that characterises modern family life in Ireland."

Patrick Burke, CEO of Youth Work Ireland, said:

"Many years ago Ireland was a very different place, usually a very cold place for people to express a different sexual identity. It was still the tail end of this period when Youth Work Ireland realised it had a role, indeed an obligation, to support countless young people who faced this struggle day in day out. Several years later, in partnership with Belong To Youth Services we now have LGBTI+ projects all around Ireland. While there is more to do we can now say that the youth work sector truly led this remarkable change throughout Ireland. Pride is now an opportunity for the youth sector to showcase its work and contribution to a new Ireland. This year we have the added bonus of another new development in our area with a Luas stop outside our door enabling all our young participants to take public transport together to the start of the PRIDE Parade. We would like to salute the support of Transdev in providing a dedicated Luas Tram for this purpose which will add further to the sense of celebration for all our LGBTI+ youth projects participating in Pride."

Speaking about Pride 2018, Moninne Griffith, Executive Director of BeLong To Youth Services said:

"I am proud that Ireland has made great progress around LGBTI+ issues and that today, our LGBTI+ young people will march alongside two inspiring human rights activists who have paved the way for inclusion and equality. There is no doubt there has been a huge change in our country. But winning marriage equality and gender recognition hasn't solved everything for our communities. There are many thousands of people who continue to face harassment and prejudice as a result of their sexuality or gender identification. There is still much work to be done to achieve the kind of Ireland we voted for in May 2015.

The hopes and dreams of our young people are tied up in the pages of the new National LGBTI+ Youth Strategy. We look forward to its implementation and the impact it will have on their lives. Pride is a day to celebrate our journey towards an Ireland where our young people are visible, valued and equal."

Speaking about the dedicated Luas tram provided to bring LGBTI+ young people to the Pride Parade, Dervla Brophy, Communications Manager at Transdev said:

"As operators of Luas, Transdev is very proud to support Youth Work Ireland and BeLong To in their Dublin Pride breakfast event. We are delighted to play our part in making today a very special day by providing a dedicated Luas tram to transport 250 young LGBTI+ people from Youth Work Ireland's national offices on Lower Dominick Street to Stephen's Green, where they will take their place in the Dublin Pride Parade 2018."