

BLOOD BIKER ROLLS OUT HIDDEN HEROES AWARDS 2019

This year's Hidden Hearing Hidden Heroes Awards, which are now open for nominations, were launched recently by a motorcyclist who is a previous recipient of the award in recognition of his voluntary efforts in delivering emergency blood supplies to hospitals, hospices and other medical facilities free of charge.

Fergus Lennon says he wanted to "give something back" to the health services after a near death experience. "I had a heart attack when I was in my mid 40s and my heart stopped twice in the ambulance on the way to hospital," explains Fergus (59) from Newbridge, Co. Kildare.

"The paramedics brought me back to life. I can never repay that debt but it was



Fergus Lennon gets a heart check-up at the launch of the Hidden Hero awards 2019.

HIDDEN HEROES AWARD CATEGORIES

- **Age Is No Barrier Hero:** Celebrating the achievements and accomplishments of someone over 65
- **Young Hero:** The achievements of a young person under the age of 16
- **Family Hero:** In recognition of the hundreds of people in Ireland who care for family members in need
- **Sporting Hero:** Recognising the achievements of a person who has overcome adversity to excel in sport
- **Deaf/Hard of Hearing Hero:** Recognising the achievements of someone who has overcome the challenge of being deaf or hard of hearing
- **Healthcare Hero:** In recognition of the achievements of a healthcare professional who has gone beyond the call of duty for his/her patients
- **CSR/Diversity Hero:** Recognising an employee, co-worker or manager who has gone above and beyond their call of duty to support the community
- **Unsung Hero:** Recognising a male hero who has overcome adversity in his life to excel
- **Unsung Heroine:** Recognising a female hero who has overcome adversity in her life to excel
- **Triumph Over Adversity Hero:** An overall hero who has overcome significant adversity in his/her life



You can nominate your hero at www.hiddenhearing.ie/heroes and all entries must be submitted by Friday 9 August.

one of the reasons why I got involved in Blood Bikes in Ireland. It's my way of giving something back."

Fergus, one of the founding members of Blood Bike Leinster in 2013, was awarded a Hidden Hero award in 2016 in recognition of his efforts.

Sponsored by Hidden Hearing, the awards were established in 2011 to honour those who have made a significant contribution to their community, workplace, family or through sporting accomplishments.

You can nominate your hero at www.hiddenhearing.ie/hiddenheroes and all entries must be submitted by Friday 9 August. All the shortlisted nominees will be welcomed to a star-studded gala celebration lunch in Dublin's Intercontinental Hotel on Monday 9 September, to be hosted by broadcaster Mary Kennedy.

RAPID RESPONSE MEDICAL TRANSPORT SERVICE

Blood Bikes operates eight groups across Ireland to transport blood, x-rays, scans, blood products, donor breast milk and organ donation tissue to hospitals, hospices and other medical facilities free of charge.

The free medical transport service is available 365 days a year, including Christmas, St Stephen's Day and all public holidays. Some groups operate a 24-hour service where resources are available, while others operate a 7pm to 6am service.

The groups operate a diverse array of vehicles, from bikes to 4x4 vehicles depending on requirement and resources available at the time of the request. Some groups offer a patient and nurse transfer services on request where resources are available.

According to Fergus, "Blood Bike Galway was the first to start operations in 2012, followed by Blood Bike East in April 2013. The Leinster Branch became operational in May 2013, followed by Blood Bike South, Blood Bike Mid-West, Blood Bike Northwest, Blood Bike Dublin and Cu Chulainn Blood Bike."

He points out that Blood Bikes receive no government funding or intervention for what is an essential lifesaving service. "Our vehicles are seen regularly travelling up and down motorways from hospital to hospital, attending events and fundraising at shopping centres throughout Ireland.

"When people see our vehicles their first impression is they are state or HSE-owned vehicles until they speak to the volunteers. Each and every group must maintain, equip and run their own group by fundraising, 100% of everything collected is put back into maintaining and running this service. Therefore, we are solely reliant on donations, sponsorship and fundraising."

Blood Bike groups are run by volunteers who give 100% of their time freely to enable this service to continue, and everyone involved from riders, drivers, controllers, fundraisers and admin staff receive no payment or gratuity of any kind whatsoever.

Volunteers are trained to a very high standard and are continually monitored to ensure the standards are maintained, whilst providing this service to the hospitals, hospices and medical centres throughout Ireland.

Companies or organisations who may wish to donate, sponsor goods or services can contact 085-8133075; email info@bloodbikes.ie or visit <http://bloodbikes.ie/contact/>



Pictured at this year's launch were children from Junior Genius Forest School in Baldonnell, Co Dublin, dressed as their favourite superheroes alongside the 2016 Hidden Hero Award winner Fergus Lennon from Blood Bike Leinster and his fellow volunteer Sharon Percival.