

PRESS RELEASE 17th August

Bye bye to burger vans as HSE Community Games Festival encourages healthy eating

Over 7,000 visitors arrived in Athlone for a weekend of fun and games at HSE Community Games Festival Weekend 1 (15th to 17th August) and not one of them missed having a burger van on site. This decision by HSE Community Games to remove the temptation of having burgers and chips at the event is a step in the right direction towards a healthy Ireland.

Speaking at the event, President Gerard Davenport said.

"HSE Community Games has a very special place in people's hearts for promoting comradery and friendly competition and this year we want to add to that and put the spotlight on healthy eating and participation. Every child in Ireland should be encouraged to eat well and be active regardless of whether they win or lose. As social media and online gaming become more and more prevalent in our homes we want to offer children and families the opportunity to get back to basics – get out and play and eat their five a day!"

As well as healthy eating, the focus was on participation and every child proudly went home with their very own Participation Pin – another new incentive from HSE Community Games.

Over the weekend, 2,800 children took part in more than 40 different events. Apx. 750 of these children took part in the Swimming Finals at the Regional Sports Centre.

The HSE Community Games has teamed up this year with Healthy Ireland, the new national initiative promoting health and wellbeing throughout the country. Speaking at the Community Games launch on 22nd July, Dr. Cate Hartigan from the HSE said:

"We are delighted to support the Community Games in 2014, and to make it part of our Healthy Ireland programme. Encouraging more children, families and communities to be active, and to see the enormous benefits that this can bring, 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. Well done to everyone involved and we're looking forward to this year's festival."

Pentathlon Ireland's were on site to demonstrate their sport – they arrived with the Olympic Flame from 2012.

The fun doesn't stop here: next weekend will be even busier as the Athletics finals and many other events such as Drama, Music and Skittles will take place. The HSE Community Games expects over 3,000 children to participate with their band of avid supporters.

Ends

NOTE TO EDITORS

Photos are attached and also available from SportsFile. Please contact sinead@communitygames.ie if you would like to be sent photos specific to your region. Results will follow after the last event today.

The HSE Community Games is an independent voluntary organisation operating in over 600 local communities throughout the entire island of Ireland. The HSE and the Community Games aim to promote healthy active lives and to have a positive impact on young people and their families in maintaining their health, in particular through being active and eating healthily.

The HSE Community Games festival Weekend 1 took place this year in Athlone Institute of Technology, Athlone, Co. Westmeath from 15th 17th August. Weekend 2 will take place from the 22nd to 24th August.

For a List of Events and the weekends they are on, please see our website:

www.communitygames.ie

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