

# Quay Times



Merchants Quay Ireland  
Homeless & Drugs Services

The Newsletter for Supporters of Merchants Quay Ireland

“Without our donors, we’d never be able to provide what we do...”

## We Are Family: A Chat with MQI’s CEO Tony Geoghegan

*He’s stood at the helm of Merchants Quay for 27 years. Yet, casually dressed and filled with quiet determination, this articulate leader is nothing like you’d expect. Because CEO Tony Geoghegan wants you to see what your place in this MQI family has done for Ireland’s hungry and homeless, and for those who yearn to break free of addiction...*

**I**t’s chock-a-block,” Geoghegan begins. “Currently there are around seven thousand people in emergency accommodation in Ireland. That’s the highest level since they started recording statistics, and why we have so many people facing life on the streets. Having said that, despite the fact that there has been no increase in State income, Merchants Quay have achieved a lot. That’s down to our supporters. Their compassion for others is the unifying force in our MQI family.”

### All that you’ve built

As he starts to describe what’s come about because of you, Geoghegan says simply, “It amazes me. I’ve brought the city manager in and he was flabbergasted that so much goes on at MQI. It was



donors that funded our detox unit at St. Francis Farm. There’s still only about 40 dedicated detoxification beds in the country, and Merchants Quay have ten of those. Then the Riverbank homeless centre provides a space where people can wash and eat and get counselling. Again thanks to donors we were able to identify

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## The Miracles You Made on Christmas Week...



**1,995** visits to MQI  
by men and women  
who are homeless



**70** pairs of  
Christmas pyjamas  
for people  
who would have  
slept rough



**24/7** near-round-  
the-clock service  
for Ireland’s most  
vulnerable, including  
on Christmas,  
Stephen’s, and  
New Year’s Days



**1,000+** nutritious  
meals for people  
who mightn’t have  
eaten at all



**6** Christmas trees  
at MQI, each with a  
star and your doves  
of hope

*For helping hope to shine this  
past Christmas, we thank you.*

**Words of thanks from MQI clients and staff across Ireland: INSIDE ➔**



# Your grace and generosity are shelter in the storm. Thank you for being our MQI family...

Words of gratitude from Merchants Quay staff and clients across Ireland



Aoife, Open Access Volunteer

"It means an awful lot to have MQI's Night Café. I don't feel as lonely. The time and care that the staff put in – they don't sleep at night so we can. They are in my heart now, and wherever I go in the world I will never get them out."  
— Charlie, homeless client, Night Café

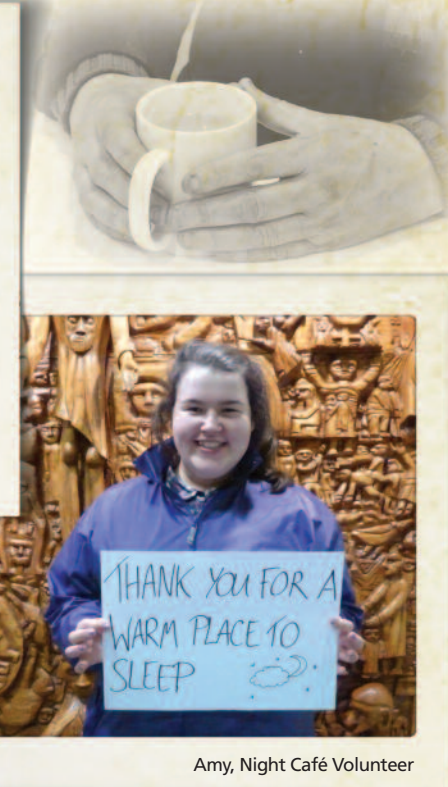


Derek, MQI Mental Health Nurse

"I feel safe when I'm at Merchants Quay, myself and my brother. We feel at home. To all the people that make donations, big or small, I can't thank you enough for what you're doing for the homeless people. We can't give you anything back, only a big thank you."  
— Joe, Riverbank homeless centre client



Will & Lynda, Family Support Team

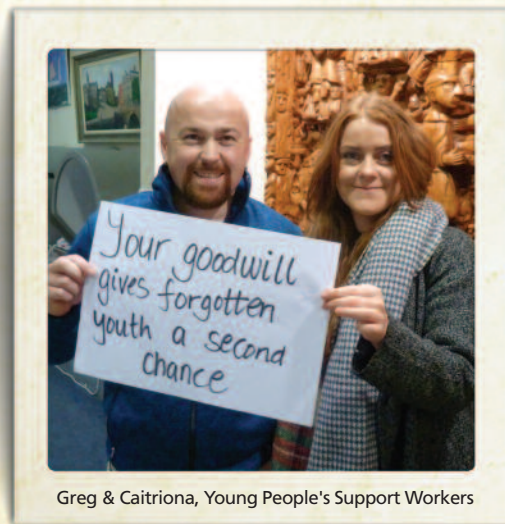


Amy, Night Café Volunteer

"In Merchants Quay's aftercare housing, there's a family feel – that we're all in it together and we'll stay strong together. Even today, I'm eleven months drug free now, we still support each other."  
— Cormac, former Aftercare client



Mark, Head of Homeless Services



Greg & Caitriona, Young People's Support Workers

"This was my first Christmas drug free, the start of a new life, and I want to thank the supporters for that. This programme shows that there is more to life than drugs and I know myself I will get through it."  
— James, High Park rehab client



(L-R) Denise, Shane, Martina, Riverbank Homeless Centre Staff



Mary, Welcomes clients into Riverbank

"Coming in off the streets, it's so cold. The clothing that you give, the toothpaste, the cup of tea and food, you're giving other people back their dignity. Everybody here is like family to me."  
— Saoirse, Riverbank homeless centre client

With love for all you do this year and every year, from your Merchants Quay Ireland family.



# For each new beginning, thank you.

## “We Are Family...”

(continued from cover)

the groups that were most vulnerable, where in 2015 we brought on the mental health team, which has been such a blessing. And this past year, a youth worker to help younger people who find themselves homeless at eighteen or nineteen. There's also now a doctor on duty every day and nursing care into the evening.”

### To the core of it

When he speaks of you as family, Geoghegan also talks about how each person does what he or she can. “Because of donors we're able to provide the things that may seem small, but are hugely, hugely important for people. I was coming in the other day and a woman dropped off a bag of warm woolly jumpers she had bought. Some of our other donors give five or ten euro so we can buy an extra blanket or new socks and underwear. How that impacts on somebody with nothing at all, who might then be a little less ashamed and a little more receptive to help, it really touches to the core of it.”

### Stronger together

Although it's early days for the new year, the future is on Geoghegan's

mind. He thinks often about more accommodation to help people out of homeless and addiction, and has some cost-effective ideas in the works. It's clear that as details emerge, he'll share them with the MQI family of supporters. “Very little of this work would be

possible without our donors. I really hope that they are happy with what we do. And I hope that the goodness they've shown is returned to them in 2017. That's my biggest wish for our supporters. They are truly our Merchants Quay family.” ■

## Emma and the Winter Wish List



*What items could you most help with in these cold, dark days?*

If you've Winter Wish List items to donate and live in Dublin, our own Emma Murphy will come round to collect them for you... she'll bring the MQI photo album as well if you'd like! For details, ring her on **01 524 0965**.

Items can also be dropped off in person to MQI at 24 Merchants Quay (just past the Riverbank homeless centre) from 9:30am to 5pm Monday to Friday.



Emma Murphy, MQI's donor relations manager

- ✓ Waterproof rain pants, so leg wounds can heal
- ✓ Shoes and boots, for frozen feet that have none
- ✓ New socks and jocks to restore dignity
- ✓ Toiletries and shaving gear for a fresh start
- ✓ Hats, gloves, and scarves for warmth
- ✓ 20 sleeping bags for our homeless in the Midlands
- ✓ BIG WISH! Commercial, two-oven cooker for MQI Athlone



*For comfort and caring, we thank you!*




**Merchants Quay Ireland**  
Homeless & Drugs Services

Merchants Quay Ireland  
P.O. Box 11958, Dublin 8

**To make your gift by phone: please ring us on 01 524 0139.**

Head Office: 01 524 0160  
Fundraising: 01 524 0139  
Volunteering: 01 524 0128  
Email: [info@mqi.ie](mailto:info@mqi.ie)

Facebook: visit us for   
news and client interviews!

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.