

Quay Times



Merchants Quay Ireland
Homeless & Drugs Services

The Newsletter for Supporters of Merchants Quay Ireland

WINTER 2025

Brendan's Journey to the World Cup: and the power of your support

Two years ago Brendan was homeless, living in a tent in Tallaght. He weighed just eight stone and was struggling to survive. Today he is a beacon of hope, having represented Ireland in the Homeless World Cup in South Korea! His incredible story of transformation wouldn't be possible without you.

There's a warmth in Brendan's voice when he talks about the busy home, he grew up in. "I'm the eldest of seven, so there was never a dull moment. My mam and dad were the best, but it was Ireland in the 70s and 80s and with seven of us to feed and clothe it wasn't easy."

As he grew older, Brendan fell in with a crowd and a scene that led him away from his loving, tight-knit family. His relationship with his family began to unravel. By the time he realised he was in trouble, Brendan was too ashamed to reach out to his family for help.

Embarrassed, Brendan left the area and spent many nights sleeping in laneways and doorways around O'Connell Street. But the pull of the family he loved eventually brought Brendan back to Tallaght.

"I'd walk down my sister's street, no intention of calling in. Then at night I'd sleep in a tent in a nearby field. I used to



Brendan stands strong today, thanks to your unwavering support and care.

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The life-changing power of your love in 2024



7,508

found sanctuary at our Riverbank Crisis drop-in centre **↑25%***



82,484

nourishing meals were served to people who would have otherwise gone hungry **↑43%***



1,217

vulnerable individuals aged 55 and older found compassion, care, and support through our dedicated teams **↑14%***



4,025

hot showers warmed cold bones and restored dignity **↑232%***

*represents the percentage increase since 2023

“ On the pitch, I wasn't homeless I was part of a team

Hope is here, because of you. Thank you.

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cry myself asleep every night praying to my brother who'd passed to take me away."

It's hard to imagine how much shame Brendan must have felt, believing his family no longer loved him or wanted him. Afraid to ask for help from the people who cared about him, because he believed he didn't deserve it.

A Life-Changing Night

One night, Brendan woke in his tent to two shining lights and the sound of his name being called. At first, he thought he was dreaming but as the voice grew closer he suddenly realised who it was.

Climbing out of his tent on that cold dark night Brendan came face to face with the worried faces of his two younger sisters.

Taking him in their arms they told him they wanted to help him find his way back.

Can you imagine what a powerful moment it was when Brendan found himself enveloped in his sisters' love? That night was the start of Brendan's journey

“ Thank you for believing in people like me

away from homelessness and addiction. And he's never looked back.

Determined to succeed and make his family proud, Brendan engaged with Merchants Quay's Aftercare Programme. He felt an immediate sense of belonging. "I just had this connection with the place. The support I got was incredible."

Brendan began putting the pieces of his life back together finding purpose again. Slowly building new connections with those around him and repairing his relationship with his loving family.

A Life Transformed

All of this was key to helping Brendan build the strength and confidence he needed to live a life without drugs. A life your love made possible.

You see it was your generosity that gave Brendan the safety and support he needed to heal from the hurt that homelessness and

addiction had brought into his life.

But how did Brendan reach the world stage? It began with his love of football, a passion that was rekindled during his recovery.

After completing the MQI's Aftercare programme, Brendan started training and playing in the homeless street leagues on Pearse Street.

From Recovery to the World Stage

At trials, his talent caught the eye of the organisers. To his delight, Brendan was selected to take part in the Homeless World Cup 2024 in South Korea. It had been so long since he'd felt he'd done anything to make his family proud.

As Brendan took his place on the world stage last September, he was incredibly grateful to his family and all the people who'd been with him every step of the way. You're one of those people and he can never thank you enough.

Brendan is proof that with the right support, anyone can overcome the challenges of homelessness and achieve their dreams.

Your compassion and generosity are changing lives by giving people the second chance they deserve. Thank you for believing in people. ■

"I'll never forget what you've made possible"
Brendan. MQI Client

“ You gave me the chance to stand tall again, find my confidence, and take steps toward a brighter future.

You Made 2024 Incredible!

Thank you for making Jane's Place a reality, fuelling the 80km Challenge, and so much more!

Spring

This spring, you helped open the doors to a vital new service, Jane's Place. For the women who arrive at our door the pain they carry is often overwhelming. Memories of violent homes, the heartache of losing a child, or the constant fear and vulnerability of life on the streets. And because of your generosity, there's now a safe space for them to heal, grow and live life to the fullest again. This female-only space offers women a fresh start and a brighter future.

“ Jane's Place gave me a chance to breathe, to believe in myself again. It's more than just a place to stay; it's a place to heal.

Joanne, MOI Client



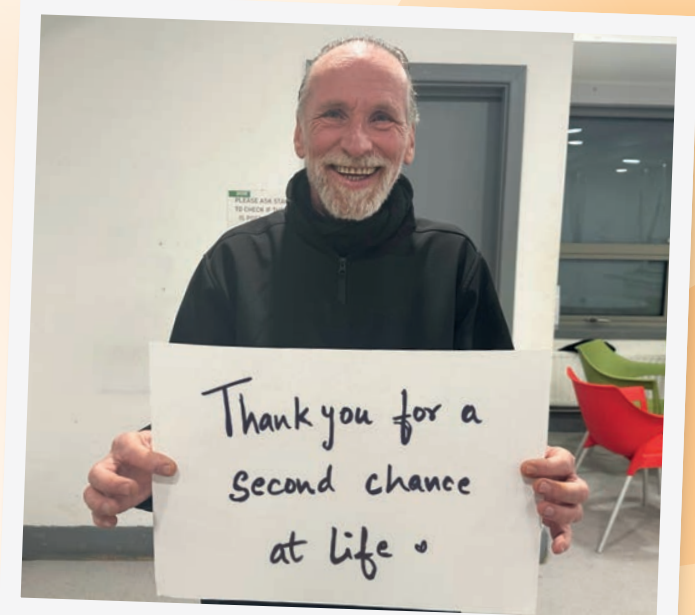
Jennifer & Ana, MOI family support facilitator & project worker

Summer

As the sun shone brightly, so did your compassion. Your support during the summer months was instrumental in safeguarding MOI's vital mental health service. People who are homeless often feel as though their situation will never improve. Your compassion and understanding ensured that these vulnerable individuals find hope, a listening ear, and someone they trust – someone who will not let them down.

“ If nobody had said anything to me that day, then I would have been gone.

Barry, MOI Client



Martin, Crisis Case Management Project Worker

Autumn

As the leaves changed, so did the lives of countless individuals thanks to your incredible support during Recovery Month. You took on the 80km Challenge, lacing up your shoes, hopping on your bikes, and diving into the water – moving however you could raise vital funds and awareness for those recovering from addiction.



Team MOI Cycle Challenge



Anthony, Shannon & Ray, MOI project workers



Amy, MOI service Coordinator

Winter

This winter you helped ensure that people who are homeless and in crisis found warmth, kindness and a hot, nourishing meal. People can feel scared and exhausted after long, cold nights of sleeping rough on the streets. Your concern and love was felt deeply by everyone who asked for help. It's not just a cup of tea, it's a cup of kindness.

“ Coming to Riverbank is like having a family. The staff treat you with respect and make you feel like you matter.

Kevin, MOI Client

2024: The Best Bits - Powered by You

Catching Up with Eddie

A chat with our CEO, Eddie Mullins, reflecting on the past year, the incredible impact of your support and what he hopes to achieve with your help in 2025.

What inspired you most in 2024?

I'm continually inspired by the generosity and compassion of all our donors. I got a letter from a lady whose daughter was in addiction before she passed away. She supports Merchants Quay to help others avoid the suffering and loss her family experienced. That kind of generosity of spirit is typical of the people who support Merchant's Quay. Our donors support without judgement. The type of folk who say "There but for the grace of God go I." They understand the impact someone's background can have on the paths and opportunities presented to them, for better or worse.

“ Together, we transform lives by never giving up on people

I grew up in a working-class home in the Liberties. I know the difference having a loving and stable home can make. I've always felt a connection with Merchants Quay. I used to go to mass with my parents in

Merchants Quay Church. The values that I hold are no doubt similar to many of our donors. People helping people, that's what it comes down to.

Our clients are at the heart of everything we do, they face so many setbacks and hardships. Imagine waking up day after day cold and exhausted, yet they still find the strength to pick themselves up and keep going. Their resilience is my greatest inspiration.

What do you hope to achieve in 2025?

Look, this year will be challenging. The number of people in homelessness and addiction will rise. My hope is that we will stand together as a family, offering support and compassion to those who need it most. We are determined to build on the support we've provided over the past years and meet the growing demand for our services. With your continued generosity,



Eddie welcoming a client into MOI

we will expand our family support service and deliver our womens service. We are also very proud and excited to be delivering Ireland's first medically supervised injecting facility. This will be a critical step in saving lives and creating a safer community for all.

What message do you have for our donors as we look ahead to 2025?

I want to express my sincere gratitude. You really are the difference between life and death for many people. Day after day, year after year, you keep our doors open and the kettle warm. I am eternally grateful that you are part of the MOI family. ■

“ Our mission is simple but profound. To be a beacon of hope for those who feel forgotten

A Special Invitation for You this Winter

Tea and a Tour

We'd love for you to join us for Tea and a Tour at our Riverbank Drop-in Centre in 2025.

Your generosity makes such a difference. We'd be delighted to show you how your compassion is helping to give people the second chance they deserve. On the first Thursday of each month we open our doors for a special tour when clients aren't using the centre.

The next available tour date is April 3rd.

Come and see where cups of kindness are poured, hearts and hands warmed and lives are changed. All thanks to you. To arrange your visit, please call Shauna on 01 524 0139. We can't wait to welcome you!



A Winter Wish List for people on the streets...

This winter, you can share the warmth of your generosity with those in need. A simple gift of socks, jocks and toiletries can make a world of difference to someone facing the harsh realities of homelessness.

Even better, consider donating waterproof pants to protect wounds, allowing them to heal, sturdy shoes to warm frozen feet, or hats and gloves to keep out the cold.

Every contribution, big or small, brings comfort and dignity to those who need it most. You can drop off your donation at the MQI Fundraising Office or make a financial contribution to provide hot meals, showers and a caring ear. Thank you for your kindness!

URGENTLY NEEDED!



**Warm socks
Underwear**



**Waterproof
rain pants**



Toiletries (soap, shampoo, deodorant, toothpaste, etc.)



Shoes and boots

Period products

**Hats, gloves,
and scarves**



Big Wish We need to raise **€2,500** for a commercial standing

mixer bowl to help prepare hot nourishing meals in our Riverbank crisis drop-in centre. Please ring us at 01 524 0139 if you'd like to help. Any additional donations will cover the cost of equipment needs we might have in the future.

Thank you!



Merchants Quay Ireland
Homeless & Drugs Services

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

Telephone: 01 524 0139

Email: supporter@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.