

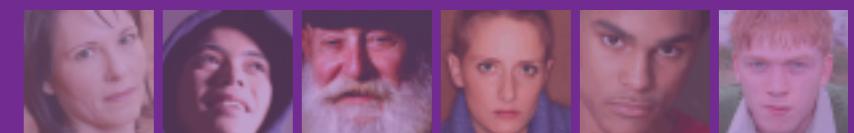
## MERCHANTSQUAYIRELAND

ANNUAL

REVIEW

2006

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making a difference

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

Merchants Quay Ireland is a community of hospitality, hope and justice. We work for justice and opportunity for those who are excluded, in partnership with those who share our aims.

We create a place of safety, compassion and welcome for all who enter our doors and offer high quality services to meet their needs.

We are committed to supporting all who work in Merchants Quay to enable us to achieve our full potential in our various roles.

We believe in and cherish the value of every human being in keeping with our commitment to social justice coming from our origins in the Franciscan Tradition.



**Merchants Quay Ireland**

**Homeless & Drugs Services**

# **MERCHANTSQUAYIRELAND**

*A Community of Hospitality, Hope and Justice*

## **Annual Review 2006**

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*Homeless & Drugs Services*

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# Looking Back

## Introduction:

At Merchants Quay Ireland we seek to provide a range of positive options for people experiencing problems related to homelessness and drug use and throughout 2006 our services were extremely busy. Despite the definite progress made at National level in addressing the issues of homelessness and problem drug use the numbers of people availing of our services has continued at high levels.

In the area of homelessness, while the overall numbers homeless has decreased and access to emergency accommodation and other housing options has improved, the numbers presenting to our homeless services remains very high. This is, in large part, attributable to the numbers of people from the new E. U. Member States that have found themselves having to avail of our services. They have come to Ireland seeking employment and a better life and while trying to become established have fallen into difficulties. However under the Government's *Habitual Residence Condition*, they are precluded from access to welfare benefits and without any safety net have no recourse but to avail of homeless services. A relaxation of this measure would have a very positive impact on homeless services across the city

We remain very concerned about the strong correlation between problem drug use and homelessness and the difficulty in securing accommodation for drug users – even those who have completed treatment and become drug free.

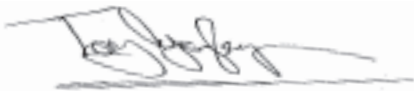
Our drugs services were very busy in 2006. While it is positive that so many people are utilising our health promotion services, it also highlights the lack of access to needle exchange services across the country, despite needle exchange being ascribed as a priority in our National Drug Strategy.

The spread of cocaine use is well documented. This has had a significant impact on our services. This nature of the drug results in greater frequency of use and a quicker escalation of problems for the individual user.

It is vital that needle exchange services are developed at local level across the city and country. Not only do these programmes serve to reduce the risks of the spread of HIV and Hep C infection and other health risks but they also act as an invaluable first point of contact with active drug users and offer pathways towards treatment and rehabilitation.

Looking to the future, Merchants Quay Ireland are committed to providing quality homeless and drugs services to those most in need. We have just commenced a counselling service for prisoners across the Irish Prison Service and are also developing social housing projects for drug users around the country. We are expanding our health promotion and harm reduction services, including needle exchange, on an outreach basis with a view to providing greater access at local level.

These are very positive developments and demonstrate that where the Government and voluntary sector work in partnership it is possible to make real progress in addressing homelessness and problem drug use.



**Tony Geoghegan**  
Chief Executive

# Merchants Quay Ireland

Merchants Quay Ireland is a national voluntary agency providing services for homeless people and for drug users. We provide creative and innovative responses to the issues of drug use and homelessness in Ireland.

## Vision

We look forward to a society where nobody is without a place to call home and where drug related harm is minimized and the range and quality of drugs services is maximized.

## Values

- Providing quality services for drug users and homeless people
- Offering access for the most marginalized
- Promoting positive change
- Working at the cutting edge
- Involving our Service Users
- Valuing our staff
- Managing finances prudently
- Promoting partnership

## Mission

Merchants Quay Ireland is a community of hospitality, hope and justice. We seek to:

- Work for justice and opportunity for those who are excluded in partnership with those who share our aims
- Create a place of safety, compassion and welcome for all who enter our doors and offer high quality services to meet their needs
- Remain committed to supporting all who work in Merchants Quay to enable us to achieve our full potential in our various roles
- Believe in and cherish the value of every human being in keeping with our commitment to social justice coming from our origins in the Franciscan Tradition.

# Addressing Crisis

## Open Access Services



My name is Raul, I am a Project Worker in our Open Access Homeless Services. I have been working at Merchants Quay for more than one and a half years.

There is great variety in my work. Very often I'm on the early morning shift. We provide breakfast from 7.15am. A lot of the people coming at this time have been sleeping rough. This can be because they are worried about staying in hostels...some are trying to keep off drugs and don't want to stay in dorms where there are active drug users. Some are afraid to stay in hostels.

We have seen a lot more Polish people and eastern Europeans in the past year. They have come over to Ireland for a better life...they want to find work and make money to send home to support their families back there. Not all are successful. Those coming in to us have fallen on hard times. Most of them are homeless, living in squats; some are staying in cargo containers at the Port. While they are less likely to be using heroin some do have drink problems. Many have very little English. However we now have some staff who have learned Polish and that certainly helps.

One aspect of my work that I think is very valuable is providing advice to drug users about how to minimize drug related harm. There is no such thing as safe injecting but we can teach people to reduce the risks involved. For clients this is something that can change their lives...they see that they can reduce their risk of infection and overdose, stuff like that.

In addition on a daily basis we help people find accommodation, we get people off the streets and into transitional housing for example. I was a key worker for a woman who had recently lost her home. She had gone downhill in the few months after that happened. I worked closely with Dublin Simon in addressing her case and just last Friday we heard that she had got a place in a transitional housing project with Dublin Simon. After nine months with them She will be in a very good position to get a permanent home.

We also refer people for drug treatment or medical help. These are very good examples of ways in which we help people on their pathway towards a better life.

**RAUL MENENDEZ, PROJECT WORKER**

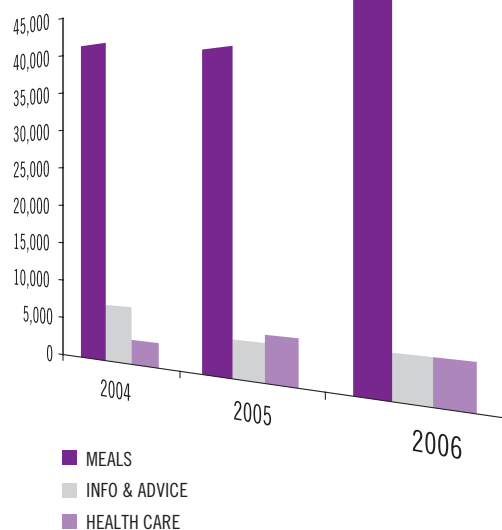
## Open Access Homeless Services

### The Drop-in Centre for People who are Homeless (Faitiu)

The aim of the Drop-in Service is to provide a "one stop shop" offering a range of interlinked services meeting the key daytime needs of homeless persons with the twin purpose of minimising harm associated with life on the streets and offering clear pathways towards settlement and reintegration. Our Cook Street Centre is open seven days a week from 7a.m. to 5p.m. with shorter hours at weekends.

In 2006 we saw another jump in the number of Eastern Europeans availing of the service. This was largely an effect of the operation of the Habitual Residence Condition whereby the Government restricted access to social welfare services for any non nationals who had not been resident in Ireland for more than two years. In October 2005 had an average of 20 to 30 homeless Eastern Europeans attending our service every day. By October 2006 this had increased to more than 50 per day on weekdays and 100 per day on Sundays.

**FIGURE 1.** Homeless Services between 2004 and 2006



The services we provide for homeless people from this centre are as follows:

**Information, Advice and Crisis Support Service:** The drop-in service includes assessment of service users' needs, advice and information on health, social welfare, emergency accommodation, long-term housing and other issues. In 2006 we recorded 5,038 supportive interventions with service users of our homeless service. Interventions include key working sessions, referrals to emergency accommodation, social work services, medical services and social welfare services, help in contacting friends or family, access to drug treatment and support in a variety of other matters. The Dublin Simon Outreach Team links in with this service on a weekly basis.

**Meals Service:** Homeless persons are offered two meals a day (breakfast and lunch). More than 40,000 meals were provided in 2006

## Primary Health Care Service



My name is Lynda, I am a nurse, and I have been working at Merchants Quay for the last two years. The centre is very busy and we deal with all kinds of medical problems.

What I enjoy most about my work is developing relationships with clients and seeing people's problems improve over time. In that time I really get to know somebody... I get to know their personality, I get to interact with them and get to know the whole person. One man I worked with came in with bilateral leg ulcers. He had been having them dressed in the UK for three years but felt that they hadn't been done properly, so when he came in he was really cagey, didn't like nurses and didn't think we could help him. Since he first came the wounds have really improved. Every time I see him there is such a good improvement it's just great. The wounds are getting smaller and smaller all the time.

I think nursing is very therapeutic for clients. A lot of homeless clients have foot problems and we need to bathe their feet... I had a guy today and his feet were in bits. He was in a very bad way. I soaked his feet and he relaxed and started to tell me about how life was for him... you wouldn't believe how valuable that interaction is for someone until they tell you or someone else tells you later about the difference it made.

We have seen a significant increase in the numbers injecting cocaine over the past couple of years. This seems to be associated with more aggression, more difficult consultations, and greater health problems because they inject more often than heroin users. I am also concerned about the number of people with significant mental health problems. We are dealing with this issue every day. We really need a dedicated mental health nurse at this stage.

**LYNDA HARAN, PRIMARY HEALTH CARE NURSE**

## Primary Health Care

MQI is working in partnership with the HSE in providing a primary health care service for homeless people. The service has General Practitioners, a dentist, nurses, a counsellor and a chiropodist. All told there were more than 5,044 health care interventions during the year.

**Nursing:** In 2006 there were a total of 3,228 nursing interventions, or 269 per month. The drop-in nurse led clinic provides a full range of primary health care services such as wound care management, blood testing, sexual health, medication management, and women's and men's health issues. Mental health presentations range from acutely suicidal clients to those who need to be referred back to services they have lost contact with. Referrals to tertiary services such as A and E and other hospital services and advocacy are a large part of the nursing role.

The citywide Primary Care Safety Net service recently set up, of which MQI medical unit is part, is still developing and will provide for consistency and continuity of care between those homeless services involved.

**Counselling:** Homelessness is often associated with severe stresses and difficulties in life, and it is not surprising that many people find it hard to cope. The Counselling Service for homeless people works at two levels – firstly providing a brief crisis counselling service targeted at service users in distress and secondly offering medium to long-term counselling relating to issues such as relationships and bereavement as well as issues of drugs and homelessness. In addition we provide group support for homeless service users attending our day programmes. We provided almost 300 counselling sessions in 2006.

**Dental Service:** In 2006 there were just short of 500 dental interventions, averaging 41 each month.

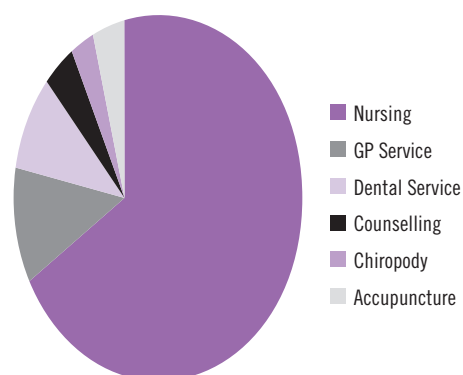


**G.P Service:** Our two GP's dealt with in the region of 940 consultations or 78 per month with a variety of acute and chronic illnesses.

**Chiropodist:** The chiropodist provided more than 100 interventions over the course of the year.

**Acupuncture:** We offer auricular acupuncture to address a variety of issues including stress and drug/alcohol stabilisation. A total of 324 service users availed of this service over the course of the year.

**FIGURE 2.** Primary Health Care Services 2006



## Open Access Drugs Services

These services can be accessed by drug users simply by walking in from the street. For this reason we are often the first place to which drug users turn for help. Services include:

### Needle Exchange –Health Promotion Unit

Here we provide drug users with information about the risks associated with drug use and the means to minimise such risks. We also offer drug users a pathway into treatment and the possibility of living life without drugs.

In our needle exchange and health promotion service our main focus is on HIV and hepatitis prevention, promoting safer injecting techniques and safer sex and on providing information on overdose and other risks. We also offer early referral to drug treatment services.

The number of visits to the needle exchange was 39,460. A total of 1,754 new injectors presented in 2006. In addition a total of 308 safer injecting workshops were undertaken with injecting drug users. The high numbers may be to some attributable to the implementation of the CICS computerised database leading to more accurate and complete data collection

### Crisis Contact Service

Many of the drug users who come to us are in crisis. Some have become homeless; others have financial problems or are in trouble with the law. Relationship or family breakdown is an issue for many people. We offer drug users practical help in getting through such difficulties – by providing counselling, advice and information, through referral to other relevant services or by providing support to people facing court action and working with people in prison.

### Outreach Service

This service aims to make contact with drug users not engaged with services and to make referrals to Merchants Quay Ireland services as well as to other external agencies. In 2006 the outreach team contacted vulnerable drug users on the street, collected used needles and syringes and also liaised with local community groups, the Gardai, Dublin City Council and others.

### Family Support Group

The Family Support Group meets regularly providing a forum where parents, and other close relatives and friends of drug users are offered support and advice on a range of issues. The participants also provide support for each other; the group is continually open to new members joining. The Family Support Group is linked to the Citywide Family Support Network which offers an opportunity to raise issues at a national level.

### Work with prisoners

Merchants Quay Ireland endeavours to continue working with service users within the prison system. We offer support, advice and counselling with a particular focus on accessing appropriate post-release options. This process entails a close working arrangement with the Probation and Welfare Service and with members of the legal profession. We worked with more than 50 prisoners in 2006

# Promoting Positive Change

## Stabilisation, Settlement and Integration Services



My name is Colm, I am a Chef Trainer, and I have been working at Merchants Quay for the last seven years. We have been providing vocational training in catering skills aimed at people with a history of drugs problems and

homelessness since 2000. The programme leads to a valuable qualification for participants as well as delivering a comprehensive catering service for the clients of our meals service, for staff and for the Friars at Merchants Quay.

Many of the participants on the programme will have had issues with drugs or alcohol. In the first programme which we commenced back in 2000 almost all were homeless and living in hostels. We still have large numbers of homeless people taking part. However chaotic a person's background, I only ask two things of prospective trainees; firstly they need to be motivated and secondly they will have to have support, perhaps from our Settlement Team or from other social care professionals, in dealing with whatever issues they may have. If these two things are in place anyone can be successful on this programme.

For example one woman, we'll call her Joan came on to the programme from a very chaotic background – she had been homeless, had an addiction problem. She came onto the programme and showed great commitment and enthusiasm. After gaining the basic qualification she went on to train as a Chef and is now in charge of her own kitchen in the Healthcare sector.

Generally speaking when people start they start well. They may come from a background of homelessness or addiction or

whatever but when they put on the chefs whites they are part of a team. When they come into the kitchen with their whites and their hats on it's a transformation. They look pristine and it boosts their motivation. It gives them a positive identity they mightn't have had before.

As a Chef Trainer you have to expect that people will make mistakes...you can't be a dictator. It's coaching rather than managing. The method I use is See – Do – Show. First of all I let the trainees see me doing something, then they get a chance to do it, and then when they have perfected the skill, they show me how to do it.

I get great satisfaction from helping people from disadvantaged backgrounds to get a valuable qualification and more on into mainstream employment. As an idea, the Catering Training Programme has worked because many of the participants have moved on into full time and part time work elsewhere. Not all end up in the catering trade. The course helps people build up a variety of skills that are useful in any work setting, but most of all it gives them confidence. The fact that people have built up work experience that they now have an employment history and can get references makes a huge difference in accessing employment.

I would love to see more businesses taking interest in programmes like these. We have shown that whatever a person's background, they can through their own efforts and with appropriate training and support become an asset to any workforce.

**COLM FOLAN, CHEF TRAINER**

## Stabilisation Services

These services offer the first steps away from crisis drug use and towards stability. They are aimed at people who are currently using street drugs, or those recently engaged in treatment and seeking more stability and structure in their lives.

Services include:

***Methadone Prescribing Treatment and Support:*** Methadone substitution therapy helps people to break their links with illegal and high-risk drug use. There were 30 service users on this programme in 2006. Encouragingly, 36% managed to access full time employment.

***Supportive Day Programmes*** offering therapeutic groups, life skills training, personal development work and pre-employment training to help drug users reintegrate into society. Links with the City of Dublin VEC allow us to include a strong educational component in our stabilisation services, which is of considerable importance in addressing the educational disadvantage experienced by so many of our service users. There were 18 participants on this programme in 2006. Many managed to obtain FETAC Certs in areas such as Computer Literacy, Craft – Glass work, Video Expression, Personal and Inter-personal Skills, Preparation for work, Food and Nutrition

***The Gateway Programme*** offers a bridge between crisis services and stabilisation services. This Programme provides one to one support linked to a range of leisure and learning opportunities. The aim is to encourage service users to examine alternatives to drug use. The programme offers access to more structured treatment, education and training. An average of 16 persons participated each month.

***One-to-One Counselling*** assists service users availing of the Stabilisation Day Services to deal with emotional and psychological issues relating to their drug use. This service is provided for all of those availing of the prescribing service as well as those involved in the supportive day programmes. Relationship and bereavement support is a key part of this service.

## Settlement Service

The Settlement Service is delivered to those seeking to move away from being homeless and we actively seek to include those who have a history of drug and alcohol problems. We work with homeless people from a variety of settings - rough sleeping, hostels, B&B's, short-term arrangements with friends/families and transitional and supported accommodation. We have a dedicated settlement service targeted at those using our residential drug treatment services, where a high proportion of participants have effectively no home to return to on completing the programme.

We use assessment interviews, individual support plans, one-to-one key working sessions, group support, personal development and life skills training, advocacy and pre and post settlement support to assist our service users to find, access, and sustain long-term appropriate accommodation. We have a dedicated Settlement worker for our Residential Drug Treatment Services who works to ensure that homeless persons becoming drug free in those services are able to secure appropriate long term housing.

During the settlement process the main issues being addressed with service users are accessing interim and long term accommodation, family relationships, money management, counselling, legal matters, and employment.

In 2006 the Settlement Team carried out 194 assessments and provided support to 111 persons, working with an average of 52 service users each month. Thirty five persons were successfully settled in 2006.

Where we do find appropriate accommodation for a service user we offer them access to our *Tenancy Sustainment Service* where the goal is to support the service user to maintain the tenancy and avoid falling back into homelessness. A total of 25 persons benefited from our Tenancy Sustainment service in 2006.

In addition, we also saw increased use of services such as money advice services and counselling, improved relationships with family members and friends and a return to employment, education or vocational training.

## The Integration Programme

This innovative programme offers transitional accommodation to drug users who find themselves homeless after completing residential drug treatment. The programme aims at assisting the integration of former drug users into mainstream society by providing opportunities for those who had drug or alcohol problems to participate in group and one-to-one therapeutic sessions and activities. These service users have transitional accommodation in a house in the Dublin suburbs for a period of up to twenty four weeks. Service users must partake in a full time course while residing in the house. The residents of Ballymount house are offered one-to-one support, an aftercare group and a weekly community night with staff. Service users' settlement needs are addressed from the start of their stay in Ballymount house. In 2006 there were 6 residents in the house.

**Pre- and Post-Settlement Support:** Our settlement and integration service includes a pre-settlement support group and a drug free aftercare group particularly targeted at meeting the needs of persons with drug and alcohol problems. The aftercare group worked with 15 service users during 2006 with an average of 6-8 people attending the group each week.

**Pre – Tenancy Group:** The pre-tenancy group is attended weekly by between 5 – 7 service users. The programme is run in twelve week modules and includes such sessions as accommodation seeking skills, budgeting, cookery, tenant responsibilities, problem solving and coping strategies. All service users are also offered a one-to-one service.

## Training and Work Programmes

**FAS – Community Employment Services:** MQI works in partnership with FAS to provide hands on training for prospective drugs workers and service users. This is done through a number of Community Employment (CE) projects based in our services. CE projects provide participants with skills that enable them to access permanent employment. In many cases our CE projects have often provided service users with their first experience of paid employment.

In 2006 a total of 130 persons participated in CE programmes at Merchants Quay Ireland. More than half (60%) of those who completed a FAS placement at Merchants Quay in 2005 secured permanent employment or moved into full time further education, this was an increase of 10% on 2004. The others are actively seeking work.

**Catering Training Programme:** Merchants Quay Ireland, with assistance from FAS, Failte Ireland and the Homeless Agency, continued to provide a culinary skills programme focused on providing “on the job” training in hygiene, cookery, food service and life-skills at a practical level. This programme is primarily aimed at homeless adults and persons in recovery. The Catering Training Programme prepares cooks and serves meals for up to two hundred people per day, in the Refectory kitchen at Merchants Quay Ireland and in our Open Access drop in service on Cook Street.

A total of 21 persons participated in the programme in 2006 and 10 of these completed the Failte Ireland / FETAC National Certificate in Culinary Skills.

**Personal Development Opportunities:** These are focused on both learning and leisure and incorporate such topics as personal development, holistic therapies, life skills training, arts and crafts and women's support groups. One-to-one literacy tuition is also provided as is a FETAC/NCVA Foundation Level Communications and Mathematics course.

## Drug Free Treatment Services



My name is Rosaleen, I am a Team Leader in our High Park Residential Drug Treatment Service, and I have been working at Merchants Quay for the last 14 years. The High Park programme has been running for more than 10 years and has helped hundreds of people to become drug free

My favourite part of the work is working intensively with clients – in group sessions, in one to one counselling. I get excited when I see people starting to really change after a few weeks here – first of all you see positive physical changes because they are eating more healthily, taking more exercise and so on. Then you see changes in their self confidence – they start planning for change in their lives they begin to work on improving relationships with their loved ones. They decide what they want from life. I really enjoy the fact that I am working with a great team, most have been here a few years and are very experienced.

One of my most memorable experiences was going back eight years or more – one client I worked with, I'll call her "Mary" – she had three children in foster care when she came in for treatment. I remember attending many case conferences with her social workers... the most difficult thing she had to do when leaving High Park was to tell the Social Workers that she was not yet

ready to take the children back full time. That she needed to continue her therapeutic recovery first – but this was the right decision for her. It made her stronger – soon after she did feel confident enough to care full time for her children. I ran into her some time ago and was delighted to learn that she was still drug free...still doing well

Since last year I think the service at High Park has improved further. We had the building refurbished. Now it's lost that institutional look. The bed rooms and other rooms are nice and homely... we have a new games room. These things make a huge difference. We now give clients a lot more responsibility in running the house. They are given a budget and have to do the weekly food shopping, plan menus, do stocktaking and so on. This is very empowering for clients and helps them take responsibility in other areas of their lives.

In the last few years we are working with more and more homeless clients. We do our utmost to ensure that nobody ends up going back into hostels. We try to get them into social or transitional housing, provided by MQI, by the local authorities or by other organisations. Going back into homelessness is just a slippery slope towards renewed drug use.

**ROSALEEN O'REILLY, TEAM LEADER**

Our Drug Free Treatment Services aim at providing easily accessible treatment for drug users who wish to become drug free. Service users can be self referred or may be referred from a wide variety of agencies across the country.

## High Park Residential Programme

This is a 17 week fully residential programme designed to help participants to become and remain drug free. The programme is a low threshold programme that seeks to attract service users who might not otherwise engage in drug free treatment such as homeless drug users and female drug users. The emphasis is on assisting service users to gain insight into the issues which underpin their drug use and developing realistic measures to prevent relapse. The High Park programme offers individual care plans, which where necessary incorporate in-house detoxification in partnership with community GPs, individual counselling, group therapy, educational groups, work assignments and recreational activities.

In 2006 there were 73 admissions to the High Park programme, 62% were male and 38% were female (high by international standards). The proportion of homeless persons accessing the service remains very high at 48%. A total of 27 persons were admitted for detoxification in 2006 and 19 of these (77%) successfully completed the detoxification.

Our Residential Settlement Worker continues to offer settlement support to homeless residents of High Park and St Francis Farm. This development has been very successful.



An example of the art work on display at the 'River' Art Exhibition. Art by clients from Merchants Quay Ireland, The Bridge Project and Ringsend Senior Citizens group was on display



Merchants Quay Ireland's Health Promotion Service

Our Residential Treatment Centre at High Park, Drumcondra underwent substantial refurbishment in 2006



Tony Geoghegan with Alice Leahy, Rev. Des Harmon and Fr. Kieran Cronin at Christchurch Cathedral

**2006**  
**THE YEAR IN PICTURES**

# Q I Quay Ireland

Former US Police Chief Gerry Cameron spoke at a seminar entitled 'Rethinking the War on Drugs'



The late Sam Stephenson, with Roddy Doyle, Imelda Healy and Tony Geoghegan at the launch of 'River' Art Exhibition in October

MQI staff from a red ribbon to mark Irish AIDS day 2006



Ruari Quinn with Imelda Healy at the 'River' Art Exhibition

At work on St. Francis Farm





My name is Norah, I am responsible for the farm work aspect of St. Francis Farm Drug Treatment Programme. I have been working here for almost 8 years now.

We have a mixed farm – we produce lamb, beef, pork and eggs. We grow a wide variety of vegetables including carrots, potatoes, onions, sweet corn, peppers, cucumbers, tomatoes and parsnips. Much of our produce goes into the kitchens of MQI's various services and the remainder of which is sold to other customers.

The clients at St. Francis Farm spend two full days and two half days farming each week. They undertake a wide variety of tasks including sowing, weeding, harvesting, maintaining grounds, fencing, feeding animals, shearing sheep and so on. I see my role as really being about developing people; I spy their talents within their first 10 days here and I try to match their talents to some particular job initially as this provides a good confidence boost. After that they learn multiple skills that are useful in a variety of settings. They get a clearer idea of the value of food, of the length

of time it takes to produce, for example six weeks for a single lettuce and of the need to see things through from the beginning through the middle and right to the end in order to see results.

I think that looking after animals is particularly therapeutic for clients. In the lambing season it raises issues about birth. For those who have children it brings up memories of the birth of their own offspring, what they may have done or failed to do. Sometimes a ewe rejects her offspring. For some this can bring painful memories about their own upbringing. Working with animals brings into focus for many clients how much nurturing they themselves needed as children and perhaps didn't get.

No one day is the same at St. Francis Farm. I am interested in people and their stories. In what life has dealt out to people and how they have coped with the crises and opportunities they have been faced with. St. Francis Farm presents participants with a great opportunity to develop their potential and it's very rewarding to see people make the most of this.

**NORAH BURGESS, FARM MANAGER**

## St. Francis Farm

This is a therapeutic facility which offers a long-term programme of six to twelve months duration for people with a history of problematic drug use. We provide a safe drug free environment where service users can adjust to life without drugs and make positive choices about their future. We also afford service users the opportunity to explore the reasons for their drug use and to learn more effective coping mechanisms. We provide former drug users with access to training and education as a means to gaining employment and we enable service users to develop their individual, social and interpersonal skills.

The programme covers areas of relapse prevention, one to one counselling, group therapy, self esteem seminars, assertiveness training, anger management, farm training, literacy skills, and computer skills training (ECDL). Service users also receive training in Emergency First Aid and in life skills and budgeting. In addition service users are offered the opportunity to participate in Yoga classes and reflexology and fortnightly spirituality workshops.

What makes St. Francis Farm unique is the fact that our programme is situated in a working farm environment. Service users gain work experience in animal care, vegetable production, and in general farming. The food produced at the farm is used to supply the kitchens in our various centres, feeding up to three hundred people every day.

The St. Francis Farm programme had 30 participants in 2006, 3 women and 27 men. Eleven residents moved on, with support from the staff team, after completing individual care plans of 6 to 12 months duration. 6 left after completing 3-4 months at the Farm. A further 4 left after completing 1-2 months. Nine residents remained with plans to complete programme in 2007.

Of the 30 residents 9 were from the South East region accounting for 530 bednights.

## Aftercare Support 2006

The Aftercare Support Service started in March 2006 initially in St. Francis Farm however due to transport difficulties we rented a room in the Parish Centre in Carlow and started operating the service from there.

We had 8 former residents who lived in the Carlow area avail of this service. Six attended for one to one support on a fortnightly basis for up to six sessions. We also ran a fortnightly support group in the evening which was well attended at different times by the eight former residents.



# Towards a Fairer Society

## Research, Training and Social Policy

My name is Peter; I am a Trainer, before this I was a project worker in our High Park Programme. I have been working at Merchants Quay for the last 11 years. I have been Training Officer for the last six years. I am responsible for the Co-ordination of the MQI / UCD Certificate and Diploma programmes in Drugs Counselling Theory and Intervention Skills.

Drinking and drug use pose fundamental questions for individuals and society- questions about meaning, about identity, indeed about life and death. It's interesting the way people will define themselves by their drug use - "my name is john and I am an addict". It gives people an identity or a pseudo-identity. Where there is an absence of meaning in peoples lives there can be a descent into pleasure as a way of compensating for that. In a culture where the ideal is to enjoy as much as possible, where pleasure is too highly privileged, sometimes problem drug and alcohol use can be consequence of that.

An addiction counsellor is a person whose role is not necessarily to stop people from drinking and drugging, but to help people to

think about and gain control over their relationship to pleasure and enjoyment.

My job is to train people in drugs counselling theory and intervention skills. Part of my role is to get people to think about what addiction means for the individual. For some people it may be about managing their relationship to pleasure for others it may be about trying to cope with something traumatic that happened to them. A well trained counsellor or project worker will understand that the cause of addiction is specific for each individual and will reflect on these kinds of issues.

Participants get a good grounding in the theory and practice of drug work and are also be provided with opportunities to develop their skills and competencies.

In terms of outcomes, it's not really about what grade someone gets, what matters is that they have begun to reflect on the nature of drug use and the ways in which they can best help people with drugs and alcohol problems.

**PETER KELLY, TRAINING OFFICER**

## Training

In 2006 a total of 772 persons participated in Merchants Quay Ireland's various training courses. The courses offered included the following;

- Project Worker Training Programme
- Drugs Awareness Training Programme
- Information and Communications Technology
- Management Development Programme
- Volunteering Induction Training
- MQI/University College Dublin: Certificate in Drugs Counselling Theory and Intervention Skills
- MQI/University College Dublin: Diploma in Drugs Counselling Theory and Intervention Skills

In addition to the above the Training Department also organized a "Bullying and Harassment Awareness Week" for all staff at Merchants Quay Ireland. This involved development of posters for display throughout the organization, arranging for speakers to speak to the staff team on bullying and harassment and in addition to this, information mornings were held at our various services on our policy on bullying and harassment. Also in 2006 we were awarded FETAC accreditation for our Needle Exchange Training Programme. We also developed quality standards for our Training Department in line with FETAC guidelines.

## Research

The MQI Research Team worked on a variety of projects in 2006 including:

### ***An Exploration of Cocaine-Users Perceptions, Beliefs regarding Cocaine Use, Needs for and Barriers to Cocaine Treatment and the Perception of Staff working with Cocaine-Users***

The NACD asked Merchants Quay Ireland to carry out a piece of qualitative research on cocaine use in Ireland. The research involved running two focus groups with current cocaine users availing of Merchants Quay Ireland's low threshold services. A further focus group with key staff working with cocaine users was also undertaken. The findings from this research highlight that there are additional health risks to the individual and new challenges for service providers as a result of this increasingly popular drug.

### ***Dublin City Rapid Needs Assessment***

Merchants Quay Ireland has been commissioned by the Homeless Agency to undertake a Rapid Needs Assessment with a view to identifying the needs of individuals who congregate in a number of city centre areas engaged in street drinking and drug use. The second aim was to promote awareness of and encourage engagement with existing drugs services where appropriate. This research is expected to be finished in 2007.

### ***An Assessment of the Numbers and Profile of EU10 Nationals using Homeless Services in Dublin***

Merchants Quay Ireland were commissioned by Dublin City Council to undertake a survey and count of persons from the 10 new EU accession states who find themselves accessing homeless services in Dublin. Fieldwork on this project began in December 2006 and will be completed early in 2007.

### ***Older People Experience of Housing and Exclusion***

Merchants Quay Ireland has been commissioned by the National Council on Aging and Older People to undertake a piece of research aimed at providing a demographic profile of older people experiencing all kinds of housing exclusion in Ireland. This study will explore the experience, perceptions of housing circumstances and preferences of older people experiencing all forms of housing exclusion and identify implications for policy, service planning and delivery in terms of meeting the needs of this group and of prevention. The study began in December 2006 and is expected to be completed in 2007.

In addition to the above the Merchants Quay Ireland Research Team also engaged in evaluation of Merchants Quay Ireland services, specifically focusing on our Community Liaison service and on our Tenancy Sustainment Project.

## Social Policy and Communications

In 2006 Merchants Quay Ireland continued to prioritize policy change in the areas of drugs and homelessness as part of its core work. In this regard we;

- Continued to participate in the Drug Policy Action Group which is focused on developing effective drug policy in Ireland
- Continued to run a Social Policy Forum within Merchants Quay Ireland which provides staff and service users with a forum where they can bring policy issues for attention.

In addition our Social Policy and Communications Officer participated in and contributed to the following policy orientated forums;

- The Homeless Agency Information Network
- The Habitual Residency Condition Coalition
- The South Western Regional Drug Task Force

In addition a number of important events were organized including;

- Drugs and Diversity: A joint seminar with Pavee Point aimed at raising awareness of the issue of problem drug use among new communities and amongst the Traveller Community in Ireland. This highly successful seminar was attended by more than 115 people.

- **Rethinking the War on Drugs:** This public forum provided an opportunity for professionals working in drugs services, in law enforcement and in other areas affected by the drugs crisis to hear some radical ideas on drugs law reform. The main speaker was Gerry Cameron, a former US Chief of Police who has come to question the efficacy and the morality of the “War on Drugs” and has come to the conclusion that it was not only a total failure but that it was causing tremendous damage to society. Mr. Cameron made the case for the legalization of drugs and a vigorous and spirited debate ensued. This forum was organized jointly with UISCE and with the Irish Penal Reform Trust.

Other work undertaken in this section included a complete re-design of the Merchants Quay Ireland website due to be launched in 2007, the production of a leaflet promoting safer injecting practice amongst active drug users and the production of a number of policy submissions to various policy forums.

## **Community Liaison Project**

In the course of 2006 the Community Liaison Officer dealt with a wide variety of complaints and incidents concerning drug nuisance issues in the Christchurch area. In addition he liaised regularly with local police, with community groups and local residents and with local businesses and Dublin City Council.

# **Supporting Staff to Respond Effectively**

### ***Human Resources***

By the end of 2006 there were 211 full-time, part-time, community employment and volunteer staff, providing a wide range of services at Merchants Quay Ireland. The HR Department works to ensure that the organization has human resources policies that are in line with existing legislation and that achieve best practice in this area.

*Volunteers:* Volunteers have always been essential in the delivery of our services. In the early days the majority of staff were volunteers. Merchants Quay Ireland values the contribution and commitment that volunteers offer at all levels in the organization. The organization appreciates the invaluable contribution made by their experience, knowledge, skills, vitality, diversity and dedication. At any one time there are 20 – 30 volunteers involved in our various projects and services.

*Staff Training:* In 2006 we ran 46 courses for our own staff and others working in Homeless and Drugs Services across Dublin. Issues covered included Motivational Interviewing; Brief Solution Focused Therapy; Issues of Diversity; Understanding issues of Child Sexual Abuse and Rape; Stress Management; Advocacy Skills, First Aid Training; Theories of Addiction; and Cocaine & Crack Cocaine. More than 500 participants attended.

### ***Information and Communications Technology***

This section manages the organisations network of more than seventy computers as well as the telephone systems. In 2006 the ICT department was heavily involved in rolling out our new “Client Information and Care System” which allows us use IT to better address client needs

# Finance, Administration and Fundraising

## Finance

Effective and prudent financial management continues to be a priority at MQI. It is essential that the financial resources of the organisation be managed so as to deliver the greatest level of quality services by achieving the best value for money.

The emphasis is on improving consistency and accountability across the organisation, integrating financial planning into overall strategic planning and providing high quality financial input into decision making at Merchant Quay Ireland.

## Fundraising

In 2006 we received more than €500,000 from fundraising and general donations an increase of 10% on 2005. To all who supported us we offer our heartfelt thanks.

## Administration

Merchants Quay Ireland has a centralised administration office which provides an efficient and comprehensive service to the entire organisation. Services provided include diary management, mail management, typing, photocopying, document production and a wide variety of other administrative tasks.

# Financial Report

The accounts of Merchant Quay Ireland are summarised below. These accounts cover the activities of Merchant Quay Project Ltd. (MQP) and Franciscan Social Justice Initiatives Ltd. (FSJI). These companies relate broadly to the organisation's drug and homeless services respectively.

**Income and Expenditure Accounts:** Total income and expenditure for MQP and FSJI for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2006 was as follows:

MQP	FSJI	Total	
	€,000	€,000	€,000
Income	3,677	1,648	5,325
Less: Expenditure	3,747	1,651	5,398
Surplus/(Deficit)	(471)	(3)	(74)

**Income:** Income from statutory agencies represents more than 80% of the income of MQP and FSJI. The remaining income in these companies was raised from grants and donations from charitable trusts, from individuals, from the corporate sector and through other fundraising activities.

**Expenditure:** Wages and salaries represent more than 70% of total overhead expenditure. Remaining overhead expenditure is broadly in line with that in previous years.

**Balance Sheets:** The Balance Sheets of MQP and FSJI as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2006 are set out as follows:

<b>MERCHANTS QUAY PROJECT</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2005</b>
	€, <i>000</i>	€, <i>000</i>
<b>Fixed Assets</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>126</b>
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Debtors	896	1,048
Cash at Bank and on hand	378	411
	<b>1,275</b>	<b>1,459</b>
<i>Less:</i>		
<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
Creditors	(1,254)	(1,380)
<b>Net Current Assets</b>	<b>720</b>	<b>79</b>
Deferred Income	--	--
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>204</b>
<i>Represented by:</i>		
<b>Accumulated Surplus</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>204</b>

<b>FRANCISCAN SOCIAL JUSTICE INITIATIVES</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2005</b>
	€, <i>000</i>	€, <i>000</i>
<b>Fixed Assets</b>	<b>298</b>	<b>308</b>
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Debtors	22	285
Cash at Bank and on hand	22	1
	<b>44</b>	<b>286</b>
<i>Less:</i>		
<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
Creditors	(156)	(181)
	<b>(156)</b>	<b>(181)</b>
<b>Net Current Assets</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>105</b>
Creditors: amt falling due after one year		(220)
Deferred Income	(194)	(2199)
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>(9)</b>	<b>(5)</b>
<i>Represented by:</i>		
<b>Accumulated (Deficit) Surplus</b>	<b>(9)</b>	<b>(5)</b>

# Thank You

Thanks to all those who supported our work in 2006

Franciscan Friars	MT Agencies Ireland Ltd.	Dennison Trailers Ltd.	Services (Ireland) Ltd.
Secular Franciscan Order	Irish Life & Permanent Plc	The Cutting Club Ltd.	Chart Label Ltd.
St. Patricks Cathedral	John F O'Connor Associates	Murray Consultants Ltd.	All Events Video
Health Services Executive	Tallaght Deaf Club	Doran's (Café Bars) Ltd.	Bernard T. Kelly & Sons Ltd.
Probation Service	CIE Dependants of Deceased Society	Travel Plan (Abbey Travel) Ltd.	Thorn Motors LTD.
FAS	EBS Building Society	Gallagher (Dublin) Ltd.	I.E.T. International
Dublin City Council	P. J. Hegarty & Sons	Macs Granite Warehouse	Blanchardstown Partnership Ltd.
Homeless Agency	Vincent Byrne Furniture	R A Scott Accountants	C S Construction Spares Ltd.
Combat Poverty Agency	Universal Honda Ltd.	Cross & Passion Convent	Atlas Language School
Family Support Agency	Kinsella Lexus	Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin	Hegarty Demolition Ltd.
Dormant Accounts Fund	Prompton Catering Services Co. Ltd.	AB Power Systems Ltd.	Coras Iompair Eireann
Pobail	Flexi-Fabrications Ltd.	DCC plc	Castleknock Cleaners
South Inner City Drugs Task Force	The Victory Credit Union Ltd.	St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin	Kirby Electrical Ltd.
South Eastern Regional Drugs Task Force	C & A Excavations (Ireland) Ltd.	Capital Fencing Sales Ltd.	Communication Workers' Union
Construction Spares Ltd	Co-Operative Animal Health Ltd.	Redfusion Ltd.	Town and Country Chauffeur Service
Mrs Jane Pfeiffer	Byrne & Murphy Ltd.	Jenkinson Agencies Ltd.	Omnipro Ltd.
Anglewing Ltd.	Reconair Services Ltd.	E A Delaney Ltd.	Lehane & Hogan
The Congregation of Dominican Sisters	Gerry Brouder Associates	GT Media (Dublin ) Ltd.	Tony Martin Carpentry
Dublin Food Coop	Doramics Ltd.	HPI Ltd.	Winkworth & Co.
Shelman Property Developments	O'Shea Manning & Co.	T J O'Mahony & Sons Ltd.	Integral Computers Ltd.
Bryan F Fox & Company	Specialitly Print & Design Ltd.	Universal Fabrics Ltd.	M & M Enterprises Ltd.
McNamara Glass and Fittings Ltd.	EPH Plumbing & Heating Ltd.	Glasthule Dun Laoghaire Credit Union Ltd.	Apple Donations Group
Wynn's Hotel	Dave Curran Design	Silentnight Group Ireland	Comhdhail Naisiunta na Gaeilge
Yew Design	Seven Star Ireland	The Secular Franciscan Order	J. G. Dillon & Co.
Aba Architects Ltd.	A & L Goodbody Solicitors	Thomas Reilly Coaches Ltd.	Mentec International Ltd.
Crofton Motors Ltd.	Environmental Monitoring Services Ltd.	W H Hayes & Co.	Tara Publishing Company Ltd.
Westbrook Motors (Ireland) Ltd.	St. Patrick's Boys National School, Donabate	Westpoint Health & Fitness Centre	Lewis E Citron & Company
William A James Solicitors	RHM Ireland Ltd.	Toni Gallen Recruitment Ltd.	Fanagans Funeral Directors
Clifton House	OC Architectural Ltd.	Palladrone Development Partnership	Grand Pictures Ltd.
Atlantic Challenge 2005	Public Service Executive Union	Chronotherm Controls Ltd.	Precision Electric (Ireland) Ltd.
Irish Security Stamp Printing Ltd.	CRH plc	Delicatessen Meat Supplies Ltd.	Setanta Communications Ltd.
Peters Repair Service	Roche Products Ireland Ltd.	Baxter Financial Services	John Clarke Engraving
Capital Glass Company Ltd.	Appliance Sales & Distribution Ltd.	Melcorpo Commercial Properties Ltd.	Diageo
James N Earls Sons & Daughter Ltd.	Hilti (Fastening Systems) Ltd.	Baxter Healthcare Ltd.	Doramics Ltd.
Kenbay Recycling Solutions Ltd.	Owens DDB	J.F.H. International	Merchandising & Promoting Services
Unit B8/9 Greenogue Square	Tramex Ltd.	Occasions Hairstyling	Greencore Group plc
	11 The Anchorage	Capita Life & Pensions	Northern Trust Investor Services (Ireland) Ltd.
			Monkstown Popteries

Astellas Ireland Co. Ltd.  
 Seal Systems Ireland Ltd.  
 PKT Consulting Engineers  
 National Taxi Drivers Union  
 Exhibit Design & Event Management Ltd.  
 Carpet Mills  
 Wincanton Irl. Ltd.  
 Whelan Frozen Foods Ltd.  
 Odium Group Ltd.  
 Roger Cagney Chartered Engineers  
 Grant Engineering (Ireland) Ltd.  
 Fiona M Murray Solicitors  
 MA International Ltd.  
 Infection Safety Matters  
 ABN-AMRO  
 E-services & communications credit union Ltd.  
 Fitzwilliam Card Club  
 Wymore International Ltd.  
 St. Brigids Girls National School  
 O'Brien Celtic Gifts  
 Panasonic Ireland  
 Dalkey Credit Union Ltd.  
 Gowan Group Ltd.  
 Acumis Technology  
 Vico Distribution Ltd.  
 Lenridge Properties Ltd.  
 PRISM Business & Financial Consultants  
 Nolans Kitchen Ltd.  
 P K Chemicals I Ltd.  
 Eoin Kenny Associates  
 Kylemore Foods Group Ltd.  
 Glennon Bros. Timber Ltd.  
 M P Technology Ltd.  
 RKD Architects Ltd.  
 John B. O'Connor & Co.  
 Aalto Bio Reagents Ltd.  
 Jim Franey Ltd.  
 Philip Warwick & Co. Ltd.  
 Cinema & General Publicity Ltd.  
 Gilbeys of Ireland Ltd.  
 Rada Ltd.  
 Zen Training & Consultancy  
 Winfield Motors  
 Noel F. Sherlock & Associates  
 Roadstone Dublin Ltd.  
 Leo Laboratories  
 EBS Building Society  
 Musgrave Group  
 Conway Shipping Ltd.  
 Gerard T Murphy & Company  
 Impact  
 Construction Guarantee Underwriters Ltd.  
 Corfri Ltd.  
 St. Lukes  
 BCP Asset Management  
 Fitzwilton Charitable Foundation Ltd.  
 Enterprise Ireland  
 Usher Bathroom Furnishings  
 O'Flaherty Holdings Ltd.  
 Peter Johnson Interiors Ltd.  
 Hickeys Ltd.  
 Denis Brennan & Associates  
 Balmar Ltd.  
 Dervan Engineering Consultants  
 Galtee Wood Products Ltd.  
 A1 House Inspections  
 Hurricane Couriers  
 F.R. Kelly & Co.  
 Label World Ltd.  
 Paul Garvey Agencies Ltd.  
 Dimpco Ltd.  
 Radionics Ltd.  
 Mater Private Hospital  
 Interpolis Captive Management Services  
 Brendan Merry & Partners  
 Toulston Ltd.  
 Traffic Solutions Ltd.  
 Acme Roofing Experts & Company Ltd.  
 Roadtrain Ltd.  
 SIAC Construction Ltd.  
 Ssi Steel Services of Ireland Ltd.  
 HOK Residential  
 Stephen McKenzie & Co.  
 Architectural Aluminium Ltd.  
 Glenageary Killiney National School  
 The Vard Partnership Ltd.  
 Kage Industrial Tool Supplies Ltd.  
 Kerins & Morrisey Ltd.  
 Douglas Newman Good  
 H. A. O'Neill Ltd.  
 Butlers Chocolates Ltd.  
 Michael Guiney Ltd.  
 Declan Brassil & Company Ltd.  
 Creedon Group  
 Central Bank Financial Services Authority of Ireland  
 Kirby Group Engineering  
 Halcyon Bedding Ltd.  
 Allen Recruitment Consulting Ltd.  
 CPM Collen Project Management  
 Computer Systems Sales Ltd.  
 Tyco Healthcare Ireland Ltd.  
 The Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy  
 Donnelly Centre  
 ASTI General Fund  
 Ben Developments Ltd.  
 Buttercups Uniforms  
 The Community Foundation for Ireland Ltd.  
 Patrick Casey & Company  
 Sheevaun House  
 Marketing Project Management Ltd.  
 Repatration Section (INIS)  
 Walsh Motors Ltd.  
 Raychem International  
 Aughrim Street Parish Credit Union  
 Shankill Ballybrack & District Credit Union Ltd.  
 Tolmac Construction Ltd.  
 Quality Goods International Llimited  
 Micro Hydraulics Ltd.  
 Store Design Shopfitting Ltd.  
 Castle King Services Ltd.  
 Corden Pharma Chem  
 Crestland Ltd.  
 Sabre Electrical Services Ltd.  
 K Tonge & Associates  
 Laois Holdings Ltd.  
 Cyndale Enterprises Ltd.  
 Maginn Machinery Company Ltd.  
 Lafferty Design & Development Ltd.  
 Urban Capital Ltd.  
 Browne & Murphy  
 K W C D Partnership Bursary AC  
 Blackrock Secretarial Services  
 Ebba Engineering Co. Ltd.  
 W. H. Good Ltd.  
 O'Reilly Recycling Ltd.  
 Industrial Consultants International Ltd.  
 Digi-Print Ireland  
 IPAG Ireland Ltd.  
 Fyffes PLC  
 Beamish & Crawford Ltd.  
 Keaney Insurance Brokers Ltd.  
 Burgess Galvlin & Co. Ltd.  
 P J Carroll & Co. Ltd.  
 Carrolls Irish Gift Stores  
 Loci Urban Design Architecture Ltd.  
 D L A Ltd.  
 Cahill Software Ltd.  
 ESB Officers Association  
 Parnell Street Pharmacy Ltd.  
 Acoustic Associates (Ireland) Ltd.  
 Unilever Ireland  
 M J Foley & Sons  
 Eureka Ltd.  
 Commercial Vehicle Repairs  
 Tyco Electronics  
 F R Kelly & Company  
 Pinewood Healthcare  
 Grimes & Company  
 TS Sales Ltd.  
 ReMax Group

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## NOTES

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