

HSE Community Games Festival 2015

HSE Community Games 2015 Now Bigger and Better

Former Irish footballer, Kevin Kilbane will officially launch the 2015 HSE Community Games Festival at the Athlone Institute of Technology (14th – 16th Aug). Kevin will be on hand when the first event; soccer, kicks off at the beginning of two hectic weekends.

Thousands of children and their families from all over Ireland will be arriving at Athlone over the next two weekends with the hopes of walking away with a much coveted medal but more importantly with new friends and memories.

Inclusion, participation and the importance of healthy lifestyle choices are the central themes of this year's HSE Community Games Festival. There are now 50 different types of activities including sports, culture and arts sections for children to choose from. The introduction of several new age categories in 2015 means that there are a further 600 participants competing than in 2014.

This year HSE Community Games is teaming up once again with Healthy Ireland, with an emphasis on healthy eating, as Athlone IT serves up only healthy options for resident children.

Speaking ahead of the Community Games Festival, Dr. Cate Hartigan from the HSE says: "By teaming up with Healthy Ireland, we want to encourage even more children, families and communities to be active, so everyone can experience the enormous benefits. This is one of the most important changes that we all want to see in Ireland. On top of that, the community participation and volunteerism that is an essential part of Community Games adds to our shared wellbeing in towns and villages nationwide. I wish all of our participants, volunteers, coaches and supporters a wonderful time and to thoroughly enjoy what I hope will be a great experience".

HSE Community Games has long attracted volunteers from all walks of life. In 2014, more than 10,000 volunteers donated their time and energy to the 200,000 children who take part in the HSE Community Games.

Dr. Cate Hartigan makes no bones about where the credit for the success of the HSE Community Games lies: with the 10,000 volunteers donating their time to make it happen; "HSE Community Games has a very special place in people's hearts for promoting camaraderie and friendly competition but its success is also a testament to the work of our volunteers. Whether they give a week, a day or an hour of their time, volunteers are critical to the success of the games".

The main events taking place on the first weekend (14th to 16th August) will be swimming, rugby, soccer, handwriting and art. The second weekend (21st to 23rd August) is dominated by track and field athletics, basketball, gaelic football, talent and badminton. For downtime, there will be amusement rides, face-painting, discos and bouncy castles.

Galway Bay FM will be broadcasting on the first weekend and Shannonside FM will be broadcasting from the second weekend.

Admission for spectators on any day is €5 and as always will be free for children under 16.

ENDS

Notes to Editor

For more information on HSE Community Games please visit our website: www.communitygames.ie . There is also an interactive calendar of Events available here: www.communitygames.ie/calendar

HSE Community Games Festival takes place over two weekends: 14th to 16th August and 21st to 23rd August.

Media Contacts:

Bernie Brennan PR Director, HSE Community Games, pr@communitygames.ie

Sinead Colleran PR Officer, HSE Community Games, sinead@communitygames.ie

Weblinks:

www.communitygames.ie

www.facebook.com/communitygames1

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WHAT IS HSE COMMUNITY GAMES?

The aim of HSE Community Games is to encourage and introduce a love of sport and culture to every child in Ireland.

HSE Community Games is an independent voluntary organisation, operating in local communities throughout Ireland. The organisation aims to provide opportunities for children and young people aged 6-16 years to develop active healthy lives in a safe environment through experiencing a wide range of sporting and cultural activities. Community spirit and co-operation is fostered and encouraged. The organisation believes that every young person should have the opportunity to take part in sports and art in their local community and grow up understanding how good it makes you feel when you are active and healthy.

The organisation caters for children aged 6-16 years throughout 30 counties. It is not entirely sports based, there is a culture and arts section so that children get an opportunity to experience a wide range of activities.