

Quay Times



Merchants Quay Ireland
Homeless & Drugs Services

The Newsletter for Supporters of Merchants Quay Ireland

He came to St. Francis Farm to leave his addiction behind. Five years on, a new Vincent returned to share his story —

Where Honesty and Miracles Grow

As springtime sun warms the soil at MQI's St. Francis Farm, a happy little flower called Honesty starts to appear in the most unexpected places. And to one former client in particular, honesty – and the seeds of a new life that your generosity helped to take root – has changed everything...

A promising apprenticeship. A respected player at one of Ireland's top sports clubs. Everything was grand for Vincent on the surface of it. Except, he was living two lives.

Down the flats

"It wasn't my upbringing," Vincent admits. "My ma and da are great, they're hard workers all their life. But down the flats where I was brought up I used to look at the other young fellas and I always felt different. I started looking for acceptance off other people."

Confronting the truth

Vincent was deep into drugs through his twenties. "I was just going about my day abusing, trying to find out where to get drugs." A rush of events would take him further down. With many family members already "destroyed by drugs," he was first to find a close relative dead. Then in Mountjoy prison, he tried to end his own life. But it was



“It's good to be back working. I learned you don't have to live that double life of addiction. Every morning now I make an honest decision to get home safe and drug-free. MQI supporters gave me my spirit back.”

'Vincent' asked that his name and photos be changed to protect his new life. But he personally volunteers at Donor Open Days (see page 3) and gladly shares his story, saying, "If it helps just one person, I would do anything."

at Mountjoy where an MQI counsellor told Vincent about St. Francis Farm. He was ready to face his own truth. "I kept thinking, there has to be a better way of life out there for me."

Unexpected places

He spent nearly six months at St. Francis Farm, both detox and rehab. There were tough days as

the cloud of drugs lifted. Again, honesty appeared. "I'd start thinking about all what I'd done, and wrecking my family. I remember my ma coming on a visit. I was nervous. Christy, one of the staff, said, you're going to be alright as long as you say what you need to. When I saw her I started roaring crying. I told her
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Won't you join us for a day on the Farm? Invitation, page 3...



At Merchants Quay Ireland's St. Francis Farm, a happy little flower called Honesty grows. It returns each year in the most unexpected places, a reminder of how your generous heart helps miracles grow here too, for women and men like Vincent (cover story) with nowhere left to turn. This springtime issue of *Quay Times* is dedicated to the legacy of hope and honesty you bring...

Your donations at work — thank you!

Expanded Mental Health Team Opens New Door...

Not long ago we came to you with a difficult issue. You responded with a compassion so powerful, you are literally changing the face of mental health care for Ireland's most vulnerable...



Raul & Kerry, newest members of MQI's mental health team, hit the ground running thanks to you!

The Backstory:

A little more than three years ago, there was no mental health nurse at all at MQI – and no State funding to fill what was a crying need among our homeless clients. But donors like you stepped up to ring-fence funding for Derek Parker's role, and in 2015 alone he found time for more than eight hundred points of contact with clients.

The Next Phase:

But as many of you read in March 2016, demand was so great – and Derek so effective at helping people

who'd literally fallen off the radar – he couldn't keep up. Again, there was no funding to expand. Again, you graciously stepped up. Today we want you to meet Raul and Kerry, whose positions you funded 100% and who are the next two members of MQI's mental health team. Thank you!

Meet Psychiatric Nurse Raul:

- Originally from Madrid, Spain
- Began as a project worker at Riverbank, Raul returned to college to qualify as a psychiatric nurse so he could better serve MQI's clients.

What he'd like you to know:

"In most cases those who have mental illness are the victims of violence from others or from themselves. They are extremely vulnerable people. Sometimes it is just seeing a person every day that means that person hasn't taken his or her own life. The amount of clients already coming in for help, it is amazing."

Meet Mental Health Caseworker Kerry:

- From Co. Dublin
- Began as an MQI intern before moving up to project worker, Kerry completed a mental health course to upskill her capabilities. She was moved into the caseworker role, delightedly, because she was a perfect fit.
- What she'd like you to know:** "I'd like to say thank you. To our clients, your support means they have somewhere safe. It means they're not getting left behind. It means people actually care about them, that there is good out there. I don't know if donors even realise what an impact they have. Some of the lads and girls definitely would not be where they are right now if wasn't for the support of donors."



Derek Parker, Mental Health Team Leader

From Team Leader Derek:

- On having a team:** "As many as 80% of the more than seven thousand clients who turn to MQI each year are suffering from poor mental health, which is no wonder, living on the streets. Having a team is a relief for me to be honest – the demand is there. Because there's more of us, we're here more often and at times when the most vulnerable clients need us. Kerry and Raul are each here one night a week as well. Thanks to donors we're in the process of expanding our medication storage for clients, delivering more staff training, and in the pilot stage of a community alcohol detox programme. But most of all they are helping us to see more people and more often. There's already people alive today because they gave to expand this team." ■

— Thank you! —

From the team that literally would not exist without you – and for all the sons and daughters and friends still here as a result – we thank you.

"The clients at the Farm, both past and present, were so warm and open. A beautiful, positive experience."
– Frank, MQI supporter

A Special Day for Your Diary: Donor Open Day at St. Francis Farm

You are invited to see your kind support in action on a guided tour of MQI's St. Francis Farm Detox & Rehabilitation Project in Tullow, Co. Carlow, on **Saturday 20th May**. Limited seating for free round trip transport via private coach from Dublin is available on a first-reserved basis, but you are welcome as well to make your own way by car. Either way, **please RSVP to Emma on 01 524 0965 by 14th May**. Buses departing 24 Merchants Quay at 10 and 11am.

Your day on the Farm:

- 10:00 am** Bus departs MQI-Dublin
- 11:00 am** Arrive at St. Francis Farm for welcome, coffee & tea
- 12:00 noon** Client and staff-led tours of the grounds and buildings
- 1:30 pm** Lunch in Beaumont House (rehab centre)
- 2:00 pm** Bus departs St. Francis Farm
- 3:00 pm** Arrive at MQI-Dublin, 24 Merchants Quay



We hope you can join us!

Springtime Wish List...

A wish in itself is a simple thing, pure of heart for the hope it will bring – would you consider making one come true this spring? Wished-for items:

- ✓ Soaps, shampoo, toothpaste
- ✓ Rain jackets and trousers
- ✓ Gently worn ladies' & gents' jeans (small sizes)
- ✓ Tractor for St. Francis Farm (Big wish! €13,000+)
- ✓ Tools for the detox clients' new flower garden (€600)
- ✓ Furniture-grade hardwood for the St. Francis Farm woodworking shop
- ✓ Commercial dishwasher for staff and clients at High Park (€2,827)
- ✓ Large trestle table and various art supplies (€400)



Drop off your items in person to MQI at 24 Merchants Court, 9:30am to 5pm, Monday to Friday. Or if you live in Dublin and can't come to us, we'll be delighted to call to see you with the MQI photo album and collect your donated items – **ring Emma on 01 524 0965 for details**. Thank you! ■



The (Amazing) Gift of Your Time at Donor Open Days

Each year as Donor Open Day approaches at St. Francis Farm, thoughts turn to you, and the amazing gift of your presence in joining us...



MQI clients await this special day for weeks. To join us for the upcoming Open Day at St. Francis Farm, see details on page 3. Be sure to look for the Honesty flowers!

“One of the best things Donor Open Days do is that very often the clients getting help here are quite nervous. They come from horrific pasts, their self-esteem and their confidence are so low, they're afraid they'll be judged. So the idea then of how supporters come, just to visit and sit and chat to them, makes them realise that there are people who care – that these are the people who donate to help you – that they're not as bad as society often makes them out to be.”

— Annette,
St. Francis Farm Services
Coordinator

For kindness everlasting, we thank you.

“Through what he’s given to you, he lives on. There’s a bit of him still here in the work you do.”

Though he never said so, he always planned to leave a legacy —

Justice for All: Anthony’s Final Gift

Every day Mr. Justice Anthony Hederman looked out from the Four Courts across the Liffey, where his gaze rested on Merchants Quay. But his final gift to MQI would touch lives here in a way few could have dreamed, rippling out to his loving family. And to kind supporters like you...

From his window at the Four Courts, every day Mr. Justice Anthony Hederman could see Ireland’s most vulnerable men and women come through the door of MQI. He believed deeply in justice for all — and more importantly in seeing that justice in action. It was a guiding principle he would carry with him into retirement from the Supreme Court, and beyond.

A lasting impression

“He was brought to Merchants Quay by a friend,” Mr. Justice Hederman’s niece Eilis remembers. “The work being done here had a lasting impression on him. For years he made a regular annual donation, to him it meant Merchants Quay was on his mind. But when he made his will he decided to leave MQI a legacy. He went on to live a much longer, fuller life — to the age of 92! It was really only after he died that we learned about his final gift.”

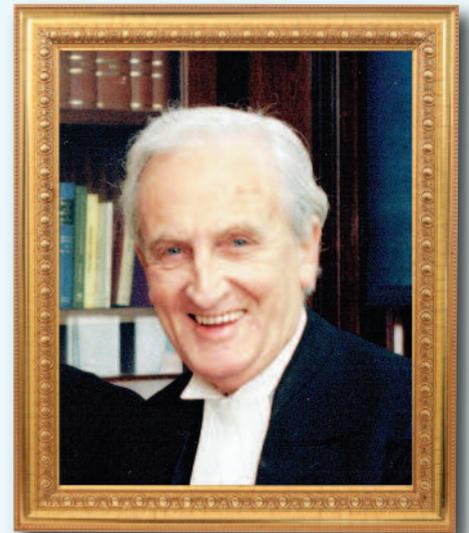
And it was, with the blessing of Mr. Justice Hederman’s sister Miriam, a gift that would touch your life too.

The man behind the match

If you are a supporter who kindly gave to have your contribution matched at Christmas, you too are part of Mr. Justice Hederman’s legacy. For it was the final gift in his will that helped to bring about the Christmas match, doubling your donation and joining with your generosity to keep the lights on, the kettle warm, and feed thousands more who would have gone hungry without you.

Legacy’s everlasting glow

“When we see homeless folk on the street, it just shouldn’t be. So for us as a family, we’re very proud that my uncle made the decision to give Merchants Quay the legacy. We miss him terribly. But through what he’s given to you, he lives on. And we tell others as well, because it does give



One of the cherished legacy donors behind MQI’s Christmas matching gift challenge, Mr. Justice Anthony Hederman (RIP) believed deeply in justice for all. He served on Ireland’s Supreme Court for more than twelve years. His niece Eilis and her family chose to share his story so others could see the power of legacy giving.

you a warm glow to think, ‘Well, there’s a bit of him still here through what Merchants Quay is doing.’ I would absolutely encourage other people to look at legacy that way. It’s something that’s big and wholehearted, and it’s worth it, every penny. I’m just blown away by the standard of the facility you have here, and the respect you show to people. I think your clients deserve that. We’re so very proud of his gift. So very proud.”

Thank you, Eilis and Miriam and family. And thank you, Mr. Justice Anthony Hederman. Across from the Four Courts is a part of you that lives forever, in our hearts and in the warm MQI welcome and in the justice, for all. ■

Enclosed, The Legacy You Leave:

A Free Guide to Will-Making and Remembering MQI in Your Will



Honesty and Miracles...

continued from cover
how sorry I was. This time she saw it in me, that I meant it."

An honest day's work

Day by day, life on the Farm began to change Vincent. Like those first shoots of Honesty,

he learned to work the soil. Roots grew stronger through one-to-one counselling. Flower buds appeared alongside new skills. "I had just gone and forgotten all the good things about myself. The more I went on in St. Francis Farm, the more I knew I could do it."

And as the aubergine blossoms of Honesty transformed into silvery seedpods, Vincent sowed the seeds of his own new life. He completed MOI's day programme – again donor-funded – to further build his skills. Today he has his own small business, and is back to his beloved sports club. "They welcomed me with open arms. I'm helping manage the children's team as well. It's my little bit of giving back, to tell them you don't get medals for doing drugs or going to jail. I have a son of my own now. I wouldn't have a life without St. Francis Farm. MOI supporters gave me back my spirit." For honesty, for miracles, we thank you.



"I have a son of my own now," shares Vincent. "I wouldn't have a life without St. Francis Farm."

Meet current and former clients like Vincent at St. Francis Farm's upcoming Donor Open Day on Saturday 20th May. See page 3 for details. ■

Detox and Rehab: By the Numbers

75% or nearly eight out of ten clients, successfully complete St. Francis Farm's medically assisted detox programmes, one of the only of its kind in Ireland.

10 detox beds available at St. Francis Farm, comprising nearly a quarter of all detox beds in the country. (Detox capacity remains a serious bottleneck to drug rehabilitation in Ireland.)

344 men and women with entrenched addiction problems were referred into St. Francis Farm alone last year.

78% or nearly eight out of ten clients remain drug-free six months after completing St. Francis Farm – a remarkable number considering many clients come to the Farm with opiate (such as heroin) addiction.

2.5x a 2014 UK study¹ found that every £1 invested in drug treatment saved £2.50 in costs to society – an overwhelmingly cost-effective return of 2.5 times, or 250%.

¹Source: Public Health England, <http://www.nta.nhs.uk/uploads/why-invest-2014-alcohol-and-drugs.pdf>.



Merchants Quay Ireland
Homeless & Drugs Services

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To make your gift by phone: please ring us on 01 524 0139.

Telephone: 01 524 0139

Volunteering: 01 524 0128

Email: info@mqi.ie

Website: www.mqi.ie

Facebook: Merchants Quay Ireland

Twitter: @MerchantsQuayIR

At MOI we respect everyone who comes to us for help – and many are working toward a fresh start in life. So while their stories are true, client names and images may have been changed to protect their privacy. Thank you for understanding.