

Quay Times



Merchants Quay Ireland
Homeless & Drugs Services

The Newsletter for Supporters of Merchants Quay Ireland

The Year You Changed Everything: Martin's Story

Every time you give to Merchants Quay Ireland, someone like Martin is working hard to respect and honour your generosity. Because without you, he mightn't have a story to tell...

A bone-deep addiction to alcohol and crack cocaine drove Martin to America to escape it – then home to Ireland to escape it again. It crushed the people he loved. Pushed him out of a home. By his own account, addiction nearly destroyed his life.

"If somebody had told me I'd be a slave to a substance for 20 years, I wouldn't have believed them,"

Martin begins. "There was no reason for any of it happen. I'm proof that addiction can affect anyone."

Delusion and denial

Sixteen years ago MQI and Martin crossed paths. By then Martin was "using dirty needles all the time. MQI offered me clean needles and counselling but I wouldn't take it: I was thinking, 'oh it's just something I do now



Last year your support helped Martin move on from active addiction to rehabilitation, and beyond.

and then.' Addiction is cunning; I was in such denial. I repeatedly went back to the thing that was destroying me."

House of ghosts

It wasn't finished with him yet.

By 2012 Martin was in his 40s and "living like a ghost," one of the last in his family home. "I hadn't put the rubbish out in a long time. I'd be almost dying, and I'd keep using drugs. Part of me wanted to give up." Instead, with a vulnerability many of us will never have to face, Martin sought help.

One small kindness

"By chance I found Merchants Quay again. I barely had my bus fare to St. Francis Farm. 'We're

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JOIN US – SATURDAYS TOO!

Coffee Mornings are Better With You



Where can you find free refreshments... brilliant company... and guided tours of the amazing work you make possible?

Coffee Mornings at MQI's Riverbank, Now on Saturdays Too – and we hope you'll ring Nick or Aislinn on 01 524 0139 to say you'll be there: Saturday 29 March and 26 April at 11am, and Tuesday 11 March and 15 April at 10:30am. Bring an honoured guest (or two)!

How your donations are wisely used: See page 4...

"I thought, 'Oh my God, what have I done

Looking back —

Christmas Roundup 2013: Thank You for Being Our Perfect Match!

This past Christmas your outpouring of support for our homeless and hungry meant a longtime supporter doubled every donation you gave, euro for euro, to help MQI. And in the words of our staff and clients, what a warm and wonderful Christmas you provided...



With the help of donors like you, our friends at Bord Gais and our other fantastic corporate sponsors, Santa Claus gave presents of hats, scarves, gloves, and more.

"The effort that staff put into Christmas – they give their time for us. Not many people out there will do what Merchants Quay do for us. Without them, we'd be lost."

— James, rough sleeper

"The clients themselves make it special. The thing that strikes me is how much they respect all that they're given. There are handshakes and thank yous and smiles on their faces. It enables them to rise above the very difficult lives they are leading, even for that few hours."

— Alan, MQI staff



A queue began in the cold and damp, before our doors opened. But thanks to your donations we fed everybody a wonderful Christmas meal.



“We have a client, a man who lives on his own – he has absolutely nobody else. When the band played, he got up to sing. It made my day, just to hear that man sing.”

— Mick Latimer, MOI staff

MOI staff dispense good food and Christmas cheer!

Men, women, children and families gather together in the happy atmosphere your generosity created.

A table waits for clients like Nicola. “Christmas was hard,” she said. “I just lost my father. But here, it’s nice. I had dinner. I got gloves, a hat and a scarf from Santa. I’m happy.”



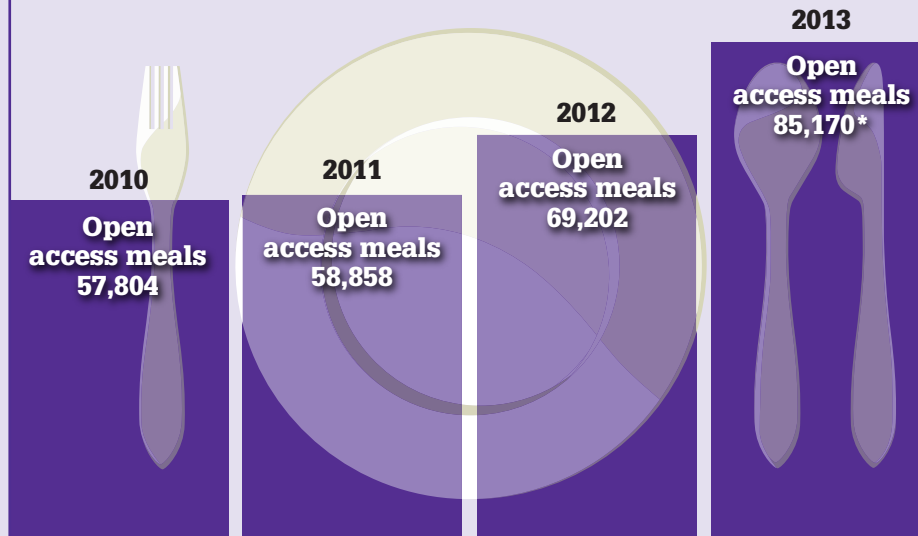
Sent on Stars of Hope, your words of encouragement let our clients know they are not forgotten.

A Look at the Numbers

Because you have a right to know how your donation is spent...

Feeding the Hungry

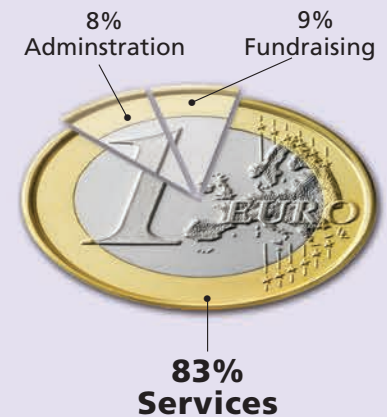
Thanks to the funds provided by your kind support, **7,089 times each month** a hungry person sits down in our dining room for a meal:



*Mid-2013, MQI's evening meals service (a collaboration with Focus Ireland) moved to our Riverbank Centre to better serve those in urgent need. This pushed meals to over 80,000 – and in 2014 we expect to serve over 100,000 meals. **Your kind donations enable us to keep pace with demand.**

Funding Vital Services

Of every Euro we spend **83 percent** – a number that is exceptional among charities – goes directly to serve our clients, including detox & rehab, meals, aftercare, counselling, basic medical care and more*:



Knowing We'll Do What's Right

At our Riverbank Open Access Centre alone, dedicated staff have a total of **355 years experience**. At MQI there are:

- ✓ **NO** salary top ups;
- ✓ **NO** six figure salaries;
- ✓ **NO** pension top ups;
- ✓ **NO** unvouched travel expenses;
- ✓ **NO** paid board members (all are 100% voluntary);
- ✓ **NO** pay increases since 2008.

Get details: MQI are fully compliant with the Code of Good Governance. View our audited financial statements and annual report online at www.mqi.ie or ring Nick or Aislinn to receive a copy, on 01 524 0139.

Keeping the Door Open

Despite State funding cuts, **over 8,300 of Ireland's most vulnerable people** will be able to turn to us for help this year because of you:

76%
Statutory income:
76% (cut from 82% in 2012)

24%
Voluntary income:
24% (up from 18% in 2012, **thank you!**)

Your support means no one is turned away hungry. Thank you for the trust you have placed in us.

*Preliminary 2013 figures; as yet unaudited and may be subject to change

A path back to life, because of you.

Success, made possible by you—

Update: Mental Health Challenge Grant

With an opportunity to meet a challenge grant that would secure the remaining funds for a pilot project to hire a new mental health nurse, we reached out to you. See how you helped MQI rise to this critical challenge...

In September 2013 an incredible gift came through to cover half of a pilot project for an on-staff mental health nurse for MQI clients at our Riverbank drop in centre. There was a hitch: with no other funding, the other half for this vital project would need to come entirely from supporter donations.

You came through for our clients with flying colours. Not

only were the funds raised in less than fifty days, your donations are now working precisely as guaranteed: after an extensive six week search, we found just the right candidate. With nearly a decade of experience working in acute mental health in both hospital and community settings, Derek Parker joined MQI's staff on 6 January 2014 as our new mental health nurse. **Thank you!**

Your generosity helped MQI meet a challenge grant in late 2013 to fund a new mental health pilot project, the first of its kind in Ireland!

Watch for more: *It's early days yet, so watch for an update in a later edition of Quay Times – when we'll introduce you to our mental health nurse Derek and share how your support is bringing hope to people who are alone on the streets and suffering from mental illness.*

Martin's Story

(continued from front page)

worried that you might not make it through the weekend,' they told me. 'We'll take you in this Friday.' That's how bad I was, very isolated and sad."

Martin continues. Even now his voice breaks as he relives the moment he knew someone still cared about him. "Then Annette, who's on staff there, gave me a sandwich to take home. Her kindness meant the world to me. At the time I was struggling to eat."

The Farm and beyond

He calls MQI's St. Francis Farm "the best treatment centre I've ever been in. I used to head off into the fields with the animals. Staff there tailor

your recovery to you. It's proven to work, and it worked for me."

By March 2013, Martin was drug free. He had no home to return to. But at many services, that's where recovery ends – and often men and women must return to the streets or hostels surrounded by people in active drug addiction. Thanks to your support though, Martin's journey had just begun.

Pathways to real change

He moved into MQI's donor-funded Leixlip house for safe, drug free transition accommodations. He availed of our day programmes and counselling. One year later Martin is still drug free – and vigilant – staying active in MQI's ongoing aftercare support programme, also

funded with the help of supporters like you.

He is, he tells us, "reluctantly happier. A part of me can't forgive myself. I hurt my parents. I made myself sick. But I'm trying to be a better person, more patient and tolerant. I see my MQI key worker Ken every week, and that's a good thing. I'm only a year drug free now, but I'm working again. Down the road I hope I can help someone in return for all that's been done for me." ■

Learn more about services you support on www.mqi.ie: *From a good meal to rehabilitation, counselling and aftercare housing and beyond, thank you for helping people like Martin find their way back to life.*

Thank you for being part of their journey.

What's On?

To attend either (or both!) events, simply confirm by ringing Nick or Aislinn on 01 524 0139. Or email to Nick.Jones@mqi.ie. We hope you can join us:



FREE Spring Symphony

The Dublin Orchestral Players are back for a FREE spring concert to celebrate... **you!** Join us at Adam and Eve Church, Merchants Quay, Dublin 8 on Sunday, 23 March at 3:30pm.



Flora Mini Marathon

Run, jog or walk: Join MQI staff & fellow supporters and raise money to help Ireland's homeless and hungry by taking part in the Dublin Flora Mini Marathon on 2nd June 2014. Sign up at www.florawomensminimarathon.ie, then let us know and we'll send you a fundraising pack. Find out more at www.mqi.ie.

Watch your post for The Good Form:

A Way to Give Again (For Free!)

Now for PAYE **and** self assessed taxpayers: if you gave €250 or more to MQI in 2013 you can help us claim an additional 45% in charity tax back from Revenue on your donation – nearly half again as much, and it doesn't cost you a cent more! Simply watch your letterbox for The Good Form, from us. Then complete, sign and post the form back to us in the Freepost envelope we'll provide, so you can help more people who are homeless and hungry in Ireland, at no extra cost. **Fast, easy and good for 5 years: Watch your post for The Good Form soon. Your chance to help again, for FREE!** (Queries? Ring Nick or Aislinn on 01 524 0139.)



For Our Monthly Givers, A Gratitude Poem

Your steadfast support and your willing heart
Make you heroes among us, and set you apart.

A sandwich, a warm coat, and welcome in the air,
Your goodwill lifts burdens and shows them you care.

Without you they'd be lost – MQI would be, too
So for your monthly support, we'd just like to say, "Thank you."

Thank you for your monthly support for our homeless and hungry. We'd be lost without you.

Not yet a Quay Supporter? Join us as one of MQI's monthly givers and become a Quay Supporter by pledging your monthly support via direct debit using your newsletter reply slip enclosed.




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

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.