

Quay Times



Merchants Quay Ireland
Homeless & Drugs Services

The Newsletter for Supporters of Merchants Quay Ireland

A Message for the New Year, by CEO Paula Byrne —

Thank You for Being Our MQI Family

Many of the women and men who turn to MQI have families. Others have no one left to care at all. They are struggling with homelessness or addiction, or both. But for a time, to each person who passes through our door, you are like family to them. And you are, to us. Thank you, this year and through all the years, for being our MQI family...

To say your donations keep good people alive here in Ireland – from every county, every time you give – is no exaggeration. Again and again you and I see how homelessness and addiction are truly a fight for survival, a race against time.

Statistics are sad and sobering. In 2016, 736 people who celebrated the new year did not survive to see 2017 due to drug-related causes. And in 2017 there were 786 lives lost, with drug-related deaths that are the fourth highest in Europe. Meanwhile still more men and women fall asleep on cold, hard footpaths or in doorways, no homes to call their own.

How then, at the start of 2020, do I offer you a message of hope... of gratitude?

That answer, for me, is simple. While never forgetting the people we still need so desperately to reach, I remember the lives you help to save. The nourishing meals, more than



one hundred thousand of them in a twelve month span, you make possible. The counselling. The drug-free recovery. The nights off the street. The warmth and care and kindness you provide, that helps someone hang on.

I remember the humanity you've restored. The laughter, that might have gone unheard. The lights that nearly went out. The mothers and fathers and sisters and cousins and friends, not left to grieve. The brave new stories being told (for a glimpse of these stories, see pages 2 and 3).

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The Comfort You Gave at Christmastime...



6,168 nourishing meals in December – including Sunday roast dinners – for people who mightn't have eaten at all



447 hot showers, to wash off the cold of the streets and restore hope and dignity



22 voices, safe and warm, sang "Auld Lang Syne" on New Year's Eve at the Night Café



41 client stockings, hung at St. Francis Farm and High Park recovery centres



6 MQI Christmas trees, adorned with your blessings and messages of hope

For every miracle large and little, we thank you.

Behind the Recovery Stories

EXCLUSIVE PHOTOVOICE PREVIEW: MQI clients and families share their journeys with you, in photos. For each new tomorrow, for each life transformed, we thank you...

What is Photovoice? Photovoice is a method of participatory photography that creates a way for people to safely share their stories. Of the stories you see here, not one of the words or photos has been edited. Raw, real, and therapeutic, photovoice empowers MQI clients and families to tell their own stories by allowing others to see through their eyes. Our deepest thanks to them for sharing, and our heartfelt gratitude to you for making the vital work of MQI possible.



MARK

“There’s things out there; there’s services; there’s tools out there that can make your life better. Save your life, almost. When I was homeless before I was just in tents, living very rough. [MQI have]...shown me how to help myself. If you put in some work, if they see that you’re putting in work, they’ll help, and will go ten steps further then.”

— Mark, MQI client who was formerly homeless



JOSEPH

“This one kind of represents – freedom, it’s where I am today... It’s been a hard journey, really, really hard, and I’ve overcome a lot of things. I’ve done a lot of work on myself coming to High Park, trying to understand... I always wanted to be someone else... but today I don’t, it’s okay... Today I have more tools in my belt.”

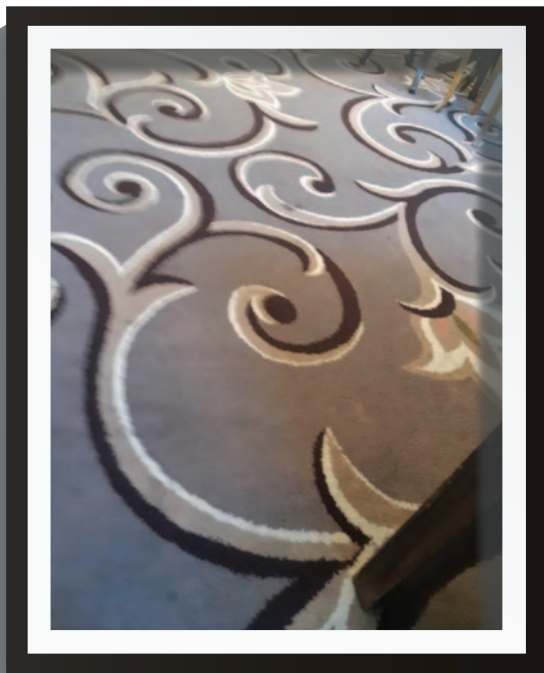
— Joseph, MQI client who went through the High Park recovery programme



EILEEN

“My son made me that when he was in St. Francis Farm [MQI’s rehab facility] last year... and I thought yes this signifies since the time I got that clock we’ve had happy time. And then I looked again and saw the €20 note underneath, that was my other son... I owed him €20 so I said ‘It’s under the clock.’ And it just kind of struck me...we have relaxed, we didn’t realise it...”

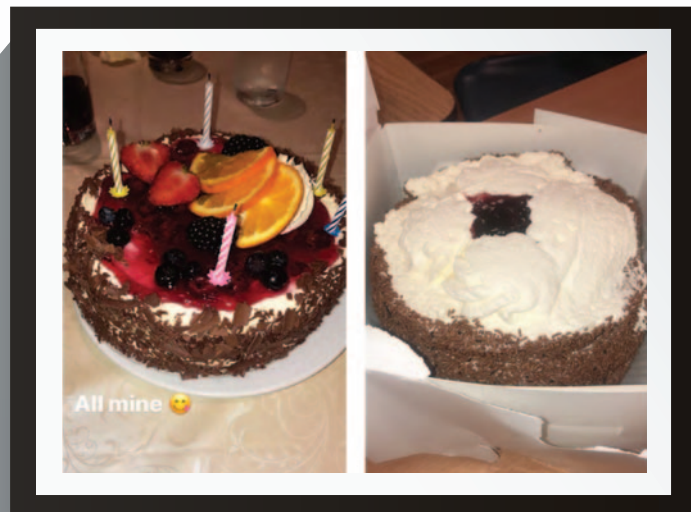
— Eileen, who comes to the MQI family support group



MARY

“... I just looked down at the floor and I thought ‘My God, this is the exact pattern of addiction.’ Because when I look at my siblings it just reaches out so far to other members of the family, like aunts and uncles and brothers and sisters and nieces and nephews.”

— Mary, who comes to the MQI family support group



JASON

“That’s my cake, I was one year clean on Wednesday, the 4th. I’m just proud of the clean time that I haven’t done drink or drugs, I’m proud of that...Then just being capable of seeing the change in me now... seeing a person that’s going to go to college to do social work and to help families that are struggling. This cake is just the start of the cakes I’ll get.”

— Jason, MQI client who went through High Park recovery programme



SHANE

“I worked in the kitchen [at High Park] and I liked it. It is good for getting back to yourself and it is good for your confidence as well. You are cooking, you are feeding 13 people in the kitchen... [Chef] Wayne, wrote on my feedback, ‘I am proud of your achievements.’ It is just good to hear like; you never hear that off anyone...I never did anyway.”

— Shane, MQI client in recovery



See the Full MQI Photovoice Exhibition Near You!

Called “The Lived Experience of Addiction,” see the MQI photovoice exhibit at The Copper House Gallery, 19 St Kevin’s Cottages, Dublin 8: **Sat. 7th March 11am-5pm**, and **9th to 11th March from 9am-5:30pm**. MQI staff will be there for the day on Saturday, and we’d love to see you.

Starting in April, the photovoice exhibition will also travel throughout Ireland. To be updated as dates and locations are confirmed, contact Emma on 01 524 0965 or Emma.Murphy@mqi.ie.

Thank you for every step of the journey!

For each new beginning, thank you.

Private Donor Tour of Riverbank



Thursday, 12th March

10:30am

RSVP to Emma, 01 524 0965

or emma.murphy@mqi.ie

Come for a tour when Riverbank is quiet and closed for training... see how your generosity works to bring hope to people who are homeless, hungry, and struggling with addiction... and enjoy warm conversation and light refreshments. **Join us if you can!**

...Our MQI Family

(continued from cover)

This is the good you make possible, the length and breadth of Ireland!

Nearly seventeen thousand safe sleeps in MQI's Night Café alone this past year... over two thousand people put on a different path through in-prison counselling... nineteen locations to help vulnerable lives get back on track from Cavan to Cork to Dublin and everywhere in between. All here by the grace of your good hand.

On the wall of my office here at MQI, hangs a simple painting...

It isn't set in a gilded frame, or created by a celebrity artist. No. This painting's artist would be faceless, invisible, if not for you.

A self-portrait of a woman on the streets. She huddles, cup in hand. Her eyes won't let you go. There is sadness, it seems hope is lost. You can feel the cold pouring off the streets. Cold she herself must feel.

Every day she reminds me why I'm here. Working to help your donations touch as many lives as possible. She reminds me – and I hope she will remind you – that if today, you and I help even one person off the street, or help one more person take another step out of addiction, that will be a victory.


Thank you, today and always, for being our MQI family. Thank you for the hope you bring. ■




"Every day this painting reminds me why I'm here... that if today, you and I help even one person off the street, or help one more person take another step out of addiction, that will be a victory." — CEO Paula Byrne

A Winter Wish List Wish From Emma... to You

We're unable to take in donations of clothing due to limited storage capacity for at least the next several months. Thankfully your past donations mean we are blessed with enough toiletries and socks to get through the winter – but if you'd like to give any of the items below you can still make a massive difference to someone in urgent need...

- New, packaged men's underwear (boxers or briefs, all sizes) 
- New, packaged women's underwear (all sizes)
- New sports bras (all sizes)

- BIG WISH!** The bedrooms at St. Francis Farm's Sycamore House are in constant use, we'd love to refresh the wear and tear by renewing furniture and bedding. €2,500 will update all 10 bedrooms for our detox clients as they build new lives. 







Please ring Emma Murphy – steadfast keeper of the MQI wish list – on **01 524 0965** or email to **Emma.Murphy@mqi.ie** if you'll be dropping off your kind donation, so she can be here to meet and thank you personally. **Thank you!**



Merchants Quay Ireland
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Merchants Quay Ireland
24 Merchants Quay,
P.O. Box 11958, Dublin 8

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

-  **Telephone:** 01 524 0139
-  **Volunteering:** 01 524 0934
-  **Email:** supportercare@mqi.ie
-  **Website:** www.mqi.ie
-  **Facebook:** Merchants Quay Ireland
-  **Twitter:** @MerchantsQuayIR

At MQI we respect everyone who turns to us for help – and many are just beginning their fresh start in life. So while client stories are genuine and true, names are changed and stock photographs of models are used for illustrative purposes and to protect client privacy. Thank you for your understanding.