

## Volunteer Fundraiser of the Year

The judges felt that due to the large number, type and high quality of applications, they would give two awards in this category.

Winner: Caroline Downey  
In the application form, the nominator said that, "If there were an Olympics for Volunteer Fundraisers, Caroline Downey would be a gold medallist." Well, now there is such an Olympics, and Caroline Downey has (along with Maureen Forrest, below) won a gold medal!

### Caroline

began her fundraising activities in 1985. Deeply moved by the story of a 15 year-old girl who died in labour, exposed to the elements and utterly alone, Caroline embarked on an ambitious fundraising campaign to establish Childline (as part of the Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children). She began by persuading her friends to run the Dublin Marathon alongside her, later establishing the Childline Ball and the Childline Concert. In 25 years of energetic and dedicated fundraising, Caroline raised millions of euros for Childline, the Toothfairy Ball (benefiting the Christina Nobel Foundation, the Chernobyl Children's Project, and the Ceka Kenyan Dental Program) and the Ulster Bank Dublin Theatre Festival, Exploration Station: Ireland's National Centre for Science and Discovery and Dublin Rape Crisis Centre.

### The

judging panel cited Caroline's strong track record and "innovative approach" to fundraising, adding that the impressive level of funds secured "have been raised for a number of different organizations over the years, increasing the number of people who benefited from the winner's fundraising efforts. Winner: Maureen Forrest

### Maureen

Forrest is the founder and director of The HOPE Foundation, raising funds and developing programmes and facilities for the street children of Calcutta. As with many of the dedicated fundraisers in Ireland, Maureen's commitment to fundraising began with a traumatic experience: a visit to the slums of Calcutta that spurred her decision to found the HOPE Foundation. A truly hands-on fundraiser, Maureen has visited civil war refugees from Mozambique, dodged bullets on the streets of war-torn Somalia and prayed at the mass graves of the victims of genocide in Rwanda. For at least three months every year Maureen visits and works directly with HOPE projects around the world.

### Since 1999, under

Maureen's direction, HOPE has established eight homes, an HIV/AIDS hospice and a drug rehabilitation centre, as well as preparatory education and cr che centres, vocational training, medical programmes and a child-watch programme. Her nominators pointed out that "It is through Maureen's vision and determination that HOPE is what it is today a direct result of her fundraising is that thousands of street children in Calcutta have now been saved from a life of fear and horror."

Apparently, the judges agreed, pointing out that they were "particularly impressed" with the depth of passion shown by Maureen in her work over many years and in particular the amazing impact she has had through her voluntary work with the HOPE project. Volunteer Fundraiser of the Year Shortlist:

Brian Cosby is a musician with a vision. A member of the well-known band Bell X1, Brian produced an innovative music CD to raise money for Oxfam Ireland. Working with renowned Irish and international singer-songwriters, he collected previously unpublished, original songs, assembled a top-quality band, edited, mastered and produced the CD. But he

didn't stop there; he also organised public relations, manufacture and distribution, artwork, a website and sorted out all legal and financial matters, always working in conjunction with Oxfam. The album has been a huge success, raising over €250,000 since its release in 2006. When one of the songs was chosen for use on the popular US TV series, Grey's Anatomy, the album raised another €9,000 and, more importantly, Oxfam's profile internationally. According to Oxfam, Brian is a passionate supporter of Oxfam's Make Trade Fair campaign, and he "has inspired many other musicians, bands and artists to get involved in Oxfam's work."

Gertrude Howley is a presentation sister and trained counsellor who has been involved with GROW : a mutual help organisation working in the area of mental health - since the early 1980s. A long-time board member of GROW, Gertrude has served as the Southeast's regional chairperson, and more locally, has established and maintained three local weekly meetings in the small town of Dungarvan, Co Waterford, including Ireland's first such group for young adults. A 'fundraiser extraordinaire' she organises an annual street collection as well as many individual fundraising events such as mental health workshops which she runs single-handed. Her nominators said that Gertrude "combines a Trojan ability to work with a deep creativity and compassion, a sense of humour and a gift of inspiring the rest of us to follow her example."

Maureen Ahern was also shortlisted for her work with the CARI Foundation.