

Dignity. Comfort. Kindness. You.

10,000 Miles From Home

Lost and alone on the streets of Dublin, it seemed they'd fallen off the face of the earth. Then you solved the puzzle that helped bring two men home...

By all accounts, MQI's first mental health nurse – a 100% donor-funded position – Derek Parker is a busy man. Six out of every 10 homeless clients he sees have previous mental health issues. They also have no access to services. Until MQI came along, they kept falling through the cracks.

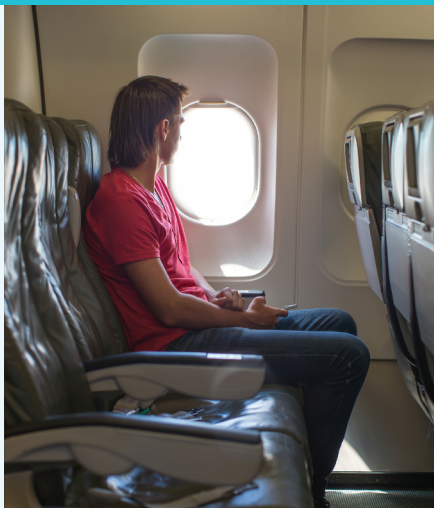
Help for Hamish

But Hamish seemed to have fallen off the face of the earth. "He came around, just asking for help finding a bed. It soon became apparent he had mental health problems and was really vulnerable," Derek describes. "We arranged for a short term bed with Focus, and got his consent for a doctor to

prescribe him medication." Out of harm's way, on medication, and learning to trust Derek at MQI, it was discovered that Hamish had a family back in Scotland. In the past they'd only been contacted when Hamish was in trouble (often by police), and so were relieved to learn he was in good hands. The day after his family learned he was ready to go home, they booked the flight. "It worked perfectly," Derek says of a job well done.

A puzzle called Christian

But Christian, the 30-year-old who came to Riverbank looking for help with a photo ID, was different. "I do education for staff around



mental illness as well," Derek continues, "and immediately one of the contact workers saw warning signs. We knew if we went too fast we'd scare him off. Over time we pieced together that he was from New Zealand – 10,000 miles from home. Since the age of 16 he'd been in and out of psychiatric hospitals."

Street life and mental illness made Christian an easy target. By the time he wandered into MQI he'd been assaulted several times. Again Derek put the puzzle together, getting Christian back on medication – and reunited with his family. "They had no funds to fly him home to New Zealand, so his family were grateful we could help. In the end they were able to repay us," Derek smiles. "Another link we are building is with the foreign embassies. It's working well, and they are looking to expand their contact with us. Without MQI's mental health programme, he could have ended up dead."

Thank you for supporting MQI's mental health programme! For other extraordinary ways you help people in urgent need, see pages 2-4. ■

For mercies big and small, we thank you.

Rent Deposit Fund... *(continued from cover)*

our Drug Free Aftercare programme, the Fund pays the deposit required to secure a flat, while clients wait for their rent allowance. Without this deposit clients could easily lose their window of opportunity, and with it the chance at securing their own home. As DSP monies come through, MQI can then replenish the Rent Deposit Fund to help others.

It's not a perfect solution. With over-demand and landlords increasingly unwilling to rent to people claiming housing allowances, MQI's CEO Tony Geoghegan is clear that "there is a serious housing crisis in Ireland at the moment. That's why we are trying to unlock a range of other options for our clients." And while we save enough funds for more MQI group homes, the new Rent Deposit Fund will at least give aftercare clients a fighting chance. ■



World's Greatest Christmas Wish List

At MQI, it doesn't take baubles or bows to touch the life of another. Your gift of any urgently needed item below will brighten Christmas by far, for a man or woman facing life on the streets...

- Socks and jocks (must be new in package)
- Waterproof shoes (men's and women's)
- Waterproof macs and trousers
- Hats and scarves
- Thermal underwear
- Warm jumper and Jeans



As you can imagine, dignity and self-respect means as much to our clients as it does to you and me. Please, for them, donate only clean clothing in good condition that you yourself wouldn't be ashamed to wear. Thanks a million.

Post to: MQI – Wish List Gifts, PO Box 11958, Dublin 8. (Or drop in and see us!) Thank you!

In Memory of You

By leaving a gift to MQI in your Will, large or small, you can make a tremendous difference to the lives of people who need help right here in Ireland. And for your kindness, we will always remember you.

For details on how you can leave a legacy, please ring Emma Murphy on 01 524 0965 or email emma.murphy@mqi.ie.



Merchants Quay Ireland
Homeless & Drugs Services

Merchants Quay Ireland
24 Merchants Quay,
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.

Riverbank Special Feature, pages 2-4

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Quay Times



Merchants Quay Ireland
Homeless & Drugs Services

The Newsletter for Supporters of Merchants Quay Ireland

SPECIAL FEATURE—

At A Place Called Riverbank: How Hope Shines, Because of You

Two years after supporters like you rallied to open MQI's Riverbank Centre in the heart of Dublin, see how your compassion keeps this beacon of hope shining in surprising ways, old and new...

A hot meal. A helping hand. A fresh start. From nearly 100,000 meals year on year for Ireland's hungry, to the relief of a hot shower and dry socks, to

basic medical care and counselling for people struggling with both crisis and addiction, you've made the good work of MQI's Riverbank Centre possible from the start.



Uncommon kindness

Yet today thanks to you this spotlessly clean haven of safety and welcome has become much, much more. And in the two years since your donations helped Riverbank to open in the heart of

Dublin, we thought you'd enjoy seeing some of the surprising ways you keep its beacon of hope, trust, and human dignity shining brighter than ever for Ireland's homeless and hungry.

(continued inside)

Special Feature, pages 2-4: At A Place Called Riverbank ➔ See inside

A fighting chance at housing, because of you:

Announcing MQI's Rent Deposit Fund

As Ireland's housing crisis puts a lockdown on MQI's aftercare clients finding a place of their own, the new Rent Deposit Fund is opening doors...

It is a bitter irony. You come into MQI out of homelessness, battling addiction – then muster the courage to break free, completing MQI's detox, rehab, and drug

free aftercare. Despite it all, there is one inescapable fact: you remain homeless, without savings, in the midst of a housing crisis. Aided by your kind support

it's also something we're working to ease. An MQI scheme called the Rent Deposit Fund is now helping men and women who are drug free to move on from homelessness and into their own homes – stability that's vital as they build new lives.

Available to MQI clients on *continued on page 6*



Had he not come into MQI, he'd simply have slipped through the cracks...

— Derek Parker, MQI's mental health nurse



Now available — The 2013 Annual Review of MQI

Just published: Merchants Quay Ireland's 2013 Annual Review is now available online in special flick-through format at www.mqi.ie. To request a print copy, ring Aislinn or Martina on 01 524 0139. ■

RESERVED FOR YOU:

Come for a Cuppa?

Each month for a few hours when MQI's Riverbank Centre is closed, we open the doors to you, our wonderful supporters. Join us for free refreshments and private tours of the good work you make possible...



Thursday Coffee Mornings at Riverbank:

9th October, 13th November, and 11th December starting at 10:30am. To RSVP please ring Aislinn or Martina on 01 524 0139 – we'd love for you (and your honoured guests) to join us.

"There would be lots of people lost without MQI. We have nowhere else to go..." — Pat, Client

At A Place Called Riverbank: How you keep this beacon of hope shining for Ireland's homeless and hungry in ways old and new...

MEDICAL CARE UNIT

Helping them heal, with true humanity

"Our clients are faced with such complex problems, it seems to them – and us sometimes – that they need a really big answer. And sometimes it's just lots of little answers, like healing a chest infection in the dead of winter, getting a meal, getting the flu vaccine. A lot of our men and women feel degraded. Many have chronic ulcers from walking miles and miles all day and night. Apart from the intense pain, they can and do smell, they feel embarrassed being around other people. You can imagine how demoralising that is, how difficult it must be to consider any other aspect of your life while that's going on. The ease of access and drop-in medical service here is hugely impactful to them. Then as their wounds heal it gives them the strength and motivation to heal other areas of their life. It has a real knock-on effect."

— Enda Spain, MQI Medical Nurse



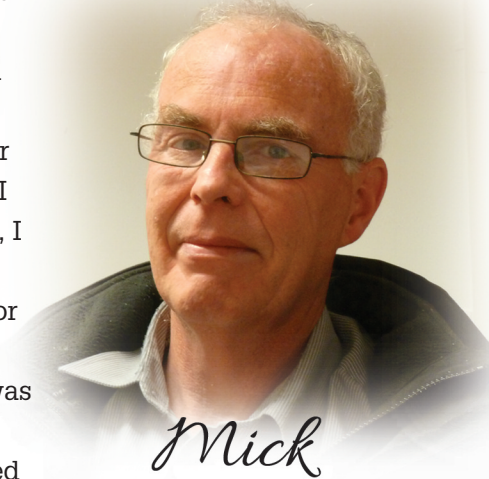
OUTREACH TEAM

Meeting people in dire need, wherever they're at

"To sit out this time of year, it's getting dark and cold in the evenings, people on the streets are not made of iron – they're human beings. They have a family somewhere. On MQI's outreach team, we go out into the streets to make sure our clients are all right. We don't judge anybody. One woman has been in

hospital now for weeks, her dermatitis had got so bad she couldn't lift her hands. Before I brought her in, I found out she hadn't eaten for three days because she was afraid to ask anybody to feed her. But we can keep her cream here and she can have a hot shower. I make sure they're taken care of by social welfare as well, and made arrangements with the post office to put some of her money into savings each week. If she took the whole lot with her into the streets, she'd be robbed."

— Mick Latimer, MQI Outreach Team



MENTAL HEALTH

Safekeeping for their meds

"A lot of our clients are homeless or living in hostel accommodation, and doctors would prescribe them a week or a month's supply of medication. But these medications have 'street value.' It's dangerous for them to be walking around with a big box of tablets in their backpacks. Many clients were being robbed or having prescriptions stolen. So as an offshoot of mental health we set up a storage service for our men and women who are prescribed medications by



a G.P. or psychiatrist. Its purpose is beneficial in many ways: clients are safer and know their medications won't be stolen, and the prescribing doctor or psychiatrist knows its safe and also whether the client is taking their meds or not. It has only been running for 3 or 4 months, but has already grown by one person each week. And it gives us another reason to see them every day, another way to build relationships."

— Derek Parker, MQI Mental Health Nurse

SAFE SLEEPING ROOM

Bringing rest and comfort to the weary

"When you have a bed to sleep in at night in your own home, the peace you get is something we all take for granted. On the streets it doesn't matter how long you've been there, the risk of your stuff being stolen, of abuse, of poor weather, you always sleep with one eye open. So it was a really exciting development at Riverbank over the summer when we opened our Safe Sleeping Room. From 9:30am to 12:30pm we actually roll out mats with pillows and blankets on the floor and our clients can go up and have a sleep. There is always two staff in the room, so it's safe and quiet. To be able to lie down for a few hours and know, 'There is somebody watching over, it's warm, I'm not going to get rained on,' there is a never a fear of being left alone. We're currently using my training room on the first floor so we can only fit 16 clients, but with more funds we hope to expand it."

— Brenda Kane, Programme and Drugs Services Coordinator for MQI



OPEN ACCESS

Welcoming those who are hungry and homeless

"Somebody coming in from the streets that has been out all night, it's not an easy world out there. People passing by – people passing them by – they mightn't have heard their name in a long time. We call them by name as soon as we can, 'How are you, Pat? How did you sleep?' To give them that cup of tea and meal, to call their name and have a chat, it opens a whole new experience for them. We open mornings at half seven and thanks to our donors we're open right the way through. Our homeless men and women are so grateful to come in out of the cold. We make sure they get the best of what MQI has to offer."

— Martina Mannix, MQI Project Worker



A hot meal. A helping hand. A fresh start.

Two years after supporters like you rallied to help open MQI's Riverbank Centre in Dublin City, you are, as always, our light in the night. If ever you'd like a guided tour of this incredible work of the heart you make possible, call us on 01 524 0139. (And if you have trouble getting about, let us know: we'll bring the tour to you.) We'd love to hear from you.

Thank you!



In honour of the joy you bring— Please Join Us:

Free Christmas Concert

You and your friends & family are cordially invited to enjoy the Dublin Orchestral Players at this wonderful, free Christmas Concert on **Sunday, 30th November from 3:30pm to 5:00pm.**

Held at the beautiful **Adam & Eve Church, 4 Merchants Quay, Dublin**, the concert will be followed by light refreshments at MQI's nearby Riverbank Centre. To reserve your FREE place, call Aislinn or Martina on **01 524 0139** or email to martina.magee@mqi.ie.

There is no MQI... without you. Thank you!



Planning a visit?

New Location Reminder: MQI Offices

If you'd like to make your donation in person or simply pop in to visit the MQI offices, we'd love to see you. We are located on the Quays, opposite the Four Courts, at: **Merchants Court, 24 Merchants Quay, Dublin 8.**

Note: Our mailing address hasn't changed. You can continue to send your kind gifts and post to Merchants Quay Ireland, PO Box 11958, Dublin 8. Thank you! ■