

Quay Times



Merchants Quay Ireland
Homeless & Drugs Services

The Newsletter for Supporters of Merchants Quay Ireland

Message for the Ages

For more than two decades there has been a version of the Message Book safely and confidentially maintained by staff for MQI clients because of support like yours. Each unfolding story is as powerful as the next...

It is a simple notebook with dog-eared pages – tightly managed and maintained only by MQI staff. Securely kept at all times, each shift a single member of the team reviews all the messages in the book and sees they are relayed to appropriate staff or to clients if they visit Riverbank. And for a homeless client we'll call Brian, the Merchants Quay Message Book became a bridge of trust. MQI Engagement Coordinator, Alan, touches his chest with an open hand – just above his heart – as he describes the moment he'll never forget.



Will you give your dad a ring?

"A call was passed through to me from a father who was extremely concerned about his son. He'd heard from somewhere – not ourselves – that his son had been coming in to Merchants Quay. I explained to the father, like I do to everyone, that we respect our clients' confidentiality,

If there had been no message book at MQI – and no one there to maintain it – Brian would never have known someone was trying to reach him.

but that I'd relay the details." Alan's lively blue eyes fill with wonder at what came next.

"I left my office to enter the message, and passed a lad who was registering at the welcome desk. When our man asked the

lad's name, it was the guy I'll call Brian, for whom I'd just taken the message. If there was no message book, he never would have known. The look of joy, and relief, when I said, 'Look your dad was on, he's

continued on page 2



Imagine being genuinely, deeply concerned for somebody, but you have no way to get through to them and they can't get through to you. The Merchants Quay message book is a manifestation of our respect for clients. 99% of the message book is messages that we take in and pass on to people with no address of their own. — Alan, MQI Engagement Coordinator

Page 3: Read Real-Life Messages, Relayed Thanks to You...

"It can be quite sad. They think that people want no more to do with them."

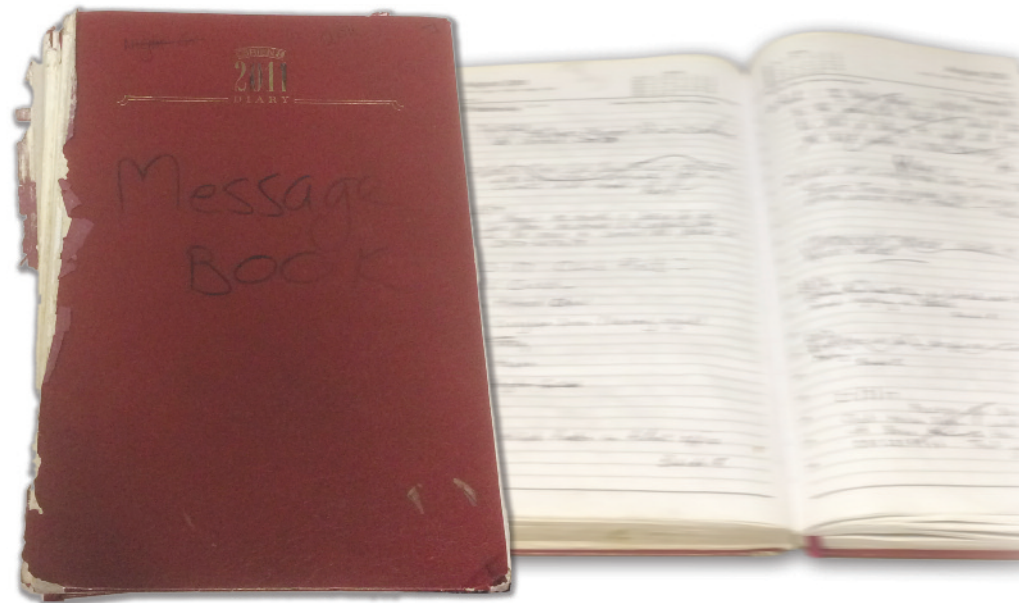
Message for the Ages...

(continued from cover)

quite concerned, will you give him a ring?' There's no guarantee, but in their head they may think their family want no more to do with them, and that's quite often not the case. I'm always struck when you hear the levels of concern, and the impact when you pass that message on to a client."

Appointments, and letters from home

As amazed as he was at the message reconnecting father and son, Alan points out that – like so much of what you make possible – the message book is also about private, practical, day-to-day things. (For the kinds of messages you help to relay, see page 3.) "When staff can remind clients of an appointment they have, that's important. It gives us the chance to say, 'Johnny, you've told us how bad your leg is, do you need us to accompany you to the appointment?' If a client is particularly vulnerable, we'll do that for them."



A version of the Message Book has been kept for homeless clients at MQI for more than two decades because of support like yours. Thank you so much.

Alan continues. "Picture having no fixed address and you're expecting a letter of great importance. Whether it's to do with a medical card, an ID card, or a note from home, it's a victory when we can pass that post on. When all that's between you and the concrete is a sheet of cardboard, when you're ashamed of things that have gone on,

knowing there's a safe place to access your messages can be a game-changer. It's another reminder of how much we do here, and how busy it is, but how little of that would be possible without our donors." ■

▶ Meet dedicated staff like Alan and learn about more facets of the work you support at our next private donor tour of Riverbank on **11th October** and **8th November**. For details ring **Emma on 01 524 0965**. Thank you!

AN INSIDE LOOK AT THE URGENT SERVICES YOU SUPPORT

AT THE COALFACE

Four Questions With Ken from MQI Aftercare

With a smile as dedicated and caring on a Monday as it is on a Friday, MQI's Aftercare Coordinator, Ken, is so thankful to help clients along those last, brave steps from rehabilitation to integrating back into their communities with your support....



Real-Life Messages, Relayed Thanks to You

The names are changed and contact details omitted, but the messages below are adapted directly from the pages of Merchants Quay's Message Book. Without you, there would have been no way to relay them to eyes and ears that so desperately needed to know someone cared. Thank you...

If you see John, please will you pass on my number and let him know I would love him to call me any time? His mother and I want him to know we still love him very much. [Message taken by staff from John's dad]

Arthur received post on Monday from Department of Social Welfare. It's in the safe waiting for collection.

Grandmother Ruth is concerned about her grandson. He finished detox and has not contacted home in 2 days.

Cillian was in this morning - he's very upset as it's his mum's anniversary. He said he'll be in this evening. Please will someone make a special effort to talk to him? [Message relayed between Riverbank staff]

If you see Aoife, please will you remind her that she has an appointment tomorrow in St. James Hospital at 12.30?

will you pass the great news on to Gerry if he comes in? He's secured a spot in our residential detox programme and he needs to follow up by ringing Joanne. Please let him use a private phone to call her.

If you see Barry, please tell him that we've secured a bed for him in short-term accommodation for the next six months!

If my dad Michael comes in, please let him know his eldest daughter had a baby boy. He's a granddad! [Message taken by staff from Michael's daughter]

For every message of concern you relay, we thank you.



What is MQI's aftercare programme all about?

Aftercare is about helping people develop the skills to move forward in their lives, after they've come through detox and rehabilitation, to help them back into everyday life. At Merchants Quay we have two aftercare houses. One in Kildare, and one outside Dublin. It's a six-month, staff supported residential and day programme that our donors help to fund at a really vulnerable time in clients' lives, when the risk of relapse is so

high. We put together an individual care plan for each client, to help them maintain what they have already achieved so far and to get back into living in the community.

There are other aftercare programmes in Ireland. What makes MQI's different?

What's unique is that we house people while also offering them a day service. They're here on a daily basis, and it gives us the opportunity to see where the

struggles may be in their lives. That may be down to a simple thing of someone knowing how to pay their rent, or filling out forms, or cook a meal, or manage a budget for the week. It's the day to day things you and I take for granted that are such huge tasks to some of our clients. Many of them would have experienced deprivation or even abuse. It traumatises them and has huge effects in terms of their life skills development. So it can be a scary time. Even when they finish with

An afternoon of glad tidings, gratitude, and song that's especially for you —

Christmas Concert: Will You Be Our Honoured Guest?

The Dublin Concert Band is back this year as we gather together to raise our voices in song at MQI's annual Christmas Gratitude Concert, celebrating the hope and healing you bring to Ireland's most vulnerable all year. It's an afternoon of warmth and cheer in beautiful surroundings, and we'd love to see you, your friends, and your family as our guests of honour!

When: Sunday, 2nd December
from 3.30 to 5pm

Where: Adam & Eve Church,
4 Merchants Quay, Dublin 8
(opposite the Four Courts)

RSVP: To reserve your free places,
ring Emma on **01 524 0965**, or
email **emma.murphy@mqi.ie**.
The more, the merrier!

Thank you for being part of our
Merchants Quay Family, this year and
every year. Hope you can join us!

A Rough Sleeper's WISH LIST

To women and men facing autumn on Ireland's streets, the following gifts would be like little miracles. So if you find yourself with extra to spare, we'd be grateful for:

- ☒ Shampoo, shower gel, and bath towels to restore dignity
- ☒ Hats, scarves, and gloves for the cold months ahead
- ☒ Men's jeans (all sizes)
- ☒ Track pants
- ☒ Waterproof jackets and pants to shield them from the rain
- ☒ New runners in large men's sizes (always a help to Nurse Marguerite!)

Drop off your items to MQI, 24 Merchants Court, any time between 9.30am and 5pm Monday to Friday. Or if you live in Dublin, we're happy to collect your donated items – ring **Emma on 01 524 0965** for details. Be sure to say if you'd like Emma to bring MQI's photo album, for an uplifting look at all you do! Thank you! ■

aftercare, our doors are still open to them. We have a weekly aftercare support group and they pop into us all the time. There's a great camaraderie.

What skills-building programmes are on offer here?

We have computer literacy – which would be ECDL – budgeting, work training, and even drama. Drama might seem a strange thing to offer but it's really good in terms of helping our clients to develop confidence, social interaction, and

even emotional regulation skills. When we talk about recovery at MQI, it's not just about recovering from drugs, it's about the skills to live a fulfilling life.

What keeps you coming to work every day?

I'm passionate about this work, so I give a lot to it. I count myself one of the lucky ones in life to have found what it is I love to do, and to see the rewards and benefits of that. I get to see people progressing in their lives, and to offer as much

support in that progression path, with them and for them, so that's what gets me up and in here every day. I think everybody deserves a chance and an equal opportunity if they are willing to try. Seeing people from where they would have come from in their lives to having come through aftercare, with a totally different mindset, change of appearance, an enthusiastic attitude to life – even the way they dress – it's the kindness of our supporters that gives people hope. ■

"In the golden chain of life, regard me as a link..."

Thank You for Coming to High Park Open Day!

Everywhere was spic and span, the gardens were alive with flowers, and the pride and gratitude of Merchants Quay clients for their temporary High Park home shone through from top to bottom. Here is a look back at the day, and the amazing new start you help give men and women who are working to rebuild their lives...



Michael, MQI's longest serving volunteer, was there to meet and greet donors with his trusty guide dog Alex the Yellow Labrador. Over Michael's years of selfless service, many clients have found great solace in the unconditional love of Alex – and in his late, beloved Labradoodle, Hugo (RIP).



"In the golden chain of life, regard me as a link." Thanks to your kind support, every life matters at MQI, every life is worth affirmation and a second chance. Garden edging stones that have been hand painted by clients dot High Park's footpaths like timeless gems of encouragement.



A chance to spend the day with supporters like you makes a massive difference to clients' self-esteem. Said one, "I was really taken aback to find that those donating to Merchants Quay had some significant problems of their own. Yet they are still able to generously and compassionately think of others."



Men and women who come to High Park are often so determined to build a better tomorrow that they sacrifice time with their loved ones to make it happen. Thanks to a lovely children's corner, funded with your help, even young family members are welcome for short visits.



Fitness equipment helps clients grow strong after battling what can be years of homelessness, hunger, and addiction, while group and one to one therapy builds new skills and resilience.



It is here, in the entryway to High Park, that clients take their first steps towards a drug free life. It's down to your patient, steady support. Thank you for every moment.

If you weren't able to attend the High Park open day, donor tours of Riverbank are guided by staff when the homeless centre is closed and quiet for a few hours, and happen once each month all year. For details, ring Emma on 01 524 0965. Thank you again!



A hot meal. A helping hand. A message of hope. Thank you.

How are your donations working? Let us count the ways —

Would You Like Address Labels for Your Christmas Post?

While you're spreading the love and cheer of the season, your post can have even greater meaning this Christmas – bringing national awareness to the women and men in Ireland who have no home at all.

It costs just pennies to print you a sheet (or two!) of personalised address labels for your Christmas post. And for your steadfast support it's our great joy to do so, with our compliments.

For your free labels, ring Emma today on 01 524 0965.

Thank You for a Thousand Warm Welcomes

A safe place to rest, when before there was cold, hard pavement. A caring voice, where once there was no one. A 'how are you feeling?' and a hot meal, when all the other doors were closed. In 2017 at MQI, just a single year, these were some of the wonders worked by kind support like yours...



25,341

lunches for women and men who would have gone hungry



172

young people aged 18 to 25, supported on a path out of homelessness



19,368

sleeping mats rolled out at the Night Café Emergency Shelter



1,668

people turned to MQI for the first time – over a thousand warm welcomes!



148

pairs of weary feet given care and relief through MQI chiropody

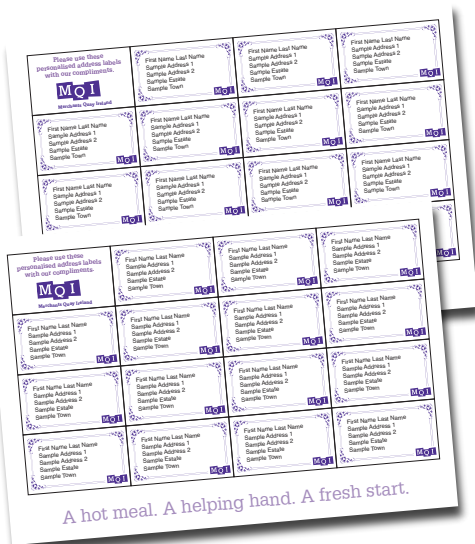
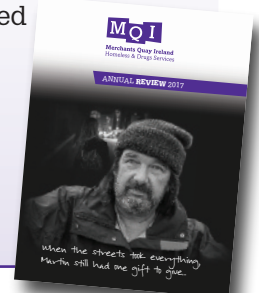


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homeless women and men helped by MQI's mental health team

Would you like a deeper look at 2017? Visit <https://mqi.ie/annual-reports-financials/> to see Merchants Quay's just-released annual review and independently audited financial statements. Free to download for everyone, 24/7.

If you prefer a copy via post, **ring Emma on 01 524 0965.** Thank you again for making every warm welcome real.



A hot meal. A helping hand. A fresh start.

MQI

Merchants Quay Ireland
Homeless & Drugs Services

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 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.