

MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT McALEESE

It gives me great pleasure to add my voice to those of the fifteen people featured in 'Give Me Heroes'. This has been a difficult year for Ireland and for Irish people, faced with worries about the economic situation, unemployment and a host of related challenges. It would be easy to lose hope and to give in to the counsel of despair. Yet it is precisely in these dark times that we can most benefit from the stories of inspiration and hope brought to us by the fifteen heroes featured in this book. Some are people whose stories I know personally, some are people who I have never met, yet they are all people who have faced challenges and overcame these through hard work, self-belief and a wonderful sense of hope. Some were pushing the boundaries that they faced due to disability or illness, some set their own challenges for personal fulfillment or to support a cause in which they believed. They range in age from children to the elderly and include every point in between. Their courage and ambition inspirational and give us cause to hope in these challenging times. Standing behind the heroes celebrated in this book are the families, friends and professionals who supported them on their individual journeys and this book is also a tribute to their encouragement and backing.

These modern Irish heroes are an inspiration to us all. They can teach us how to overcome adversity and harsh times and they have shown us the power of never giving up. I am delighted that their remarkable spirit can also be found in the countless volunteers and community workers around the country who, in ever increasing numbers, give of their time and skills and effort to make a difference to the people around them. 'Give Me Heroes' is a celebration of the wonderful Irish capacity to tackle challenges head-on and to make a difference in situations of hardship. I thank these fifteen wonderful people for sharing their stories and I wish them all well in continuing to make a positive impact on their own lives and the lives of their communities.



MARY McALEESE
PRESIDENT OF IRELAND