

Quay Times



Merchants Quay Ireland
Homeless & Drugs Services

The Newsletter for Supporters of Merchants Quay Ireland

Relief. Respect. Hope, and help. It's on every floor here, because of you —

Beneath this Riverbank Roof: Special Summer Foldout Feature

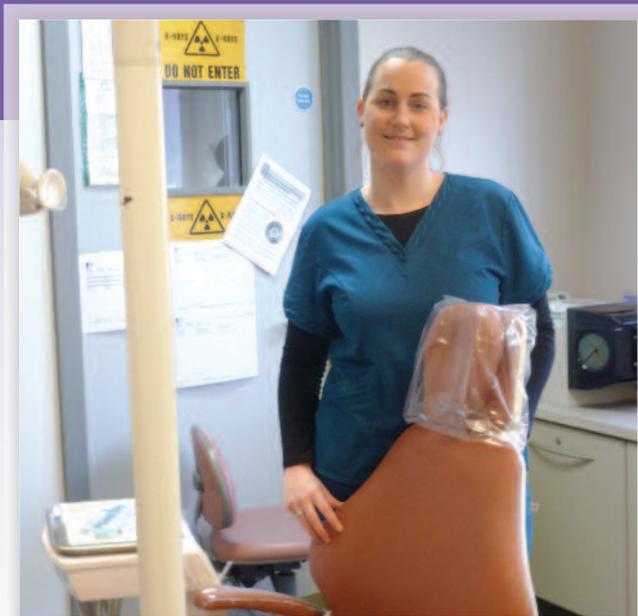
"I've passed by the Riverbank homeless centre before," she told us. "But I had no idea there was so much on offer helping people rebuild their lives." The truth is, as a result of your support there is light years more than a meal here for Ireland's most vulnerable. It's making a real difference. And today we'd like to show you...



For the special Riverbank foldout that shows how your generosity helps on every floor, turn the page



lift here >



When a funding gap threatened Merchants Quay dentist Niamh's position, you rallied to fund her role. Thank you!

MQI dentist to remain, thanks to you —

A Reason to Smile

Between 2015 and 2016 alone, demand for MQI's crisis dental service increased 62 percent. Yet when we wrote to you this past spring, nothing was certain. When what was anticipated to be a short-term gap in funding for Merchants Quay dentist Niamh's position was stretched, we turned to you for urgent help in keeping her here. It's an honour to report that your outpouring of support has funded and protected her role, giving men and women who are homeless a place to turn for emergency dental care – and a reason to smile. (See "30 Seconds with MQI's Dental Care Team," inside.) **Thank you!** ■

Beneath this Riverbank Roof

A look inside the safe haven your generosity has built for Ireland's homeless:

On virtually every day and every hour of the year at MQI's Riverbank homeless centre, your support keeps the door open, the lights on, and the kettle warm for men and women in Ireland with absolutely nowhere left to turn. But what's really inside Riverbank? An amazing breadth of services that puts hope and help on every floor, because of you...



SECOND FLOOR: So that no one is forgotten...

Second Floor Services – Brighter Tomorrows

- **Ending the Homelessness Cycle, Early:** One of the only services of its kind in the country, Young Person's Support at MQI is 100% funded by donors and helps hundreds of men and women, as young as eighteen, out of homelessness and addiction.
- **A Vital Link:** Homeless people are among the most isolated in the country, so it's no wonder they suffer from mental illnesses like depression and anxiety that can lead to or worsen addiction. Here on the second floor, Ireland's first mental health service for homeless people was started by and is sustained thanks to supporters like you – a vital link at a critical time.



He Could Have Been Anyone's Son

“You just feel pure empty. When everybody is going home, knowing you'll be on your own on the street thinking, ‘There is no way I can hold down this job.’ Nowhere to sleep, nowhere to shower, my feet in bits, and I still have to work tomorrow. It can happen to anyone, literally anyone. Without Young Person's Support at MQI, I'd have given up.” — Paul, aged 23, now in accommodation



Ninety Days from Tomorrow...

If tomorrow you found yourself homeless, there is one thing we know. It will take just ninety days for your mental health to slide – and maybe, turn to a way to numb the shock of street life. “The fact that because

of supporters we are the first mental health team opening our door to people who are homeless and struggling with mental illness and addiction, it's amazing. Yesterday I had no appointments in the afternoon and I ended up seeing three people in two hours,” explains mental health team member Raul. “There is a huge demand.”

FIRST FLOOR: A step up, out of homelessness, despair, and addiction...

First Floor Services – Practical Pathways

- **Tending the Sick and the Wounded:** From bandaging feet to treating chronic illness, in the first-floor medical service, you help bring relief to all.
- **Pain-Free Smiles and New Self-Esteem:** When addiction and homelessness take a toll on teeth, the dental service you help fund lets clients face the world again.
- **Hope in Addiction's Dark Days:** MQI needle exchange, offered without judgement, keeps streets safer and builds a bridge to recovery for clients.
- **Life Skills, Learning, and More:** Needs constantly change at Riverbank. But the first-floor multipurpose room lets your donations do double duty for Ireland's most vulnerable, expanding Night Café capacity in the wee hours, and serving as a computer, training, and therapy room during the daytime.



30 Seconds with Riverbank's Dental Care Team

Q: Are clients ever embarrassed to have you see their teeth in a bad state?

Niamh (Dentist, 100% donor-funded!): Always. And ashamed. They're scared – they're in pain – but they still apologise for the state of their teeth.

Q: How do you let them know it's OK?

Triona (HSE Dental Nurse): We give them a bit of a hug or a pat on the back. Yesterday we saw a client who told us he was having suicidal thoughts as well. The services are all joined up here, thanks to the support of MQI donors. It's massive.



The True Impact of Needle Exchange

He could have been a sad statistic. But all through addiction's dark days, MQI's needle exchange protected his basic health until he was ready to work on recovery. Years later, drug-free, he wrote to say thank you: “I've two beautiful sons. I've a beautiful wife. If I'd had HIV or Hepatitis C from risky injecting, I would never have had a chance with that girl. Now I'm married to her.” In changing the lives that others dismiss, you change the future.



GROUND FLOOR: It all starts with a cup of tea and an open door...

Ground Floor Services – Life's Basics

- **A Warm Welcome:** Thousands of times each week vulnerable men and women check in at our reception desk, to a smile and a friendly face
- **A Cup of Tea and a Meal:** Day or night, MQI's donor-funded food service offers sustenance for those who mightn't otherwise eat.
- **Clean, Dry Clothing:** With your help, as often as we can, clean, dry socks and underwear are given to those who need them
- **Dignity and a Hot Shower:** When you're cold and street-weary, the privacy of a clean bathroom and a hot shower restores dignity
- **Free Phones:** For many clients, ringing for even a chance at a hostel bed would be impossible without the free phones
- **The Shelter of the Night Café:** At 11pm, mats are rolled out in Riverbank for 70 people. If not for this bit of shelter they would sleep on the streets.



Frozen Footprints

“It was half seven on a frigid winter morning. There, leading up to to Riverbank's door, were frozen footprints. All through the night before, someone was out in their socks, in the bitter cold, their feet falling apart. Yet because of our donors they knew they could find their way to us. Can you imagine what a hot shower and warm, dry clothes means to someone like that?” — Aislinn, MQI Staff



100 New Faces Each Week

Each month as many as one hundred new faces come in to the ground floor of Riverbank. But this was a giant of a man, who sat quietly at one of the dining room tables. As a project worker approached and asked if he'd like a cup of tea or something to eat, the man broke down in tears. “That's the first time someone's spoken to me in weeks,” he said.



Hope and help on every floor, because of you. Thank you for a fresh start and a second chance.

Thank you for being our MQI family.

Why Supporter Open Days mean more than you know —

Your Day on St. Francis Farm

It was a bright and clear, fresh morning for the drive down to Carlow from Merchants Quay. For clients working hard to come back from addiction, and for the former clients – now drug-free – who came back to help host the day, the annual Supporter Open Day at St. Francis Farm forged a healing, human connection that could never have happened if not for the gift of your presence. A warm and lasting thank you to all who could attend...



Supporters Like You Reflect on Their Day

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“On chatting to one of the clients, who told me his story and showed me his writings, I felt very humbled at the trust placed in a stranger – he spoke about hope and how MQI had been responsible for this.” — Noreen

“

“To meet the person behind the ‘label of addiction’ shone a new light for me. It was most interesting to learn all that running a Detox and Rehab Centre like St. Francis Farm entails, from the staff to the therapies that help clients, and how and why those work. The coffee and scones, and the Shepherd’s Pie, were delicious, we felt like royalty. I cannot remember all the names of those we met, but their faces are indelibly printed on my mind – courageous young people who I congratulate on pursuing this course to change their lives. I send them all a special thanks.” — Vivienne

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“The clients reminded me of a grandchild who also went through these experiences. Today, gratitude is his way of life.” — Pat

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“Thank you for the work you are doing, for the evident respect with which you treat each client, and for organising the day.” — Carmel



“

“St. Francis Farm is such an uplifting place full of love and hope. I was overwhelmed by the three young men’s pride in the centre, their lovely vegetable garden, their woodwork and beautiful art, and nature in general. They made me feel full of joy in their hope for the future, despite their hard start in life, with no hate, blame or malice to anyone. I think about SFF every day with a warm smile, that there’s such a place of hope and love for people who fell along Life’s way, but got up and now look to a happier future.” — Anne

The next Supporter Open Day is in September at MQI’s High Park Detox and Rehab Centre in Drumcondra, and we would love for you to attend. See your special invitation on page 6. ■



MQI wouldn't be here, without you. Thank you.

Will you join us?

High Park Supporter Open Day

On **Saturday, 2nd September from 11am to 3pm** you are cordially invited to our annual supporter open day at MQI's High Park Detox and Rehab Project on Grace Park Road in Drumcondra. Eagerly awaited by staff and clients alike, they guide you through the amazing residential rehab service you make real, and – over tea and biscuits – share the inspiring stories that are unfolding thanks to your generosity. To RSVP, **ring Emma on 01 524 0965**. We would love to see you there! ■



SUMMER Wish List

Could you spare any of the following this summer? When supplies are low, even the simplest gift speaks volumes to those we serve:

- ✓ Men's shaving razors and cream (supplies very low on these)
- ✓ Sun screen and baseball caps to prevent sunburn and heat stroke 
- ✓ Clothing for our homeless women (sizes 8-10: leggings, jeans, t-shirts and hoodies) 
- ✓ Men's track suit bottoms and t-shirts (small and medium)
- ✓ Gently used runners for men and women (constant need for these) 
- ✓ Secondhand mini-bus, 9-seater, for Aftercare Houses (Big wish! €10,000) 

Drop off your items in person to MQI at 24 Merchants Court between 9:30am and 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!*

Heart of the work —

How Your Donations Touch Lives of All Ages

Right now, chances are there is someone near your age who is trying to pull themselves up from the loneliness and hardship of life on the streets...



9% Nine percent, or nearly 1 in 10 MQI clients, are just 18-24 years of age.



16% Almost 2 out of every 10 clients – sixteen percent – are aged 50 and older.



25% 1 out of every 4 who turn to us, 25%, are between the ages of 40 and 49.



50% Fully half of those who pass through our door are aged 25-39.

For each of these men and women, your donations in 2017 have meant respite from the streets, practical supports, and a fighting chance. Thank you.



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 MQI 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.