

**Johnny Giles launches Specsavers Grandparent of the Year Award 2017**

Today (3rd October) legendary sports star, broadcaster and grandfather of eight, Johnny Giles, launched this year’s Grandparent of the Year Award. Specsavers, in association with Third Age, is calling for nominations in the search for Ireland’s most exceptional grandparent. The aim of the award is to celebrate and recognise the extraordinary contribution that grandparents make to the lives of grandchildren and the community.

Speaking at this year’s launch, Specsavers Chairperson Sinead Clohessy said, ‘We are excited to celebrate our Grandparent of the Year Award, which recognises the many benefits of an ageing population and the special role that grandparents play in Irish families. It is a fantastic opportunity for younger generations to recognise the many ways that grandparents and older people enrich our lives and I would encourage grandchildren throughout Ireland to nominate today to give their grandparent the recognition they deserve.’

She continued, ‘Many people who come to us with concerns about their hearing have withdrawn from social situations leaving them feeling isolated and depressed. Many struggle to keep up with conversation and become tired or embarrassed of asking people to repeat themselves. The speed at which younger people speak can also be a strain for older generations, so at times relationships between grandparents and children can be a struggle. Specsavers is delighted to work with a charity like Third Age that, like us, works tirelessly to alleviate loneliness and combat social isolation.’

Speaking of his role as ambassador for this year’s Specsavers Grandparent of the Year Award Johnny commented; ‘As a proud grandfather I am thrilled to have been asked to support this year’s campaign, one that recognises the value of older generations to society and families in Ireland. I am also delighted to work with a brand like Specsavers that is actively working towards removing any stigma associated with hearing loss. While I don’t suffer myself I am very aware of the importance of being mindful of my hearing health. Hearing has been a big part of my career from my days on the pitch, to those in the studio, but more importantly at home with friends and family.

‘If you suffer from hearing issues and feel you are drawing away from social situations and society I would encourage you to visit your local Specsavers store for a free hearing screening as there is no need to suffer in silence with so much expertise available”.

Grandchildren of all ages can nominate their grandparents by filling out an entry form in Specsavers’ 52 stores nationwide or online at [www.specsavers.ie/hearing/grandparent](http://www.specsavers.ie/hearing/grandparent). Four regional finalists from Leinster, Munster, Connacht and Ulster will receive a €215 Specsavers voucher, a bottle of champagne and a finalists’ certificate. The overall winner will receive a weekend away in Ireland, a Grandparent of the Year trophy and a €750 voucher for Specsavers while the grandchild who nominated them will win an iPad.

Áine Brady, CEO of Third Age said; ‘Grandparents play a significant role not only in the family but also in the community so we are delighted to once again work with Specsavers on this initiative that recognises the extraordinary contribution they make to society. This award is important in that it acknowledges the unspoken value of grandparents and how much they mean to us all. Please show your appreciation by nominating today.’

The closing date for entries is Sunday, 29 October and the four regional finalists will be chosen by a judging panel in November before Ireland’s Grandparent of the Year is announced on Monday, 13 November.

Specsavers has on-site hearing tests across the country managed by qualified audiologists and highly trained staff. Each centre is dedicated to giving the highest standard of care to each customer and boasts the latest equipment. Anyone concerned about their hearing can avail of a comprehensive hearing assessment with a qualified hearing professional at their local store free of charge.

Third Age is a national voluntary organisation committed to responding positively to the challenges and opportunities of ageing in Ireland and supporting the contribution of older people to their communities. All programmes, both national and regional, share an underlying philosophy of social inclusion and connectivity through communication and conversation. Third Age has over 1,400 older volunteers working in three national programmes, supporting isolated older people, migrants and older people in nursing homes and in the community that are in need of care.

For more information visit your local store or log onto [www.specsavers.ie/hearing/grandparent](http://www.specsavers.ie/hearing/grandparent) or [www.thirdageireland.ie](http://www.thirdageireland.ie) .

**-ENDS-**

For more information please contact:

Suzanne Cairns and Catriona Gallagher, WH, 01 669 0030

[suzanne.cairns@ogilvy.com](mailto:niamh.queeney@ogilvy.com) / [catriona.gallagher@ogilvy.com](mailto:catriona.gallagher@ogilvy.com)

Tel: 086 8945635 (SC) or 087 9140310 (CG)