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Media Information

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Triathlon Ireland and BMW back Pieta House.

Triathlon Ireland has today announced that it is supporting mental health with a significant alliance with Pieta House, Ireland's leading suicide prevention charity. This year, triathletes across Ireland will raise money to help suicide prevention through a joint initiative between Triathlon Ireland, BMW Ireland and Pieta House.

Funds that are raised will contribute to Pieta House's 'A Life a Day' initiative which focuses on raising money for the cost of a full programme of counselling for someone is suffering with their mental health. Funds will also support the Resilience Academy, an initiative by Pieta House which teaches school-going children positive mental health techniques and strategies. The Resilience Academy is a six-week, evidence-based programme that was designed 'with schools, for schools'. The programme aims to provide students with the skills and coping mechanisms needed to succeed in school and throughout their adult lives.

Any participant who signs up for an event that is sanctioned by Triathlon Ireland will have the opportunity to raise funds for Pieta House during their Triathlon journey. There is a hashtag for to try and raise as much awareness and funds for Pieta House; **#Tri4Pieta**. This initiative is being supported by BMW Ireland, Triathlon Ireland's title sponsor.

Off The Ball are also getting involved by partaking in their first Triathlon as a team to raise funds for Pieta House. On the 15th June, all six presenter from the popular sports media company will partake in the Bolands BMW Hook or by Crook Triathlon in Dunmore East.

The CEO of Triathlon Ireland, Chris Kitchen is urging the sport's 20,000 participants to get on board and help fundraise for a worthy cause:

"The work that Pieta House does is not only lifesaving but life changing and Triathlon Ireland is proud to be joining our official partners BMW to team up with Pieta House. Sport and exercise can play a huge role in physical and mental wellbeing and linking this worthy cause to our sport is for me a perfect match. "

Mr Kitchen continued: "I would urge every member and every triathlon club in Ireland to join us in adopting Pieta House as their nominated charity for 2019. We have more than 18,000 participants each year and just look what a significant difference we could make to Pieta House if we all gave €10 each so let's show what a truly generous bunch us triathletes are and do some fund raising."

"Each year BMW Group Ireland employees nominate a chosen charity and this year Pieta House was chosen because the charity is addressing one of the most pressing social issues today; mental health. We are humbled by the work Pieta House undertakes and are keen to raise as much funds as we can for the A Life a Day and the Resilience Academy programmes", said Paulo Alves, Managing Director, BMW Group Ireland.

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Kieran Brady, Director Funding & Advocacy Pieta House said: “We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to Triathlon Ireland and BMW Group Ireland for supporting ‘A Life a Day’ initiative and the Resilience Academy, a key pillar in the Pieta House suicide prevention service. Triathlon Ireland will help us reach over 7,500 students nationwide. We are extremely appreciative for their support and fundraising which will go a long way to significantly improve the capability of adolescents to recognise and deal with difficulties around stigma and identity. The program encourages students to reach out early and preventing them arriving at a point of crisis”.

Brady added “Our vision at Pieta House is a world where suicide, self-harm, and stigma have been replaced by hope, self-care, and acceptance. Triathlon Ireland & BMW Group Ireland are with us in providing mental health education for young people, focusing on practical skills to help students understand their emotions and develop techniques to cope with anxiety.”

Last year, BMW Group Ireland raised €25,000 for Temple Street National Children’s Hospital and it is anticipated that the company will exceed this amount for Pieta House during 2019. In addition to the Darkness into Light Walk, BMW Ireland’s network along with friends and family have pledged to fundraise throughout the year with a charity cycle from Dublin to Belfast in one day on 24th May, doing the Bolands BMW Hook or by Crook Triathlon in Dunmore East and Two Provinces Triathlon in Lanesborough, Co. Longford on 13th July.

To find out more on how to get involved or donate please visit <https://www.triathlonireland.com/Get-Involved/Tri4Pieta/>

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Image 1: Chris Kitchen, Triathlon Ireland, Elaine Austin Pieta House, Laura Condron BMW Ireland and Adrian Barry from Off The Ball.

Image 2: Chris Kitchen, Triathlon Ireland, Elaine Austin Pieta House, Laura Condron BMW Ireland and Adrian Barry from Off The Ball.

Image 3: Using the campaign hashtag #Tri4Pieta BMW, Triathlon Ireland and Off The Ball are encouraging sports enthusiasts to Try a triathlon this summer and raise funds for Pieta House.

About Triathlon Ireland

Triathlon Ireland is the National Governing Body for one of Ireland’s most dynamic and inclusive sports. Since the first triathlon event was held in north Co. Dublin in the early 1980s, the sport of triathlon has experienced unprecedented growth to the extent that Ireland now ranks fifth in the world for participation rates in triathlon per head of capita.

From its roots as a sport for the ultra-fit, triathlon has become a mass participation activity for all ages and abilities. Triathlon Ireland is proud of its 35% female participation rate and good governance standards that lead amongst Irish sporting bodies.

About The BMW Group

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With its four brands BMW, MINI, Rolls-Royce and BMW Motorrad, the BMW Group is the world's leading premium manufacturer of automobiles and motorcycles and also provides premium financial and mobility services. The BMW Group production network comprises 30 production and assembly facilities in 14 countries; the company has a global sales network in more than 140 countries.

The success of the BMW Group has always been based on long-term thinking and responsible action. The company has therefore established ecological and social sustainability throughout the value chain, comprehensive product responsibility and a clear commitment to conserving resources as an integral part of its strategy.

About Pieta House

Pieta House was founded in Lucan, Co Dublin, in 2006 and now has 15 centres across Ireland. Pieta offers free counselling to those suffering from suicidal ideation, those who have been bereaved by suicide and people who are engaging in self-harm. Staff are fully qualified and provide a professional one-to-one therapeutic service. Pieta House also operates a free 24-hour suicide helpline 1800 247 247 or you can also text HELP to 51444 (standard message rates apply). For all details and information on Pieta House go to www.pieta.ie.

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