

Quay Times



Merchants Quay Ireland
Homeless & Drugs Services

The Newsletter for Supporters of Merchants Quay Ireland

AUTUMN 2023

“You see, some people are broken and just don’t know who to turn to.”

It’s something none of us can ignore. More people than ever in Ireland are homeless, living in emergency accommodation. Some taking their chances sleeping in doorways. Today, men and women are homeless for longer. And their health suffers the worst from it. The weight of homelessness is a burden of anxiety people carry with them every day. Peter wants to share his story with you. How MQI’s Riverbank drop-in service, generously funded by your kindness, offers care and healing -- just when it’s needed most.

Peter’s approaching his 30s now, with everything to live for. But life hadn’t been kind to him before he found help with Merchants Quay Ireland at the Riverbank drop-in centre.

“I started thinking homelessness was normal.” Peter tells us, “Amy saw me at my worst. I hadn’t been able to wash, I looked like a scruffy Jesus with long hair and a beard. I stayed everywhere in town, on the streets, in and out of hostels, sleeping here and there. I was in a sleeping bag behind Connolly Station for a few months. There is a better life, but when you’re living rough on the streets... you need help to find it.”

They saved my life. I could be dead today

“Riverbank was the only place in my life where anybody knew my name. When you’re homeless, Riverbank is a lifeline. Getting a warm winter hat, having a decent dinner, being able to charge the phone, even just sitting down in a welcoming place... for a little while you can feel normal. And when you are sick, the team at Riverbank can literally save your life. That’s what happened to me...”

Your care and support were there waiting for

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“There’s a better life, but on the streets you don’t know how to find it.”



When someone remembers your name, it reminds you that you're human.

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Peter that day he arrived at Riverbank. After sleeping rough for years, Peter had hit rock bottom. The staff could see how serious Peter's condition was. "I couldn't tell how sick I was, Amy got the ambulance for me, and I spent 10 days in hospital. I could be dead today if I hadn't got that help." Peter has benefited from all the services you provide at MQI. From the worst day of his life at Riverbank to beginning his recovery journey at St Francis Farm, MQI's detox and rehab centre.

Sharing his story isn't easy

Because of you, all these kindnesses are made possible. Your compassion, love and generosity are at the foundation of Merchants Quay Ireland. Peter wants to thank you by speaking to you through his interview. Sharing his story isn't easy for Peter. But while he was fighting so hard to reclaim his life, he knows that you were walking side-by-side with him.

"I was thinking about my story going in Quay Times, I want people to know the difference you make by supporting MQI. You're helping without a doubt. It can be small things like a pair of gloves or a warm hat. More than anything it's the staff making people feel comfortable, offering kindness and giving help when it's most needed."

Thank you, for walking the journey from Riverbank to recovery with Peter. Thank you for giving him and many others a way back. ■

At the Coalface with Darren and Amy

If you arrived exhausted, desperate and cold at the door of MQI's Riverbank homeless drop-in centre, you might feel you'd come to the end of the road.

But staff members Darren and Amy are there, waiting and welcoming. Helping people get back on track. Your kindness makes everything they do possible.



When a person finds themselves homeless, we are here for them.

The warmth of Amy's voice radiates caring concern as she opens the door in the chill and darkness of dawn at Riverbank drop-in centre. **"Good morning. Come on inside and get warm. Would you like a bit of breakfast and a cup of tea?"** She doesn't know his name yet, this cold, wet figure of a man hunched over in front of her, not raising his eyes.

But when he does decide to give Amy all he has left... his name... she'll greet him with it every time she sees him.

"Human connection is at the heart of the work that we do," explains Amy. She co-ordinates the homeless services you make possible at Riverbank. Just like you, Amy wants people who are homeless to know that somebody cares about them.

Hearing his name cuts through the loneliness

"To know someone's name might sound simple, but it can make all the difference for someone who has woken up in a sleeping bag on the street, just existing from day to day. Meeting someone who acknowledges you as a person can give you the hope to keep going. It may sound simple, but it can make all the difference. To be able to say 'Hi John, it's good to see you. Let's get you something to eat' when he arrives... when he might have been in the same clothes for a week, exhausted, carrying his few belongings with him, feeling alone and lost. That's what will make him look up -- hearing his name spoken... it's a powerful place to start from. When someone remembers your name, it reminds you that you're human, you are valued and part of the community. That small kindness can lift your spirits."

People can arrive numb with cold

"I see the fear and panic in people when they come here for the first time" explains Darren. "But because of the help of our donors, nobody has to feel the stigma of homelessness at Riverbank. When you think of the way you might be treated in a fast-food restaurant, buying the cheapest thing you can just to sit down because you're tired from walking. Not feeling human, excluded, it's very degrading mentally and physically."

"People soon become very unwell. So it's vital that after food, a shower and clean clothes clients get medical

Riverbank is a place like home to people who move from hostel to hostel.



Darren and Amy have seen how vital it is to protect people from extreme weather conditions.

Your donations are keeping people alive

Amy will never forget one freezing cold winter morning, and the man who'd spent the night sleeping rough. "We found a man whose leg was sticking out of his sleeping bag. His leg was so badly frozen that it was turning black. He had experienced God only knows what trauma in his life. His mental health was very bad, and he had probably been drinking or taking drugs so he couldn't feel what was happening. The harsh reality is he lost his leg, but his life was saved."

Homelessness can happen to anyone

So many people are a payslip away from sliding into homelessness and living rough. Darren tells us "There are people who are homeless and trying to keep their jobs, coming to Riverbank for breakfast and a shower before they head to work. None of us are above this happening to us."

care. They can see the doctor, the nurse, the mental health team and get help with accommodation."

As the temperature plummets your support is essential

"Riverbank is actually a place like home to people who move from hostel to hostel, trying to hold onto their belongings," Darren explains. "We've had people carrying the ashes of their loved ones ask us if they can leave them at Riverbank for safekeeping. They've lost so much already. Friends, family... they're totally isolated with no structure to the day. When they arrive here, clients need to feel accepted without judgement."

That's why your help is so vital. Darren and Amy want you to know that your donations are being put to the best use possible.

You are putting love into action

"We simply can't do the job without our supporters," says Amy. "They have a big impact on people, even by donating enough for a box of tea bags. They are encouraging and supporting the start of very special relationships being built. Something as simple as a staff member sitting down with a client and a cup of tea. It's so important... those basics."

Darren agrees, "They are saving lives without a doubt. And we'd love them to see how they make that happen" That's why we are inviting donors to come for Tea and a Tour and meet our staff. We'd love to share the day-to-day experiences, give a tour of the building and show first-hand how donations are keeping people alive.

As winter draws near, please keep our men and women close to your heart. Because of your love in action, MQI can continue to care for people at their darkest hour. Thank you for giving your support. ■



You're encouraging and supporting the start of a very special relationship.

Come for Tea and a Tour of Riverbank




Bring a guest (or two!) for a behind-the-scenes tour of MQI's Riverbank homeless drop-in centre. And see first-hand how your kind donations work to bring hope and relief to Ireland's hungry and homeless.

You're welcome to *Tea and a Tour* on the first Thursday of the month. **Spaces are limited so RSVP! Call Shauna on 01 524 0139 for all the details. We'd love to see you.**

What you made possible last year

Your gift to MQI works hard here, warming the human spirit in so many untold ways. It's impossible to fully describe what your kindness has done for each individual. But in just a single year, here are some of the wonderful victories you made possible.

 **12,764** individual people came to MQI in crisis for help.

 **43,047** nourishing meals for people who otherwise would have gone hungry.

 **9,058** appointments with the GP, nurse, dentist and mental health team at Riverbank.

 **2,189** hot showers warmed cold bones and restored dignity.

Thank you

Thank you for everything you do for the men and women who need MQI.

A hot meal, a helping hand, a message of hope.
Your love in action at MQI.

An afternoon of good cheer... especially for YOU!

Especially for You... The MQI Christmas Gratitude Concert

The wonderful Dublin Concert Band will return once again for MQI's annual Christmas Gratitude Concert. It's FREE! Because it's in honour of the great good you do, changing the lives of vulnerable people right here at home. ■

When: Sunday, 17th December, from 3.30 to 5pm

Where: Adam & Eve's Franciscan Church,
4 Merchants Quay, Dublin 8
(across the Liffey from the Four Courts)

RSVP: Join us for a lovely afternoon of festive good cheer! To reserve your FREE places just call us at 01 524 0139
Or join us online at:
www.churchtv.ie/adamandeve

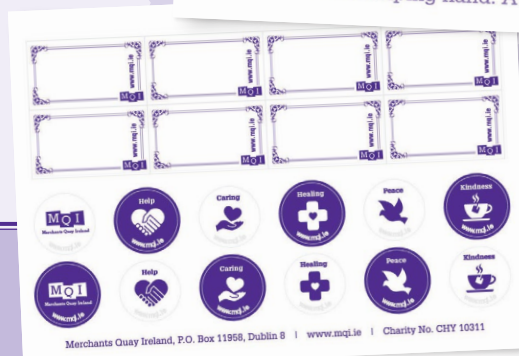
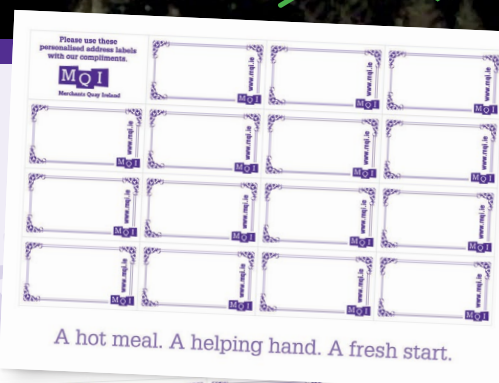


Would You Like Address Labels for Your Christmas Post?

Whether you're new to the work of MQI or you've just run out of your address labels...ring us. We'll be delighted to send you a sheet (or two!) of labels, free with our warmest compliments, personalised for your post.

Then while you're spreading the joy of the season, your post can have even greater meaning. It only costs pennies to print your labels. And by using them you're raising awareness of people who don't have an address of their own. ■

For your free labels, ring us today on 01 524 0139.



A reason to hope. A way to change. Thank you.

A Rough Sleeper's Wish List

The coldest and darkest months lie ahead for our homeless men and women. If you can donate any of these barebones basics, please know they will go to immediate use for a person in need who will be so thankful for the dignity and comfort you give.



- ✓ New packaged underwear for both women and men
- ✓ New packaged socks, hats, scarves, and gloves
- ✓ Toiletries of all kinds: shampoo, shower gel, shaving gear, toothbrushes, and toothpaste
- ✓ Clean bath towels, new or used
- ✓ Tracksuit pants, leggings, long-sleeved t-shirts, fleecy sweatshirts and hoodies
- ✓ Waterproof jackets, waterproof trousers

Give your items in person to MQI at 24 Merchants Court, 10am to 3pm, Monday to Friday. **Just ring us at 01 524 0139 to let us know you're on the way!**

✓ Big Wish

You know the anxiety... your phone has a red battery and there's nowhere to charge it. When it goes dead, you can't contact anyone... and no-one can reach you. For someone who is homeless this could mean missing out on a bed for the night or missing an essential medical appointment.

Please, if you can, make a Big Wish donation of €2,000 to provide a secure phone charging station in Riverbank dining room. You'll be making sure that clients have a way to stay in contact.

Any additional donations will cover the cost of equipment needs we might have in the future.

Thank you!



As the temperature drops and the nights draw in, donations of warm items are much appreciated.

MQI

Merchants Quay Ireland
Homeless & Drugs Services

24 Merchants Quay,
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Dublin 8

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

☎ **Telephone:** 01 524 0139

✉ **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.