

Irish Team launch plans to Race Across America

Team Youghal launched their Race Across America Cycle at the local Mall Arts Centre on Saturday last. The team will compete in the World's toughest cycle race, which is 3,005 miles long from the Pacific Coast at Oceanside, California to the Atlantic Coastal city of Annapolis in Maryland.

This is the 30th edition of the race and Team Youghal will make history by being the first ever Irish Team in the 8 person Team Category. Crossing 12 states and climbing over 170,000 feet the race will start on June 18th and Team Youghal are planning to finish on June 26th in Annapolis, Maryland. The highest point of the race is Wolf Creek Pass, high up in the Rockies at almost 11,000 feet and the lowest point is 170ft below sea level. This is a non-stop race across the American Continent with racers competing 24 hours a day from start to finish.

Mayor of Youghal Mary Linehan-Foley launched the event before a packed house, which included Cyclists and Crew of Team Youghal, Sponsors, local dignitaries, Town and County Councillors as well as family and friends. The Mayor said, "I'm very proud to be invited to this launch and proud that a Team from Youghal will be the first Irish participants in this world cup race." She went on to say "This is a great opportunity to put Ireland and indeed Youghal on the world map which will benefit tourism numbers in these very tough economic times" Team Leader, Ger Flanagan outlined the route and gave a very detailed plan of what was involved in getting the group to the start line in Annapolis. He said "I would like to thank every member of Team Youghal for their efforts to date and I'm looking forward to the challenge ahead." He thanked the sponsors, and especially Firedog, who are the main sponsor, for their contribution of €20,000. The other sponsors included Magners Irish Cider, Excelsys, Matheson Ormsby Prentice Solicitors, Irish Distillers, Youghal Town Council, Race Around Ireland, Lee Travel and Juliette and Brendan Casey.

The team is taking part to raise money and awareness for the Emer Casey Foundation. Emer, who was from Youghal, in Co. Cork, was diagnosed with ovarian/uterine cancer in February 2006. She was just 27 years of age. She died on June 10 2006, four days after her 28th birthday. Her parents Juliette and Brendan and sisters Julie, Annelee, Susan and Ruth, set up the foundation in her honour. The Emer Casey Foundation has raised more than €500,000 for the foundation's research into ovarian and uterine cancer. It began with a road race and walk in Youghal, but it now organises such races in London, Melbourne and New York.

A fundraising event is planned for The Consulate General of Ireland's Officers at 345 Park Avenue, Manhattan on June 28th from 6.30p.m. to 8.30p.m. A 5km run will be held in Central Park on June 29th, as well as events in San Diego prior to the race start.

Team Youghal is being backed in it's fundraising efforts by some influential US groups, including the Irish US Council, Enterprise Ireland's US division, The Irish Consulate General in New York, The American Chamber of Commerce, The Trinity Foundation, The Discovery Consortium, Matheson Ormsby Prentice Solicitors, Emer's former employers, and The Cork Association in New York.

You can follow Team Youghal's progress by joining our Facebook page at www.teamyoughal.com where there will be hourly updates during the entire race.

If you would like to find out more about the progress of the Emer Casey Foundation or make a donation please log on to www.emercaseyfoundation.com