

Quay Times



Merchants Quay Ireland
Homeless & Drugs Services

The Newsletter for Supporters of Merchants Quay Ireland

WINTER 2015

Brenda at the Coalface: A Frontlines Look at What Your Donations Do

MQI programme and drug services coordinator Brenda reveals how at the coalface of work for Ireland's homeless and hungry, every donation you send, from little to large, brings big impact...

This year alone some 8,000 men and women will turn to Merchants Quay Ireland for help. Yet it's not only the sheer numbers of people in need – but the depth of that need – that transform even the smallest gifts into life changing gestures. “The majority of our clients,” says MQI

programme and drug services coordinator Brenda, “have only the clothes they stand up in. They don't have the money to buy food as well as pay their hostel charge every evening. Then they're trying to keep on top of their health despite sleeping out on the

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“The majority of our clients have only the clothes they stand up in...Every donation no matter the size is essential,” says MQI's programme and drug services coordinator Brenda, of the urgent help your support provides.

Personal messages from Brenda and other MQI staff: **INSIDE** ➡

Introducing Ireland's First-Ever Night Café —

Thank You: 24-Hour Homeless Service Opens at MQI!

As a direct result of your voice and support, Merchants Quay officially launched Ireland's FIRST 24-hour access homeless service just weeks ago. Early details here...

It was getting harder and harder to close our door each night – to turn increasing numbers of people with nowhere to go out into the streets. Now based on the proven homeless service framework that was put in place at MQI because of

your incredible donations, a NEW option exists. Merchants Quay Ireland's first-ever Night Café:

- Open **11pm - 7:30am** at Riverbank homeless centre, **7 days a week**
- Giving people entrenched in homelessness near **24-hour access** to a safe place off the streets, hot showers, clean clothing, crisis medical care, emergency needle exchange and food service;
- One to one counselling, **respite zone**, referrals to services such as MQI's detox and rehabilitation, housing and accommodation services and more **pathways to lasting change**.

Further details coming soon. For now, THANK YOU: Your support let us act quickly this winter to launch the first days of an urgent new project for Ireland's homeless, MQI's Night Café. ■

The year ahead is brighter because you are there. Thank you for walking beside us...

Messages of gratitude from staff and clients at Merchants Quay Ireland



Martina, MQI Staff

"When I was at my lowest MQI extended a hand of caring. I'm now doing the stabilisation programme and am really grateful for everything that supporters do to keep Merchants Quay going. Yours thankfully, James" (aftercare client)



Brenda, MQI Staff

"They're handing out warm jackets, they're giving out food, they're helping people up off the streets. What MQI supporters do for the homeless, we really need it. They make us feel we are not forgotten."

– Jamie, former client, now in his own flat



Amy & Derek, MQI Staff



Jimmy, MQI Staff

"I'm staying in a hostel and it's not great. But there are people who sleep out all night less fortunate than me. If you could keep MQI going for them that can come in and have a few hours' safe sleep, and for me to get something to eat, it would be brilliant."

– Anna, Riverbank homeless centre client



Alan, MQI Staff

"For day sheltering, advising, feeding me and for all the time you've been there for me, thank you to everyone who helps MQI. Please don't stop."

– Paul, Riverbank homeless centre client



Janet & John, MQI Staff

Thank you
for your grace and generosity
in 2014. We'd be lost
without you.
xxx.

(L-R)
Triona
(Dental Nurse),
Joe and
Martin B.,
MQI Staff

"Thank you for respecting me and for having a cup of tea next to me through the funds you send. I am thankful for every chance I get."

– Aidan, MQI open access client



Ciara, MQI Staff

With love for all you do this year and every year, from your Merchants Quay Ireland family.

A little love... means a lot. Thank you.

“At the coalface...”

(continued from cover)

pavement, plus transportation to appointments that might help them get out of homelessness. They rely on us for survival, from food to clothing to basic human contact. Every donation no matter the size is essential.”



Little builds into big

She sweeps her eyes gratefully around Riverbank then adds, “Visible proof of how every gift helps is all around. For example, from morning ‘til evening our showers are open. That’s dozens of people every day having a shower who’ve slept on the pavement or in a doorway. Without us they couldn’t get warm and clean and regain their dignity. A donation of €5 a month, it’s a bottle of shampoo that enables homeless clients for a whole day to have showers. Or when four people donate €10, it’s socks and

underwear for a few days – or washing powder to clean the towels used every day. Little donations build into big things in people’s lives.”

Larger donations as lifelines

As a programme coordinator who sees hundreds turn to MQI for help each day, Brenda always looks to grow programmes. It’s here that “larger donations are our lifelines. We got a donation of a commercial strength washing and tumble dryer, that’s critical. And cash donations keep the lights on and the heat running and add new

services like our mental health nurse. That progression, that caring, is felt daily by our clients.”

At the coalface

If you come for a guided tour (details below), Brenda’s voice will likely be one you hear. “I always say to our donors who visit, you may not walk the halls with us but at Merchants Quay you are the unseen members of staff enabling us to do what we do every day. Thank you for the hope and dignity you give to Ireland’s homeless and hungry, and long may it continue.” ■

Join us for a cuppa —

Private Donor Tours



Each month for a few hours when MQI’s Riverbank Centre is closed we open the doors to you, our friends and supporters. See firsthand the presses of warm towels and clean clothing, Merchants Quay’s kitchen, safe sleep zone and more, on private, staff-led tours of the good work you make possible....

Coffee Mornings at Riverbank: 12th February, 12th March and 9th April starting at 10:30am. To RSVP ring Aislinn or Martina on 01 524 0139. We’d love for you and your honoured guests to join us. Free refreshments!



Merchants Quay Ireland
Homeless & Drugs Services

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

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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.