

# Quay Times



Merchants Quay Ireland  
Homeless & Drugs Services

The Newsletter for Supporters of Merchants Quay Ireland

SPRING 2022

## Anne was a client of MQI's St. Francis Farm rehabilitation centre. This year she returns... as your host.

*"Knowing there's people out there who care, that's wonderful," smiles Anne. She remembers her journey of recovery and looks forward to welcoming you on June 11th to our Donor Open day at the Farm.*

**T**hree years ago and before the pandemic started, Anne was a client at St. Francis Farm during the last Donor Open Day. "It was a lovely, bright morning and we'd all been so excited getting ready for the Open Day," Anne remembers. "We'd been preparing and looking forward to it so much for ages. Everybody got stuck in! Dusting skirting boards, arranging vases of flowers, cleaning windows, preparing food. Outside we were cutting grass and trimming hedges – it was busy, busy, busy! When we were told we could show groups of supporters around the Farm, I was nervous but also excited. It was lovely seeing so many supporters from the outside world. There was a feeling of pride that we'd come so far and were able to do this."

### Anne lost everything

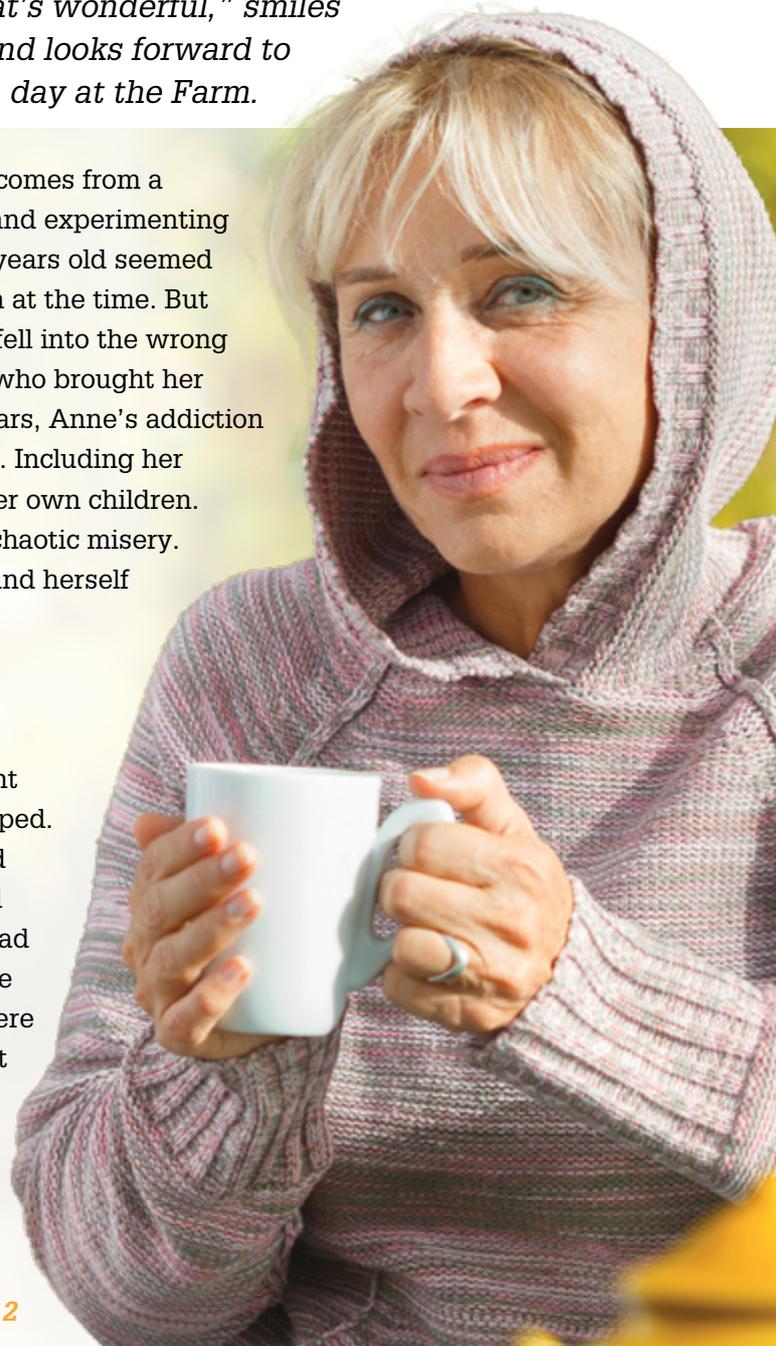
Anne had never been in a residential detox and rehab programme before MQI's St.

Francis Farm. She comes from a supportive family and experimenting with alcohol at 13 years old seemed like just a bit of fun at the time. But before long, Anne fell into the wrong company - people who brought her drugs. Over the years, Anne's addiction lost her everything. Including her family, and even her own children. Her life became a chaotic misery. Eventually, she found herself in prison.

### Prison was a turning point

"The lightbulb went on, the penny dropped. I was sick and tired of what my life had become. I knew I had to change. Then the news came that there was a bed for me at St. Francis Farm. I was brought there straight from prison by two officers. I was

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“ Without St Francis Farm I don't think I'd be here today. But now I have a life with lots to look forward to.

# Anne looks forward to giving you a warm welcome at the next Donor Open Day

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scared and deeply ashamed, but I knew I needed this chance to prove that I could change. No matter how bad the sickness was."

Now in her 40s, Anne is finally able to enjoy having the security of her own, neat-as-a-pin flat.

"Without St. Francis Farm I don't think I'd be here today. But now I have a life with lots to look forward to. My eight-year-old is making his First Holy Communion in May. It's on the very anniversary that I've been healthy for 3 years. My relationship with my family and children is brilliant now. But it took time for us to work on that together. They're very supportive and I'm so grateful to be here for them too. I'm present today. I can be a mother now."

## The magic of Open Day

Former clients like Anne volunteer to come back and help out on the Donor Open Day. This year, Anne is looking forward to welcoming you and meeting the current residents. As she

battled to reclaim her life from the hell of addiction, meeting former clients helped. Anne's voice fills with emotion when she remembers what that meant to her. "It gave a us so much hope, seeing how well people had done and how far they'd come. People who once were just like me - now in college and with their families back. To sit over a cup of tea and hear them say 'I was where you are and look at me now. You can do this too.' It gave me hope and I thought to myself - I can do this. This can be done." Now it is Anne's turn to come back and be an inspiration for our current clients.

## Anne's message to you from her heart

"If I could say one thing to MOI donors -- it's wonderful that you want to see people change their lives. Some people don't understand about addiction. But I could see that those who came to the Farm that day really care. It made me feel so good. You saw what we were going through and believed we could come out the other side. To know there's people like you out there who care, that's really wonderful."

Your visit to St. Francis Farm will give a huge boost of happiness and confidence to all the clients and we hope it will be an enjoyable day for all involved. ■



## Donor Open Day St. Francis Farm

Chat to clients and staff and see first-hand the transformative work you support on your visit to MOI's St. Francis Farm Detox & Rehabilitation Project in Co. Carlow for this year's Donor Open Day, Saturday 11th June.

Seating is available on a limited, first reserved basis for free round-trip transport via a coach from Dublin. You are welcome as well to make your own way by car.

Either way, please RSVP to Emma on **01 524 0139** or **emma.murphy@mqi.ie**. The coach will depart 24 Merchants Quay at 10am and return at 3pm.



**"To know there's people out there who care, that's really wonderful."**

## Sowing seeds of Honesty with St. Francis Farm manager Norah.

22 years ago, Norah answered an advertisement in the Farmer's Journal: "Horticulturalist wanted to work alongside former drug users to develop a walled garden." With your support, at MQI's St. Francis Farm in County Carlow, Norah's gentle wisdom nurtures clients back to full bloom.

People can be a lot like plants, some of us do very well in the shade, others like full sun. All of us need to be well-fed and given time to flourish. Most of all, everyone needs love... like the love your support makes possible.

"Every single day is different here, just like every person who arrives at MQI" explains Norah. "We adapt the recovery programme for each client and bring people along at their own pace." In the gardens, Norah opens up a new world for clients where they grow stronger as each day passes.



### Honesty at the heart of recovery

"The first time a client comes outside, I ask them to sow a tray of seeds. Often it's the Honesty flowers that grow all around the Farm. Ten days later, they see green shoots coming up. That's when they say to themselves, 'I'm not a complete failure if I can do this!' I give people something I know they can do, and they start to build on that themselves."

Clients grow their own food with Norah's encouragement. In one of the poly-tunnels, rows of tiny carrot seedlings are starting to emerge. There's satisfaction for each client in their harvest. The fresh vegetables, salad and fruit are brought straight from the gardens to the kitchen. They pack goodness into every meal.



Norah witnesses first-hand the changes in people. "Within six weeks you can see their skin improve and their faces fill out with a healthy bit of weight going on," she explains. "Add a bit of fresh air, exercise in the gym and regular sleep – and there's a complete transformation."

### He was finally able to grieve

"One young chap wanted to take an hour in the Memorial Garden on his mother's anniversary. In life, he hadn't had a great relationship with her, but he'd started to see other aspects of his mother while he was here. He'd realised in the therapy group that his childhood hadn't been so awful compared to other clients. His mum had only been trying to manage her own problems as best she could. So, he took the afternoon in the Memorial Garden to reflect on her. I was keeping an eye on him and, in passing by, I asked him if he'd like to help me sow a rosebush.

"As we were working together, that young man told me lots of the memories he had of his mother. He hadn't been able to grieve for her at the time she'd passed away. It was only now, having a bit of space, that he was really feeling for the first time the loss of his mother. And so I asked him a very important question: 'What would she say to you now? If she could see you today?' You could see him take comfort in the thought. You could feel the glow. He knew she'd be proud of him. There was a huge softening in his attitude from then on. He'd planted his emotions in the form of a rose."

**Your loving support of Merchants Quay Ireland helps to make these beautiful changes possible. With your generosity, people are growing and thriving. Thank you for being a part of this work – and for every life you help to turn around. ■**



Norah shows clients how to grow Honesty flowers and encourages the value of honesty to take root at the heart of their healing journey.



## Thank you for being so wonderful!

You put on your runners and did 10,000 steps a day in MQI's February 10k Steps Challenge. You got up early on cold mornings, rainy days and went out on dark evenings. All for the men and women who come to Merchants Quay Ireland for help. Thank you from your MQI family for walking with us!

Thank you for all the birthday fundraisers. Thank you to all the couples who made MQI part of their special day with our Wedding Favours. Thank you for helping the homeless and hungry with gifts in lieu of flowers on rip.ie – tributes in memory of loved ones are always deeply felt at MQI.

Everything you do gives hope to people who need it most. You are our strength, our MQI heroes! Thank you everyone. ■



### Calling all the sisterhood!

The VHI Women's Mini Marathon is on **June 5th**. Please support MQI! Just get in touch with Maggie at **01 524 0139** or email **communityfundraising@mqi.ie**

**We'd like you to have a little bit of St. Francis Farm for yourself!**

Just ring the Fundraising office at **01 524 0139** to receive your **FREE** pack of Honesty flower seeds from the Farm. Yours, as a symbol of our friendship.



# When you leave a legacy to Merchants Quay Ireland... your story will live on.

Client taking inspiration  
from the MQI Book of Love

*A gift in your Will makes a new future possible for the men and women who turn to Merchants Quay Ireland for help. Your legacy makes sure that MQI can always offer a safe place, a warm welcome and a fresh start.*

**M**erchants Quay Ireland is forever grateful for every legacy, of any amount, to help this healing work. We also know that sometimes a monetary bequest isn't possible in your Will. No matter what your personal circumstances, you can always give your gift of understanding and wisdom by contributing to the **MQI Book of Love**.

## Your message of compassion

The **MQI Book of Love** is a book of hope and encouragement, written by MQI supporters like

you, for people in recovery at St. Francis Farm and High Park. It is your opportunity to fill clients' hearts with your message of compassion. As clients take their first nervous steps into their new drug-free lives, your words of wisdom can offer guidance and inspiration.

## Inspiring clients for years to come

Please share your experiences, stories and lessons – anonymously if you wish – on the page enclosed. Just send it back in the purple envelope.

We'll gladly include it in the 2022 **MQI Book of Love** for clients to read.

Help clients to always remember that they are loved. Inspire them with the knowledge that you care enough to think of them as they rebuild their lives.

A copy of **MQI's Book of Love** is kept at the Adam and Eve's Franciscan Friary. We also have a limited number of 2021 copies available. If you'd like to receive one, please contact Emma Murphy at 01 524 0139 or [emma.murphy@mqi.ie](mailto:emma.murphy@mqi.ie). ■

Sometimes the greatest healing comes in the gentle words of a stranger.

# A Springtime Wish List

## for St. Francis Farm



### **Spring has well and truly arrived!**

At St. Francis Farm the vegetable beds are sprouting with lettuce, beets and carrots. The hens are laying and Honesty flowers will soon come into bloom.

If you can help with a donation for these Wish List items, we'd be very grateful.

- Refresh and renew a client bedroom with your gift of €500. 
- Provide horticultural supplies, gardening tools and animal feed with your gift of €250. 
- New, packaged socks and underwear are always needed. 



### Big Wish

Storage space at the Farm is very limited! We're in need of a large secure, insulated shed on a concrete pad for storing essential supplies. Can you help with a donation towards our estimated cost of €10,000. Please call Emma now at 01 524 0319.

Thank you!

## For safeguarding Sunday dinners... we thank you.

Thanks to your generosity, the MQI Sunday dinner service is protected for another year. This service is a lifeline for people sleeping on the streets.

Every Sunday, Riverbank can continue to offer warm nourishing meals, the comfort of a shower, a change of underwear and dry clothing. You make possible the kind words of welcome with every smile. Thank you for such a blessing. ■



**Merchants Quay Ireland**  
Homeless & Drugs Services

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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 0128
- 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.