

Quay Times



Merchants Quay Ireland
Homeless & Drugs Services

The Newsletter for Supporters of Merchants Quay Ireland

How Adam Got His Life Back

Vulnerable. Lonely. Broken. Ashamed. The words Adam uses to describe himself during his years of drug addiction would break your heart. At MQI's High Park, Adam found a new vocabulary – and an amazing new chance at life that couldn't have happened without you...

Adam was well into his twenties when his mother got the phone call from her only son. "I'm addicted to heroin and I'm homeless." His life was off the rails and he didn't have the money to get back. It would be more than five years and two treatment programmes later, with the very real chance of prison time looming, before he stood in the entryway to MQI's High Park residential rehabilitation centre.

"When I was using drugs," he begins, "I felt so broken and ashamed, so much smaller. Vulnerable. I'm not very streetwise so I kept my head down. Addiction

could hit me again at any time, I still feel that fear. But I'm trying to do one thing every day that I don't want to do – to combat that stuff."

When the penny dropped

He was five weeks into the 14-week programme at High Park before, he says, "the penny started to drop." It's one of the main reasons why the first part of High Park's rehabilitation, that your generosity helps to continue, lasts about a month. After years and years of addiction and isolation, women and men like Adam are essentially learning a new way to live, right down to the time they spend with



Adam

"Is there anything I want to say to MQI supporters? Yes. Because of you, High Park saved my life. Like I was on the brink of suicide then, and now I can go to work, and have conversations with my mother, and – it's saved my life, do you know? It's saved my life." — Adam is a former High Park client who is now drug-free and helping others through MQI's aftercare support.

others and the words they choose. (See companion story on High Park, page 2.) "I found it very, very hard. Everyone has jobs they are required to do. But as you move through the *continued on page 6*

Transformations in the Heart of Drumcondra: A Look Inside MQI's High Park



High Park's bright and tidy hallway

"To see someone coming in, the fear on their faces, to 14 weeks later that person then helping to oversee the day to day management of the house, it's not just about them stopping taking drugs – it's about helping them learn how to live."

See inside for more on High Park



Transformations in the Heart of Drumcondra: A Look Inside MQI's High Park

Men and women who come here use words like "deep" and "intense" to describe the drug-free residential rehabilitation programme at High Park. With an emphasis on helping clients to work through the issues that can underpin years and years of drug use, what you help to make real in this 14-week programme is nothing short of transformational. Today, ahead of the upcoming High Park Open Day, we'd like to show you...

Team leader John Dowling on how the 14-week programme works:

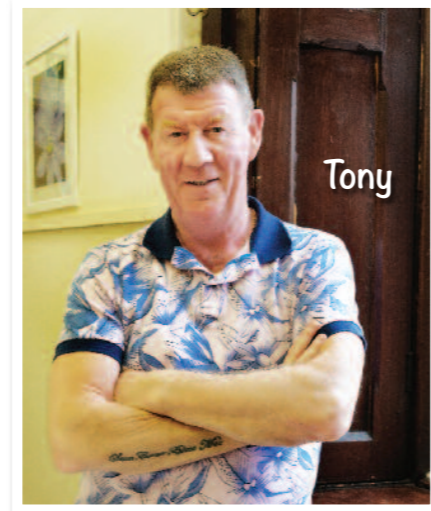
For the first four weeks, each person is in a period of induction. During this time, they're invited to explore what it means to be in treatment, what they want to achieve in treatment, setting goals, and becoming familiar with the language of treatment. So, if you are a client here, you'd be getting an insight into what you need to do in order to stay drug free. Maybe it's to deal with a childhood trauma, to become more assertive, to build self-esteem, or to get used to voicing your feelings. When you identify what you want to work on and set

your goals, you then share these with your peers. When you move out of induction, you have to write your life story, which gets presented to your key worker in week eight. Then as you progress through the programme, you move into



different roles. Every client will be the laundry manager for two weeks. On the surface they are developing their skills looking after the laundry, but it's much more than that. They are ensuring others look after that space as well. They are keeping it tidy. Just like the kitchen, they learn the basic skills of that, but they also learn how to communicate with people.

And those skills build right up to when they become the house chairperson. You have people coming in heads full of shame and embarrassment, abused on the street or traumatised as children or young adults, then you see them blossom, that they can be assertive and strong in themselves and feel that they have a future. It's powerful."

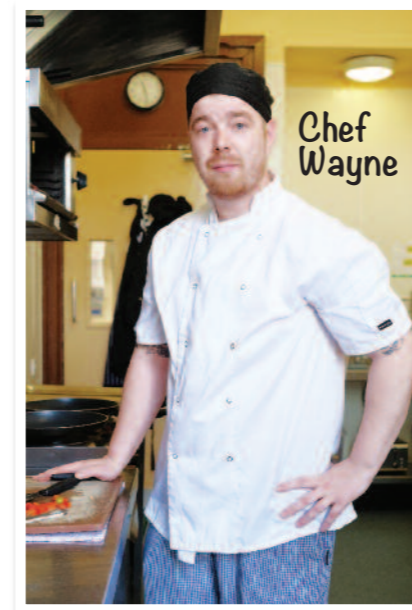


Project worker Tony, on physical transformations

Some of our clients would come to us fairly emaciated. So you really see that transition. And the caring aspect comes into it in a really big way. Out there people walk past them in their sleeping bags at night, and they come in and they're given this warm, caring, loving environment. To go down in the morning and have three square meals a day, breakfast in the morning, lunch, and then to sit down and have a good dinner in the evening – and they're all substantial meals. And later to be able to go to the press and have their biscuits and crisps. They nearly all go and make a sandwich at ten o'clock at night before they go to bed. It's a big eye opener for them and it changes their whole life."

Pat, a past client, on what he found most surprising about High Park:

The way staff work with you here, I never expected it put that way. I never expected the things they pulled out of me. Things I never talked to anyone about as a child or anything like that. Things that were keeping me in addiction. I didn't know myself. I was using the drugs to cope so much that I had forgotten what I was taking them for. There's things that you ran away from all your life that you never talked to people about and it comes out here. With the staff and with the trust you have and the way they build it with you, you really dig deep. I'm just off the phone with my littlest one, she's back in my life again, and she said, 'I love you Daddy, I'm so proud of you.' It makes me feel good that I'm there for them now. I'd be in a grave if I hadn't been able to come to High Park." (Pat spent two hours travelling back and forth to chat with us on his day off from work, and we'd like to say a special thank you!)



In the kitchen with Chef Wayne

As part of their house chores, every client at High Park works with me in the kitchen for two weeks. There is a real transformation they undergo, not just in learning kitchen hygiene and food storage, or how to plan and prepare simple meals, but in confidence and coping with nervousness. I tell them, the nervousness they'd get walking into the kitchen with me for the first time is the same way I'd feel starting in a new kitchen as well. It's good to get those nerves out of the way in a nice friendly environment because when they're finished here hopefully, they'll get a bit of work or go on to do a course. They'll have the same anxious feelings, so we try to develop their confidence. I feel lucky to be here – it's good for me as well."

A typical rehab day

Bringing back structure to a person's life after drug addiction is a key part to the High Park programme, and days are structured from 9 to 5.

- 7.30 a.m.** Wake-up call
- 8.00 a.m.** Breakfast
- 8.25 – 9.00 a.m.** Clients' Meeting
- 9.00 – 10.00 a.m.** House Chores
- 10.00 – 11.30 a.m.** Peer evaluation group
- 12.15 – 12.45 p.m.** Lunch
- 1.00 – 2.00 p.m.** Walk / games room
- 2.15 – 3.45 p.m.** Educational Group
- 5.30 p.m.** Dinner
- 7.00 p.m.** NA meeting (optional)
- 6.30 – 8.00 p.m.** Gym
- 8.30 p.m.** Wind-down
- 12.00 a.m.** Bedtime



SPACES LIMITED! HIGH PARK OPEN DAY —
Please Will You Be Our Guest?



We would love it if you (and your guests!) could be our guests of honour at this special Supporter Open Day in the heart of Drumcondra at **MQI's High Park Residential Rehabilitation Programme**. Meet the dedicated staff who help support like John, Tony, and Chef Wayne... hear more about the amazing 14-week programme you make real... and enjoy a full guided tour plus tea and biscuits with past and present clients on their own journeys of transformation because you chose to give:

When: Saturday, 31st August (arrive any time between 11am and 2pm)

Where: High Park Residential Rehabilitation Centre, Drumcondra, Dublin 9 (minutes off the M50!)

How: To be included on the guest list, please **RSVP to Emma by 26th August on 01 539 0965**. Space is limited due to building capacity. ■



Help Spread the Word About MQI's Work With Every Letter You Send:

Unless you've requested otherwise, with this newsletter you'll find an MQI summer tradition: Our gift of MQI address labels, to you. They're not fancy, but we print them right here. And they only cost around 7c per sheet. Until every person in Ireland has a place to call home, you'll help us spread the word by using the labels. **To request more any time, even if you've chosen not to receive them in the past, ring Emma on 01 524 0965.**



55% Over half of clients come into High Park out of homelessness or other unstable accommodation, prison, and halfway houses.

277 In 2018 there were 277 referrals into High Park.

The client gardens and inspirational signs at High Park



New! From the Postbag of MQI: Our Heartfelt Answers to Your Heartfelt Questions

One of the most wonderful things about Merchants Quay Ireland supporters like you is the time and the heart you put into the letters and messages you send to us – either with, or without, a donation each time. In the months and years to come, as space permits, we’d like to share some of our replies, with you. You keep the lights on and the kettle warm here, thank you...

🦋 To the extraordinary supporter in Co Dublin giving to MQI in memory of her beloved daughter who died from addiction:

Thank you, from the heart. In memory of your daughter, staff will work hard here to help as many women and men as we can to move on from addiction. Keeping you and your dear daughter in our thoughts and prayers.

🦋 To ‘TM’ who attended our Open Day at High Park last year, and wrote:

“I now have great admiration for those who overcame addiction.” Thank you for visiting us, TM. And thank you for keeping an open mind and an open heart, and for taking the time to hear clients share their stories.

🦋 To ‘EM’ who came to Riverbank for a private tour, and commented on the “caring, welcoming atmosphere”:

Staff here wanted you to know it’s supporters like you that keep them here and helping – and to thank



Whenever she has a moment to spare, CEO Paula Byrne is one of several MQI staff who read and respond to your letters and messages. Thank you for writing!

you for taking the time to see the needle exchange as well. Hope to see you at a tour again soon.

🦋 To ‘Anne,’ who wrote:


“I am only on an old age pension but I had a bit of luck at the Bingo last week so I hope €50 will help in some small way.” Anne, at MQI all gifts – large or small – make a massive difference. Your fifty euro winnings are enough to provide 8 hot meals

for people who are homeless! Thank you so very much and may all good things return to you. Please take good care of that asthma! ❤️❤️

🦋 To ‘MF’ who came to a Riverbank tour and wrote:

“My visit coincided with a lot of discussion on the radio. I always felt addiction is such a serious problem and so hard to break, but it was good to hear that it can happen.” Thank you, MF, for the time you took to visit and learn more and to see how, with the right supports, people can recover from addiction and move on from homelessness. Come back any time.

KEEP YOUR CARDS AND LETTERS COMING:

Use the reply envelope enclosed to  write to us any time – no gift required. You can also ring or email, on 01 524 0965 or to supporter@mqi.ie. We’ll reply as quickly as we can. You are the heart and soul of this good work, and it is our great joy to hear from you.

“To send a letter is a good way to go somewhere without moving anything but your heart.”

— Phyllis Theroux, author and essayist

Thank you for every chance to start again.

Adam's Life...

(continued from cover)

programme, you become more responsible. You learn new skills, like laundry, cooking, and how to be assertive. I started learning things about myself that I never knew," he says. Then Adam laughs and says, "Like I hated doing the laundry."

A new vocabulary

While his humour downplays the transformation he was making at High Park, Adam quickly comes back to the interconnectedness of it all.

The jobs are just one part of that. "The counselling is amazing, for starters. From the day you come in the staff are trying to set you up for when you leave. They're available whenever you need them. The more progress you make, the less afraid and vulnerable you feel."

In many ways, your support hasn't just helped Adam get his life back. You've helped him build a new one. Now in High Park's weekly aftercare support group, he gives back by helping new members as they come in. This September, if he's given a place, he's hoping to attend

college part-time for counselling and psychotherapy. "I wanted to apply the last time I got out of treatment but I was too afraid. This time, I'm proud to say that I applied. And without MOI, it wouldn't be happening." **Thank you for being part of Adam's new life.** ■




For the many transformations you make real, we'd love to have you and an honoured guest join us for Donor Open Day at High Park, where clients just like Adam will tour you through the work. You'll find full details on page 4.




A Simple **Summer Wish List** For Comfort and Relief

If extra goodness comes your way, you can bring relief to others who'll face all the seasons in a day. Through lashing rain and blazing sun, your kind donations of much-needed items like these mean the world this summer:



- ✓ New, packaged men's and women's underwear (e.g. sports bras) – Urgently needed! Supplies extremely low! 
- ✓ Baseball caps and sunscreen factor 50 to prevent sunburns from being exposed to the elements all day long 
- ✓ Water-proof jackets to stay dry in summer downpours 
- ✓ Runners and trainers (gently used are fine) Sizes: 4/5/6 women's and 8/9/10 men's
- ✓ Fleece/hoodies/jumpers in case of cold weather
- ✓ Clean t-shirts and bath towels – always welcome!

- ✓ **BIG WISH!** €3,500 for two staff to attend Specialist Training in Trauma Informed Care, so they can then cross-train the frontline team to better help clients cope with and move on from past trauma 






Donate your items in person to MOI 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 MOI photo album and collect your donated items – **ring Emma on 01 524 0965 for more.** *Thank you!*



Merchants Quay Ireland
Homeless & Drugs Services

Merchants Quay Ireland
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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:** supporter@mqi.ie
-  **Website:** www.mqi.ie
-  **Facebook:** Merchants Quay Ireland
-  **Twitter:** @MerchantsQuayIR

At MOI 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.