



World's largest torch relay for international friendship launched in Dublin

On **25 February 2010**, Dublin played host to the opening ceremony for the European leg of the World Harmony Run, the world's largest torch relay for international friendship. In conjunction with Dublin European Capital of Sport 2010 the **Lord Mayor of Dublin**, Councillor Emer Costello launched the event in a gala ceremony in **Dublin's City Hall**.

From Dublin, an international team of runners will then carry a flaming torch on a **24,000km journey** for 7 months through **49 European countries**, finishing in Moscow in September. In April another **Asian run** will begin in Japan and travel westward through South Korea, China, Mongolia and all the former Soviet states to also finish in Moscow at the same time in September - a unique link between East and West spanning over 36,000kms! The runners will visit schools, community groups, running clubs, and local and national government organisations.

During the ceremony Irish running legend **Catherina McKiernan** received a Torch Bearer Award from the World Harmony Run for her services to the athletic community. The ceremony also featured readings from poet **John F. Deane**, founder of the *Poetry Ireland Review* and music from flautist **Martin Doyle**. The runners then embarked on a circuit of the city cheered on by the people of Dublin before setting off on their journey.

Every year, hundreds of thousands people participate in the Run, passing along the torch from hand to hand and adding their hopes for a better world. The Run is a non-political, non-fundraising event that simply aims to demonstrate mankind's shared wish for harmony.

Since its founding by visionary **Sri Chinmoy** in 1987, the World Harmony Run has passed through over 100 countries. An athlete, philosopher, artist, musician and poet, Sri Chinmoy dedicated his life to advancing the ideals of world harmony and said, "If we have perseverance, then that is our first step towards world harmony." In recognition of his contribution for a more fulfilling world, Sri Chinmoy received UNESCO's Nehru Medallion and the Pilgrim of Peace Award of the International Centre for Peace Among People (Assisi, Italy).

The Run is organized and financed by an international network of volunteers inspired by Sri Chinmoy's vision of a more harmonious world. Partners in communities and cities often provide accommodation and food.

Endorsements have come from many world figures, including President Nelson Mandela, President Mikhail Gorbachev, Mother Teresa and Carl Lewis. Carl Lewis, spokesman for the Run, said, "*By carrying the Torch, millions of citizens are taking a step for Harmony and bridging the cultural and social boundaries that separate nation from nation.*"

Everyone can participate in the World Harmony Run: athletes and non-athletes, young and old alike. Everyone can carry the flaming Torch a few steps, a few blocks or a few miles or just come out and cheer the runners as they pass through. People can join local school children, celebrities, and government officials in one of the thousands of welcoming ceremonies along the route.

For more information go to: www.worldharmonyrun.org