

Quay Times



Merchants Quay Ireland
Homeless & Drugs Services

The Newsletter for Supporters of Merchants Quay Ireland

WINTER 2022

How you help the deepest wounds heal, with Nurse Marguerite at MQI.

MQI's welcome starts with the help you give: a cup of tea, a hot shower and nourishing food. It's when clients feel warm, safe and cared-for that they find the courage to open up and share their story. When it comes to healthcare worries, Nurse Marguerite's dedication is a tenderness that soothes like a balm.



‘I’m here at Merchants Quay seven years now,” explains Marguerite. Her voice is soft and reassuring, like her gentle bedside manner. “My first nursing role was with patients in homelessness, with HIV and addiction. Now towards the end of my career I wanted to come back to working for very vulnerable patients.”

Marguerite was drawn to Merchants Quay Ireland's ethos of making people feel welcome when they've nowhere else to turn. “If clients have no medical card, they're undocumented, or they haven't accessed care for years, we welcome them and start a care plan. Our Riverbank drop-in centre is a one-stop shop for healthcare needs.”

“I certainly see many untreated chronic illnesses, unattended for years,” says Marguerite. “Diseases like epilepsy, diabetes, bowel diseases and respiratory illnesses from being outdoors in the weather so much. Many patients have asthma and COPD, as well as heart problems, high blood pressure and pulmonary diseases that we can help with.”

She treats people whose daily lives are a battle to get through. So often, clients are afraid to tell what's hurting them, ashamed of how they look, and worried about what could be wrong.

“Just today I've seen an 18-year-old girl who has been homeless since she was 15 years of age. We've discovered that she's pregnant. While I'm looking after her healthcare needs, our Youth Support worker is trying to sort out suitable accommodation.

“Another patient needs an x-ray on his hips. He's in a lot of pain and really has to get that treated. Earlier today I've seen a man with a very large and painful hernia that has

continued on Page 2

“We don't know who's coming in the door, so we have to be ready. There's always something we can do...”

Nurse Marguerite

continued from Page 1

developed over time. He needs an ultrasound and obviously surgery, but he has no address and no phone. So I am liaising with the hospital to get those appointments.

All he wants is to get back to work. And that's just this afternoon."

"God knows what happened to Aoife."

It's the very complex wound care that concerns Marguerite most. She's cleaning and dressing Aoife's leg ulcer three times a week.

"It's a serious wound she's been coping with for at least a couple of years. Bandaging it with cling film and nappies because she was too afraid to show anyone or see a GP. She's in homeless accommodation and it can take her over an hour to get here because her mobility is limited. Her ulcer is very large and deep. She's losing a lot of fluid and has been in terrible pain, you can only imagine. We're using hyper-absorbent dressings and working closely with the hospital to treat her.

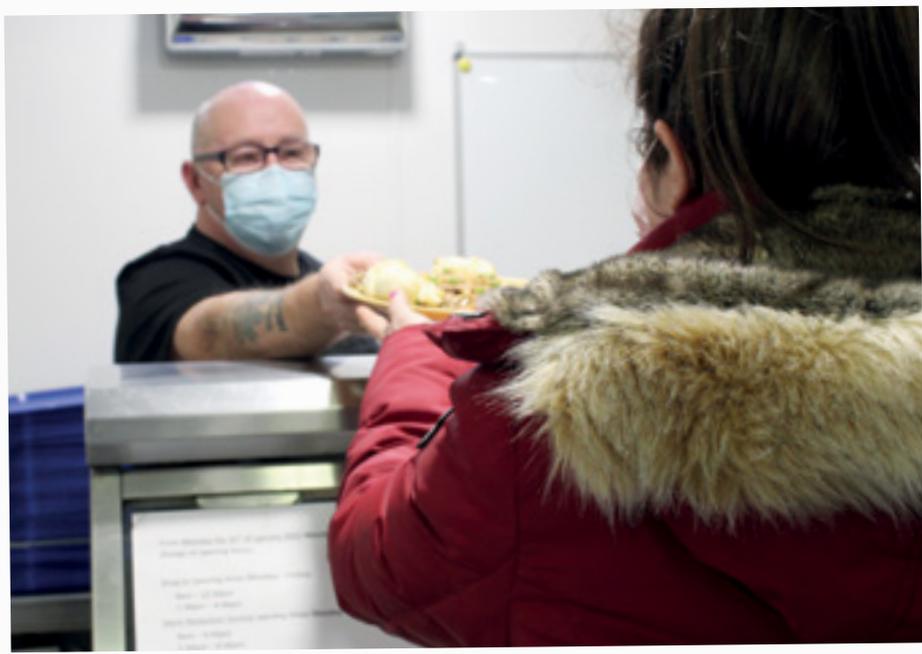
"God knows what happened to Aoife. Very often, people don't want to talk because it's too distressing. But over time, patients get to know and trust us. Aoife knows she's safe here. She tells me she thinks of it like a beauty-treatment because we give her coffee and while she rests her leg she can listen to music."

Aoife's wound isn't all that's being healed.

It's the wrap-around support, provided through the grace of your generosity, that keeps very vulnerable people like Aoife alive. Marguerite explains just how vital all the other services are at Riverbank. "She had her hair done here and was so happy. If Merchants Quay wasn't here, I don't know where she would go. Staff found a homeless hostel for her, we're trying to secure her a social payment, and she has access to a hot meal. She really needs to eat well because of all the protein she is losing. She's the most complex patient I have at the moment. We're all very concerned about Aoife but she's a pleasure to take care of."

Treating chronic diseases in the winter is more difficult because of the cold and wet. Marguerite particularly sees respiratory problems like asthma and bronchitis, worsen in the winter months. "Everything is harder. Nutrition is so important, and foot-care because people might walk all day in wet shoes. So, keeping warm and dry can save lives. And certainly, people feel pain more in the cold. So, a hot meal and a hot shower are absolutely critical."

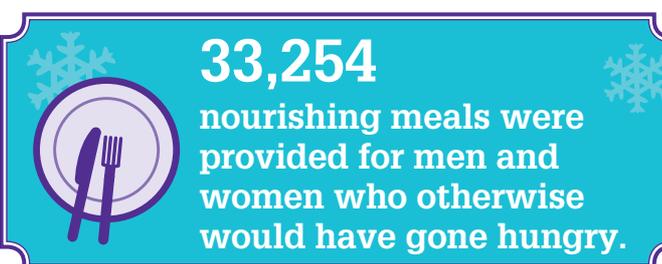
Thank you for all you do to help people who are homeless. Our Riverbank homeless drop-in centre is a refuge when clients find no other door open to them. It's a place where your love shines in the darkest months. You are with us every single day in this work of the heart. Thank you for your compassion. ■



Your love flavours every nutritious meal served at Riverbank. But more than that, you give hope to the men and women who come here.

Thank you for what YOU make possible

A safe place to rest, when before there was a cold, hard pavement. A caring voice, where once there was no one. A 'how are you feeling?' and a hot meal where before the doors were closed. In 2021 at MQI, just a single year, these were some of the wonderful victories because of your kind support.



See with your own eyes the good you do... Riverbank tours at MQI. You're very welcome to visit Riverbank for a tour of the building and a chance to chat with staff. We'd be delighted to show you around. For all the details, just **ring Shauna at 01 524 0139**. There's nothing like seeing first-hand your love in action.

**A hot meal, a helping hand, a message of hope.
Your love in action at MQI.**

Aoife was too scared to tell... until the pain got too much.

Aoife is well-read and loves the escapism she finds in a good book. Her large, expressive eyes are full of warmth and emotion. It's her quiet voice that gives away how absolutely exhausted she is.

She still can't bring herself to talk about her past. Where life started from, or what happened to her. We do know that Aoife used to live in a bedsit until her money ran out. And that was when she first lost her home; secretly staying with a friend in a hostel. Hiding like a stow-away, until she was discovered.

Recently, Aoife suffered a mild stroke. But it's the deep, chronic ulcer weeping from her knee to her ankle that's most worrying. "I was never sick before in my life, never needed the doctor," says Aoife. The crutch she needs to help her walk is by her side.

"Being cold all the time makes you want to feel nothing at all."

Aoife was on the streets before she came to MQI. "Being without a home over the winter is horrible. You're always cold and you can't even wash yourself. When I first lost my bedsit, I didn't know where to find places like Riverbank. I was just outside all the time walking and trying to keep warm."

Aoife quietly tried her best to take care of her wound. She dressed it with whatever she could find, wrapping it with cling film to keep it clean. She heard from people living on the streets that there was a nurse at Riverbank who could help her. But Aoife was too scared and anxious to come. Until the pain became too much to bear.

"I came here in pain, but I left smiling."

Without a medical card, there was nowhere else to go for the healthcare Aoife so desperately needed.

"I was so afraid to come here at first, I almost fainted. But I liked Marguerite from the moment I saw her. She just talked to me like an ordinary person, she's so kind. It was wonderful. She made

Your love and kindness welcomed Aoife into the warmth of Riverbank, where she found the care she so desperately needed.

me feel safe and told me not to worry. I was scared and came here in pain, but I left smiling."

When clients feel safe, valued as people, and respected for their dignity and humanity, only then can their wounds begin to heal. The support you give towards services at Riverbank, and the warm welcome you make possible, is what makes Riverbank a special place.

"She treats me like a friend"

Aoife's face lights up when she mentions Marguerite. "She's an angel. She's so careful, always thinking about what I need to do and how she can help. She's so much more than a nurse, she treats me like a friend."

"One day I came early and Marguerite was with another person," Aoife tells us, "so I waited in the dining room. I was only going to have a cup of coffee but one of the staff said 'Relax and sit down. Let me bring your coffee,' and she came back with a tray and a full breakfast. That was so very kind. It made my day."

Tough decisions ahead

Looking after an ulcer is extremely complex work. Aoife was in such horrendous pain that she couldn't sleep at night. Nurse Marguerite cleans the wound and changes the dressings on Aoife's leg three times a week but she's losing a lot of fluid. So, Marguerite is working very closely with the hospital



and there are some tough decisions ahead.

Aoife comes back to Riverbank for medical care and for kindness. "It's amazing at MQI, people don't ignore me, they talk nicely to me and try to help. Even one good word for me means a lot, makes me feel so good."

When clients give an interview for your *Quay Times* newsletter, they know it's a way for them to talk to you directly. They know that you care about them, and that you send your donations and your love to keep the good work at Riverbank going. Aoife's last word is to you, our MQI family:

"Good people deserve good things to happen to them. People who give and help are good people. God bless you and obviously thank you very much. I wish you all the good things you deserve."

Thank you for standing with MQI, and for supporting people who need your kindness and love. ■



Celebrating your generosity – a Christmas Gratitude Concert.



You know that, without your donations, men and women who are hurting, lonely and scared might not have a place like MQI to come to. So - in their name – we offer our gratitude to you with a FREE Christmas concert for you and your family.

It's a beloved tradition and one of the most joyful events MQI holds, just for you, every year. Please join us for an afternoon of seasonal festive music and carols with the wonderful Dublin Concert Band.

It's a FREE event -- our "Thank You" to you and your loved-ones -- on behalf of all the clients you're helping.

Your generosity to MQI is love in action. And that's something we celebrate every Christmas and all through the year. We hope you can join us in person or online at www.churchtv.ie/adamandeve
Thank you for being our Merchants Quay Family. ■



Where: Adam and Eve's Franciscan Church, here on Merchants Quay, Dublin 8.

When: 3:30pm on Sunday, December 11th.

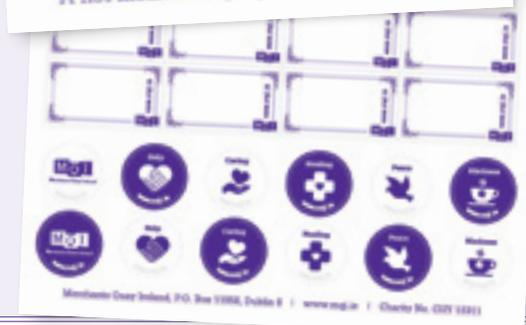
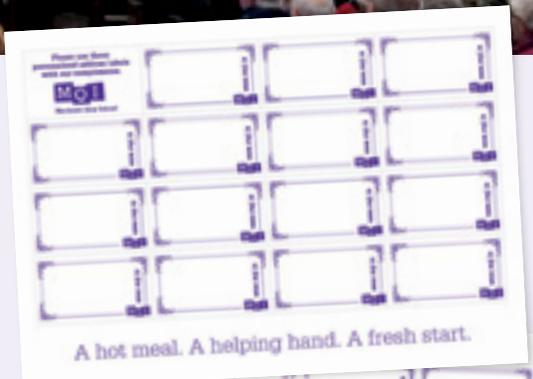
How: To book your places just ring your Donor Care team at **01 524 0139** or join us online at www.churchtv.ie/adamandeve



Would you like address labels for your Christmas post?

Until everyone in Ireland has an address of their own, please spread the word of MQI's work with your personalised address labels. If you've used the last of the ones enclosed in the Summer Quay Times newsletter... just ring us. We are delighted to send you another sheet (or more!) of labels, FREE with our warmest compliments, personalised for your Christmas post. The labels cost pennies to print yet create national awareness for Ireland's most vulnerable.

For your labels, ring Carol on 01 524 0139. ■



For warmth and dignity, we thank you.

A Wish List for Winter...

As the coldest, darkest months of the year arrive, people are outdoors in winter rain and wind. Can you help with these essentials to bring warmth, comfort and dignity to homeless men and women coming inside for a shower and hot meal? We have very little storage space, so we're focused on items that are most in need:



- ✓ New, packaged socks and underwear for both men and women (sportsbras)
- ✓ Warm hats, scarves and gloves
- ✓ Tracksuit pants, leggings, long-sleeved t-shirts, fleecy sweatshirts and hoodies
- ✓ Toiletries – shower gel, shampoo, toothpaste & toothbrushes, shaving gear
- ✓ Waterproof jackets, waterproof trousers
- ✓ Gently-used runners in more common sizes

You can bring your donation to **24 Merchants Quay D08 X7YK**, 10am to 3pm, Monday to Friday. Or if you live in the Dublin area and can't come to us, ring our donor care team on **01 524 0139** to arrange a collection. ■

✓ Big Wish

The kitchen in Riverbank needs a new commercial fridge. Can you help with a gift of €2,000 to ensure clients get a good, hearty home-cooked meal. Please ring Emma on **01 524 0965**.

Thank you!

For people outdoors in all weathers, a place to come inside for dry clothes can be a lifesaver.



MQI

Merchants Quay Ireland
Homeless & Drugs Services

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 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.