

An Saol Foundation

Press Release



Supported by



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

For Immediate Release

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#IronMonth Challenge 2021 – Leave No One Behind!

A rapidly growing movement to promote equality and inclusivity is emerging in Ireland and many European countries to promote physical wellness and mental health based on equality and integration.

So far more than 70 participants have signed up for the first Iron-Month Challenge to complete, remotely, an Ironman-style triathlon (42.2k run/walk, 180.2k cycle, 3.9k swim) during the month of May at their own pace.

Because of the current pandemic and closed pools, participants have the option of completing a biathlon - leaving the swim to generous supporters of the Phoenix Masters Swimming Club who are doing the entire distance (226k) in the ocean! The aim for all is to finish together on 30 May - no matter whether it took them the whole month or just one day.

One week into the event, participants from Ireland, Spain, Poland, Germany and even the Canary Islands have already signed-up. They include supporters, friends, family and service-users of the An Saol Foundation's NeuroRehab Day Centre in Santry.

Reinhard Schäler, CEO of the An Saol Foundation, said, *“The IronMonth Challenge is the first event of its kind to promote physical activity for those who have long been left behind and forgotten, those with severe neurological injuries or conditions, especially those with a severe Acquired Brain Injury (sABI). We need a change of heart and mind, and recognise that everybody benefits from physical activity - no matter how independently you can pursue it. Participating in this most challenging of triathlons brings a great sense of achievement and pride to all who participate, together with improved physical and mental health.”*

Andrew King, organiser of the Challenge and An Saol Foundation Board Member, said, *“It has been amazing to see the enthusiastic response from the service users of An Saol's NeuroRehab Centre, as well as their supporters from all over Europe. This is the first #IronMonth Challenge of many more to come. The IronMonth is inspiring cross-Channel swimmers and semi-professional tri-athletes together with those whose severe Acquired Brain Injury and a lack of support so far have prevented them from participating in such activities improving their physical and mental health. The #Ironmonth Challenge will change this by promoting equality and inclusivity, physical exercise for all. We will leave no one behind.”*

Support the Iron-Month athletes by signing up and promoting the Challenge. Donate to An Saol's Iron-Month challenge fund at gf.me/u/zjaaky and spread the word about the fundraiser on social media. Follow the participants' progress and share using the hashtag #IronMonth.

Social Media

Instagram: an_saol_foundation

Twitter: an_saol

Facebook: @AnSaolFoundation

<https://iron-month.com/>

Contact

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Selection of Images from participants in #IronMonth



Video of An Saol client, David, participating in the challenge:

https://videos.files.wordpress.com/Yzx06mHV/the-cycle_mov_dvd.mp4

Video of An Saol client, Pádraig, participating in the challenge:

https://videos.files.wordpress.com/CoUvyeaf/img_2969_mov_dvd.mp4

About Severe Acquired Brain Injury (sABI)

A brain injury that involves a long period of unconsciousness (coma) and a prolonged disorder of conscience (PDOC). Persons with an sABI are very highly dependent, are often non- or minimally-verbal, and require, in most cases, life-long support with basic activities of daily living (ADL) as well as life-long rehabilitation.

About the An Saol Foundation

The An Saol Foundation was established in 2014 by the family of Pádraig Schaler to provide adequate and ongoing support to people with a severe Acquired Brain Injury (sABI). It now also offers neurological rehabilitation in the community. It is a registered charity and a Company Limited by Guarantee. The Foundation received its initial funding through a generous donation from the parents of Sara Walsh († 2015) and has since received financial support from various fundraising activities, donations and funded projects. The Foundation operates from its headquarters in Dublin and delivers its services in Dublin and beyond. To achieve its goals, the Foundation promotes awareness about sABI and neurological rehabilitation, supports research, delivers neurological rehabilitation services, raises funds, and engages in related support activities. The Foundation runs the An Saol Project which is co-funded by the Health Service Executive (HSE).

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