Rolling Sun Press Release

The two bereaved fathers whose friendship inspired Colum McCann’s celebrated novel, Apeirogon, will join the author for a special event to open this year’s Rolling Sun Book Festival in Westport.

Palestinian Bassam Aramin and Israeli Rami Elhanan each lost a daughter in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; they went on to form an unlikely friendship and are both now peace activists dedicated to sharing their vision of dialogue and human connection.

They will join Colum McCann on stage at Westport Town Hall Theatre on Thursday 16 October to talk about the book, the reality behind it, and the work of the Parents Circle, an organisation of bereaved Israeli and Palestinian families committed to peace.

“It is an enormous honour for us to be able to bring Rami and Bassam to Ireland,” said Maria Ruddy of the Rolling Sun.

“At a time when there is so much despair and bewilderment about what is happening in Gaza and elsewhere, it is essential that we hear the voices of people like Bassam and Rami.”

The two men are travelling to Ireland at the invitation of the Rolling Sun and will speak at a number of events before their final public event in Westport next Thursday week (16 October).

Other guests at this year’s festival, which runs from 16 to 19 October, include Kevin Barry, Liz Nugent, Sabina Brennan and Irish Times columnist, Frank McNally whose memoir was launched last month.

Historian Diarmaid Ferriter will join Flor McCarthy and Lise Hand, hosts of the chart-topping “Think You Know the Presidents?” podcast series to discuss the lesser-known aspects of the men and women who have called Áras an Uachtaráin home. A week out from the presidential election, they’ll also consider why we actually have a president.

And there’s something for the children too. Westport-based children’s author, Anne Printer, who has years of experience teaching children through stories and games will do a reading in Westport library on at 11am on Saturday.

Tickets for all events (excluding the children’s event which is free) are now available from the Town Hall Theatre and the Clew Bay Hotel.