

# Quay Times



Merchants Quay Ireland  
Homeless & Drugs Services

The Newsletter for Supporters of Merchants Quay Ireland

SPRING 2018

"Whatever hostel they put me in, I was studying"—

## The Homeless Teen Who Still Dreams of College

*Twice, she's tried to attend college. And twice, a shocking tangle of bureaucracy and the fates have held back this determined homeless young teen. Read the role you are playing as Clara's story unfolds...*

**H**ow could it have come to this? Clara had worked so hard to build her future. Now it was slipping away.

While other college students were out with friends, Clara rang the freephones each night looking for a bed. While they slept, Clara studied at whatever hostel she'd been sent to. While other students woke refreshed, Clara tried to rest on the four-hour bus ride to her classes – another four-hour ride back to the only place she had a chance at a bed.

It made more sense when she'd had to drop out the first time, even despite a score of 410 in her leaving certificate. Still just a teenager, she had to leave the family home. Money for college evaporated alongside a roof over her head.

### Cruel catch-22

This second time had felt different. "I was still homeless but I decided to apply this past August. I got an offer for Law and Criminal Justice. I knew I'd have to move the four

hours north, but I was happy."

Bureaucracy would deliver a cruel catch-22. "They said I couldn't join the housing system because I didn't have a source of income. I didn't have a source of income because I was in full-time education. And because I was in full-time education, I couldn't get social welfare. They kept saying, 'You can't do this, you can't do that. You have to go back to Dublin.'"

“It would be different if I didn't want to study, but I really do. I was homeless and I got into college – the fact that everything is pulling me back, it's so tiring. And now I have to drop out again.”

### Faces of the homeless

Clara wouldn't quit. She rode the bus, up to nine hours back and forth. Kept attending classes. Kept studying. Kept ringing the freephone. Over Christmas holidays she was alone trying to study for exams. "Sometimes I would sit in the McDonald's all night because I had nowhere to go," she says softly. "And now I have to drop out, like I did before."

### All the support she has

Three years ago supporters like yourself donated 100% of the funds to create a Young Person's Support Worker role at MQI, in the form of the passionate and dedicated Antoinette.

The day after they spoke in the Night Café, Antoinette secured

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Clara, who dreams of getting back to college, is grateful for you. "To the donors who are giving to help Antoinette help younger adults at MQI, it's a blessing for me. Literally she is the only support I have."

Page 5: An ancient beech tree's final gift...



“Understand a person’s story and you also get to see the hope in it...”

## A Hidden Garden of Healing in the Heart of Dublin

*It’s a metaphor for homelessness and addiction: hidden behind metal fencing on a once derelict site waits a garden of hope and healing. Open the gates to discover the oasis of change that’s breaking down stigmas and growing better futures...*



MQI project worker Chris and garden manager Richie (left) are hoping to help more homeless clients grow better futures at the Bridgefoot St. gardens this year.

**W**hen Bridgefoot Street gardener Richie Taplin invited MQI clients to get involved in tending the plants, project worker Chris jumped at the chance. “Richie saw our men and women as part of the community, not just as people who were homeless or struggling

with addiction, but as his neighbours, which was great.” The duo have been growing better futures ever since.

### The good earth

At St. Francis Farm (See invitation, page 3) it’s been proven: working the good earth is therapy to body,

mind, and soul. The Bridgefoot Street Community Garden brings that same opportunity to the hustle and bustle of Dublin. “Basically if I attend Merchants Quay and I get involved in the garden, I have a say in what happens in the community as well,” explains Chris. “And once a client gets involved with the gardening end of it, it opens all the doors to other activities that go on there during the week.”

### Seeds of success

Like so many clients who turn to MQI, the garden was once a lonely, forgotten part of the city. Time, care, and community changed that – seeds of success that work equally well for our men and women who are hurting. “We had a younger client, just out of detox. I brought him to meet Richie and immediately they hit it off,” Chris smiles. “He came back on his own the next day, rolled up his sleeves and is still there helping Richie. He attends everything that happens. The new skills, new friendships, and routine, it’s completely helped him to stay off drugs.”



“Having a community working together from all walks and talks, it gives our clients back that sense of belonging. It’s both ways, you know. We opt in it together, the businesses, residents, the clients – they see they’re part of things and realise ‘hold on I want to look after this as well.’ Understand a person’s story, and you also get to see the hope in it.”



## The Bridgefoot garden is stuck for funds and supplies: Could you help our clients there?

*Borrowed wheelbarrows, donated soil, a shortage of wellies, the community garden gets no outside help. Our clients would be so thankful for any donations you give to MQI to keep them growing:*

- Wellies, all sizes
- Gardening tools
- Gloves
- Wheelbarrows
- Seeds and soil
- Cash contributions



### If you can help the garden

**grow**, ring Emma on 01 524 0965 and she'll get you started. From Richie, Chris, and the clients, thank you!

### A part of things again

Budding relationships and being part of the community are so important, says Chris. "A hard thing about addiction is breaking away from your old crowd. Having a community working together from all walks and talks, it gives our clients back that sense of belonging. It's both ways, you know. We opt in it together, the businesses, residents, the clients — they see they're part of things and realise 'hold on I want to look after this.' Understand a person's story, and you also get to see the hope in it." ■

*You're invited!*

## Donor Open Day at St. Francis Farm

**M**eeet clients and staff, and see firsthand the good work you support on a visit to MQI's St. Francis Farm Detox & Rehabilitation Project in Tullow, Co. Carlow for **Donor Open Day, Saturday 19th May**. Seating is available on a limited basis for free round-trip transport via private coach from Dublin on a first reserved basis. You are welcome as well to make your own way by car. Either way, **please RSVP to Emma by 12th May**. Buses depart 24 Merchants Quay at 10 and 11am.

### *Your day on the Farm:*

**10:00 and 11:00 am** Bus departs MQI–Dublin

**11:30 am** Arrive at St. Francis Farm for welcome, coffee & tea

**12:00 noon** Client and staff-led tours of the grounds and buildings

**1:30 pm** Farm-fresh lunch in Beaumont House Rehab Centre

**2:00 pm** Bus departs St. Francis Farm

**3:30 pm** Arrive at MQI–Dublin, 24 Merchants Quay



*We hope you can join us!*

"The fact that, at Open Days, clients get to tell supporters their stories – why they're here, and what they do – it just seems to strengthen what they're doing. I've seen evidence of it every year. Then there's a great deal of excitement getting St. Francis Farm ready for Open Day and a bit of fun involved as well."

— Norah, Farm manager



“Safer Injecting Facilities are compassionate, vital health services which reach out to the most vulnerable people living in Dublin today. I believe this non-judgemental approach to some of Ireland’s most vulnerable citizens is the true expression of Christian service.”  
— Fr. Seán Cassin, Franciscan Friar

A good news story in the fight against overdose deaths in Ireland —

# Government Chooses MQI as Pilot Site of Ireland’s First Safer Injecting Facility: How (and Why) It Will Work

WHAT: Pilot Safer Injecting Facility for people trapped in addiction

HOW: Fully government funded

WHEN: Slated to open late 2018 or early 2019

WHY: To save lives now being lost to overdose

BELOW: Early facts on this lifesaving and historic pilot project...

If ever there was a good news story for the hundreds of families in Ireland being devastated each year by drug overdose, this is it. The Health Service Executive recently announced that Merchants Quay have been chosen as the pilot site for the first government-funded Safer Injecting Facility, or SIF.

## It’s about saving lives

“Recovery from drugs is possible only if someone is still alive,” begins Merchants Quay CEO Tony Geoghegan, “when they’re gone, the chance to help them is gone as well. So we’re really pleased to have been chosen. Especially because this was not an idea that MQI just ran with – it was the



“It sounds obvious but treatment and recovery from drugs is possible only if someone is still alive,” says MQI CEO Tony Geoghegan. “This government-funded, pilot Safer Injecting Facility is about saving lives and access to treatment.”

government that saw lives being shattered, and put forth an open tender for the pilot project.”

## How a SIF will look

Imagine a clean, safe, compassionate place, expertly staffed and with full nursing and medical services on-site. It is nothing like life on the streets.

Local Gardaí, the HSE, DCC (Dublin City Council), and the greater community all play a role. It is the only pathway out of drug use, and often homelessness, that many men and women in active addiction will have. And it’s designed to bring them into the full breadth of services Merchants Quay have on offer, including drug-free recovery.

Says Geoghegan, “Someone who is battling addiction, their world is so small. They might be desperate for change but they don’t see the opportunities. This is about taking injecting off the streets and getting people to where they can safely get help.” ■

## SIFs: A 30-year history of success

*Safer Injecting Facilities are nothing new. The first SIF opened in Switzerland in 1986, with many more operational around the world.*

**Public benefits are well-established and include:**

- ✓ No increases in local crime
- ✓ Safer for clients
- ✓ Increased uptake in rehabilitation services
- ✓ Fewer discarded needles and drug equipment in the area
- ✓ Decreased incidence of public injecting (4X less, in Barcelona alone)

Source: European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction

**The pilot SIF is anticipated to open in late 2018 or early 2019 and will be fully funded by the government. Watch for further updates this year.**



**"There's none of us perfect. Beechwood is the picture of any of us..."**

The legacy you leave for tomorrow, the thanks you'll receive for today —

## Legend of Your Gratitude Heart

*Nearly two centuries ago, a tiny seedling sprouted from the soil. Buffeted by winds, kissed by the sun, it grew stronger as decades passed – until one day it lost its final battle to the weather. Yet for those who come to St. Francis Farm for a chance to live drug free, the tree still has a gift to give. So begins the legend of your gratitude heart...*

Farm manager Norah reckons the beech tree that watched over St. Francis was more than 150 years old when it lost its final battle to the weather. "Beech is secretive. At first glance it looks perfect. It's only when it falls you find that it wasn't." In so many ways the tree mirrors Ireland's addiction crisis – no matter the outside appearances, addiction can touch any life, any family. And so an idea took shape, gratitude hearts from the ancient beech, crafted by the hands of clients in recovery, made especially for donors that include MOI in their wills.

Norah sees the hearts as a way for the tree to live on. "What better can you have but to use the beechwood for the recovery work that clients do? They come here with so little, just a suitcase. Even after it's died the tree gives them the chance to create something tangible they've made themselves."

### Sacred mission

A shed on the Farm holds the timber, and clients use a variety of woodworking projects as therapy. From the start Norah lets clients know the hearts have a



The ancient beech at St. Francis Farm has fallen. But it still has a gift to give – to clients, and to you, if you choose.

singular mission. "They fully understand it's for someone who's including MOI in their will. The absolute gratefulness for that type of contribution to be coming to Merchants Quay, to sustain the work being done here, they wow about it when I tell them. And I do tell them. Because the hearts are something with a mission, a special purpose. We're doing something for somebody else. That in itself is good for them."

Clients choose one quality from St. Francis Farm's ethos – such as

Compassion, Justice, or Dignity – and burn it into the face of the heart. On the back, their own initials. They mightn't have done woodwork before the Farm, but Norah tells them to "just feel the wood. Feel the wood, feel the age, feel the texture. And love it. There's none of us perfect. Beechwood is the whole picture of any one of us, the bad and the good. It's a huge support to have our legacy donors. We want to show that." ■



## Letting us know you've remembered MOI in your will is always up to you...

But if you have, or you do, the clients building new, drug-free lives at St. Francis Farm are honoured to craft a gratitude heart for you. For details, see the enclosed leaflet or ring our own Emma Murphy on 01 524 0965. Thank you for the good you do.



For every step forward, we thank you.

## College Dreams...

*continued from cover*

a reliable bed for Clara. It's helping Clara to regroup and look for a job – "I would work at anything," she admits. She currently has to put her education on hold, but is grateful for safe accommodation. If she can save the money, she hopes to attend college in Dublin this

autumn. Thanks to your support she still comes to Merchants Quay to meet with Antoinette. "...it's a blessing to me," she says softly. "Literally she is all the support I have."

**Please join us in keeping Clara in your thoughts and prayers, and thank you for your generosity through even the toughest times. ■**

Thanks to you and Comic Relief...

## Double the Help for Homeless Young People

**F**or three years, supporters like you have funded 100% of Antoinette's role as Young Person's Support Worker at MQI: the position wouldn't exist without you. Yet in helping increasing numbers of homeless young clients who come to her, Antoinette has been stretched so thin.

Enter Comic Relief. The organisation heard about the need and added to your generosity by funding a second youth worker at MQI this year! Antoinette is over the moon. "Some nights I've been here until seven o'clock with young people that come in quite distressed. They didn't expect to be homeless. It's going to be great because with two of us we can see more clients and give them extra support." **Many thanks to Comic Relief... and to you!**



## Springtime Wish List...

*It may be that extra pair of rain pants or forgotten jacket at the back of your wardrobe. But to someone on the streets, it's lifesaving protection received with deep thanks. Could you make a springtime wish come true?*

- ✓ Weatherproof clothing for clients outdoors in all weathers
- ✓ New packaged underwear
- ✓ Warm hats, scarves, and gloves
- ✓ Razors and shaving gear (really low on these)
- ✓ Rain gear, all sizes
- ✓ Towels
- ✓ Toiletries
- ✓ Runners (Sizes 4-10 especially)
- ✓ Big Wish! €500 to purchase industrial plastic for St. Francis Farm's polytunnels damaged in bad weather



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



**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:** info@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.



*While there is time, let us do good...*

## **If You'd Like to Know More About a Legacy in Your Will for Ireland's Most Vulnerable, Start with This Simple Guide**



Making or amending your Last Will and Testament is a deeply private matter. At MQI we respect that. Yet in choosing to remember the work of Merchants Quay with a simple bequest of any size in your will, please know that your generosity ensures Ireland's most vulnerable will always have a place to turn. Let your final story be the one you choose — starting with this simple guide on will-making. And if you've questions, we're here to help...



From St. Francis Farm's drug-free rehabilitation project to the Night Café and Riverbank homeless centre, a gift of any size in your will to Merchants Quay ensures Ireland's homeless and those who battle addiction will always have a place to turn. **Pledge your bequest and with your permission we'll post you a client-crafted gratitude heart, and after you're gone, carve your initials onto a beautiful oak bench at MQI.**

**MORE OVERLEAF:** Details on will-making, inheritance taxes, and ready-made bequest language you can discuss with your solicitor.





# Making Your Will: Questions and Answers

## 1. Why is making my will so important?

Making a will is the only way for you to limit inheritance taxes, say how you want your assets and belongings distributed after you pass, and outline any legacy you want to leave behind. Without a will to give your final instructions, those decisions will be made for you by others. Getting started is as easy as a phone call: will-making is a basic service almost every solicitor provides.

*"I give to Merchants Quay Ireland of 24 Merchants Quay, Dublin 8, Reg. Charity No. 20026240, all [or a fraction] of the residue of my estate whatsoever and wheresoever, and I direct that the receipt of the Treasurer or other officer for the time being of the said Organisation shall be a full and sufficient discharge of the same."*

## 2. Could my estate be impacted by inheritance taxes?

Yes. Inheritance tax rates have jumped from 20 to 33%. Because of these significant changes even modest estates will suffer the taxman's share, shrinking your estate and creating needless tax bills, especially for children. A proper will helps protect you from this.

## 3. I want to remember Ireland's most vulnerable in my will. Do you have wording I can bring to my solicitor?

We certainly do. Most people choose what's called a residuary legacy. This looks after your loved ones first, then leaves the remainder of your estate – or the portion you decide – as your legacy, after debts have been paid. At top right is the ready-made wording:

## 4. Must I notify you once I've set aside a gift in my will to MQI?

It's up to you. Informing us that you've included MQI in your will lets you direct your legacy to a part of our work that's closest to your heart, which may add meaning for you. It also lets our clients thank you, in your lifetime, with a hand crafted beechwood gratitude heart... and after you pass, to eternalise your initials on our legacy bench (photo below) for the great good you've done.



## Questions? Speak privately with us anytime:

**Speak privately with Emma Murphy on 01 524 0965 or [Emma.Murphy@mqi.ie](mailto:Emma.Murphy@mqi.ie)** to ask your questions about bequests, learn more about the gratitude hearts, or to confirm the correct details to take to your solicitor. You are never under any obligation, she is happy to assist. Or simply complete and post back this reply.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

*Emma Murphy, MQI's donor relations manager, is happy to answer your questions on will-making.*

