



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **CO DUBLIN YOUTH VOLUNTEER HONOURED FOR GIVING BACK TO HER COMMUNITY**

Charlotte Gallagher, from Co. Dublin has been recognised as one of 20 exceptional young people from across Ireland, who have been chosen as some of the country's most outstanding youth volunteers, working to make a positive impact on their local communities.

A First-Year student at Our Lady's School, Charlotte was diagnosed with Leukemia at age 10 and became the youngest member and volunteer of the Sarah Jennifer Knott Foundation (SJK). A close friend of Charlotte's family, Sarah passed away in 2015 aged 31 from Cancer of Unknown Primary (CUP). Unable to find the source of Sarah's cancer her family set up the foundation to raise awareness and pay for research. Charlotte has been working relentlessly to spread the word about CUP amongst her peers and school friends.

At the annual SJK Christmas carol event, Charlotte helped to sell candles and raffle tickets to help raise money for the Foundation. Following their confirmation Charlotte's class decided to choose a charity to donate some of their money to and Charlotte focused on telling her classmates more about the foundation and explaining about her own illness. Charlotte was delighted when her class chose the SJK Foundation and a cheque for €1,000 was presented to Sarah's sisters.

The top 20 local students were revealed as Pramerica announced its top 20 finalists for the 2020 Spirit of Community Awards, the only all-Ireland youth initiative of its kind that rewards post-primary students for their exemplary acts of volunteerism.

Passionate about a range of topics including homelessness, mental health, disabled rights, climate change, animal cruelty plus many more, the 20 finalists will gather for this year's awards which will take place at Titanic, Belfast on Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> March. Each finalist will receive an impressive €500 to donate to their preferred charity and are in the running to win a once in a lifetime trip across the globe to Washington, D.C.

The programme, which is run in partnership with the National Association of Principals & Deputy Principals (NAPD) and the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (GTCNI), is one



of Ireland's largest youth recognition programmes, this year's awards received a remarkable 250 applications from across Ireland.

**Naomi Hegarty**, vice president, Risk Management, Pramerica Systems Ireland is overwhelmed with the selfless work being carried out by young people across Ireland.

*"Year upon year I continue to be humbled by the incredible volunteer work carried out by young people in towns and villages across Ireland. The 20 finalists selected as part of this year's awards programme are proudly taking a stand for what they believe in and actively empowering others to do the same. Our awards programme celebrates these passionate and dedicated young people and aims to give them the recognition and voice they truly deserve.*

*"At Pramerica we are committed to supporting youth volunteers and understand that even the smallest of contributions can make a big difference to those who are in need and vulnerable. In sacrificing their spare time to give back to their community, these young people are showing that they genuinely care, and we want to make sure that their selfless good deeds don't go unnoticed. We cannot wait to welcome all of the chosen finalists to the awards ceremony in Titanic, Belfast on 31<sup>st</sup> March of this year."*

The 20 Pramerica Spirit of Community finalists are:

- Lidia Balocchi, Sixth Year, Assumption Grammar School, Co. Down
- Sasha Barrett-Ferris, Sixth Year, Sullivan Upper School, Co. Down
- Gavin Bennett, Third Year, Ard Scoil Chiarain Naofa, Co. Offaly
- Jemma Campbell Sixth Year, Our Lady and St Patrick's College, Co. Antrim
- Rebecca Colley, Sixth Year, Castleknock Community College, Co. Dublin
- Jessica Collins, Fourth Year, Skibbereen Community School, Co. Cork
- Keira Culleton, Third year, Loreto College, Co. Derry
- Jamie Duffy, Sixth Year, Beech Hill College, Co. Monaghan
- Lauren Gaynor, Sixth Year, Loreto Grammar School, Co. Tyrone
- **Charlotte Gallagher, First Year, Our Lady's School, Co. Dublin**
- Liadh Hanley, Sixth Year, St. Angela's College, Co. Cork
- Rebecca Irvine, Sixth Year, Carrickfergus Grammar School, Co. Antrim
- Grainne McGlynn, Fourth Year, Rosses Community School, Co. Donegal
- Julie Reddan, Sixth Year, Borrisokane Community College, Co. Tipperary
- Jake Redmond, Sixth Year, Larkin Community, Co. Dublin
- Aurora Riddiough, Fifth year, Ballycastle High School, Co. Antrim
- Sophia Shally, Third Year, St Louis Community School, Co. Mayo
- Aaron Smith, Sixth Year, St Louise's Comprehensive College, Co. Antrim



- Emma Smyth, Sixth Year, St Louis Grammar School, Co. Antrim
- Teagan Stanley, Fifth Year, Newtown School, Co. Waterford

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