

AT THE COALFACE

Four Questions with MQI Service Coordinator Zoe

Reaching out when you need help starts with knowing where to turn. MQI's new Cavan/Monaghan drug and alcohol services (CAMDAS) is there to listen, help, and offer pathways to recovery and employment – all in the MQI spirit of compassion and non-judgement. Zoe describes how these supports are touching lives...



"As soon as clients pick up the phone or walk through the door, we try to make them feel welcome and safe. It's such an important moment, setting the tone for the rest of the journey. I love to see people's full potential blossom, especially when they have had difficulties for a long time."

Who can come to CAMDAS for help and how can they reach out for support?

People from different areas, backgrounds, and ages come to us. We get referrals from GPs. People also might get in touch with us themselves if they've hit crisis point. Or if their family members reach out, it can be because something serious has happened, such as an overdose.

What are you seeing among people in your day to day work?

Mental health is a huge concern, particularly the high rates of suicidal depression that we see. We've seen an increase in alcohol-related referrals among people who are older. The pandemic has heightened feelings of isolation for people, especially those who

live on their own. This is affecting their mental health, and alcohol is used as a way of coping.

How do you begin to work with clients to start their journey?

It's therapeutic - clients design their own care plans and set their own goals. Then we help to work through their plan. We offer family support for those who have a loved-one in addiction. And there's a Community Employment Scheme for clients working on recovery. There's great success when people have the structure, support and stability to go for training and education.

So with the right support, people can rebuild their lives?

Yes people can, and they do! One man I worked with had a long history of addiction, had been

diagnosed with schizophrenia, and was sometimes in prison. Many of his challenges stemmed from poor mental health, not just drug use. This was a long, challenging road for him and his family. Luckily, we were able to provide counselling support to help him and his family. He went for treatment, completed his training and education, and turned his life around completely. His faith is a big support to his recovery. He's flying now, it's brilliant to see.

Thanks to you, help is more widely available than ever before. If you or a loved one is in need of support in Cavan and Monaghan, reach out to Zoe at 049 4379160 or email zoe.wells@mqi.ie.

continued from page 1

At 14 I had already developed a problem. I lost an awful lot of weight very quickly. My mind was quite broken. By 21, it was heroin."

Dermot linked in with services local to him in Cavan. When he was ready, he then took the next steps in his recovery at MQI's St. Francis Farm.

"Going to St. Francis Farm was the best decision I've ever made but it was really tough, being there. Really hard. I had to confront some of the self-limiting beliefs inside me. That I didn't like myself, that I wasn't worth anything. Those things came to the surface, and I dealt with them.

It's funny because after 21 years of addiction and recovery, I rediscovered the same hobbies I liked when I was seven years old. I grow vegetables and potatoes in the garden. I read the bible a lot, books about history, and books that make me laugh. I just really want to inform my mind."

Thanks to your kindness Dermot has rebuilt his life. We are delighted to share with you that Dermot is now working with MQI and helping more young men and women to find a way out.

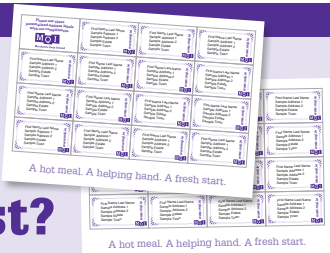
"I've completed addiction studies and now I'm back – but this time I'm helping others. It feels like completing a circle," says Dermot. "People are at their most vulnerable point and by being there to support someone, knowing the depth of the hurt that they're in – I've seen the anxiety melt away."

Thank you for bringing healing to every corner of the country, to everyone who needs it. ■

Would You Like Address Labels for Your Christmas Post?

Whether you're new to the work of MQI or you've used the last of your summer address labels... ring us. We are delighted to send you a sheet (or more!) of labels, free with our warmest compliments, personalised for your Christmas post. The labels cost pennies to print yet create national awareness for Ireland's most vulnerable.

For your labels, ring Maggie on 01 524 0139.



A Rough Sleeper's Wish List

The coldest and darkest months lie ahead for our homeless men and women.

If you can donate any of these bare-bones basics they will immediately help provide comfort and dignity...



- ☒ New, packaged underwear for both women and men
- ☒ New packaged socks, hats, scarves, and gloves
- ☒ Toiletries of all kinds: shampoo, shower gel, shaving gear, toothbrushes, and toothpaste
- ☒ Clean bath towels, new or used

Big Wish – Non-slip flooring needs to be replaced in some areas of our Riverbank homeless drop-in centre. If you're able to help with a gift of €3,500 we would be very grateful.

You can give your items in person to MQI at **24 Merchants Court, 10am to 3pm, Monday to Friday**. Or if you're in Dublin and can't come to us, **ring Emma on 01 524 0965**. She will collect your donated items as soon as she can.

Thank you!



Merchants Quay Ireland
Homeless & Drugs Services

24 Merchants Quay,
P.O. Box 11958,
Dublin 8

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

- Telephone:** 01 524 0139
- Volunteering:** 01 524 0128
- Email:** supportercare@mqi.ie
- Website:** www.mqi.ie
- Facebook:** Merchants Quay Ireland
- Twitter:** @MerchantsQuayIR

At MQI we respect everyone who turns to us for help – and many are just beginning their fresh start in life. So while client stories are genuine and true, names are changed and stock photographs of models are used for illustrative purposes and to protect client privacy. Thank you for your understanding.

Quay Times



Merchants Quay Ireland
Homeless & Drugs Services

Caring For People, Closer to Home: How Your Kindness Touches Lives Countrywide

Addiction doesn't just happen in Dublin. Merchants Quay Ireland supports people from all over Ireland who struggle with alcohol and drugs...

When you give to MQI, your kindness touches hundreds of people country-wide each year. Your support helps clients and their families to find healing that is within reach.

Two men from different counties in Ireland who have rebuilt their lives, want you to know how grateful they are for your support.

Thomas from Portlaoise

MQI's Midlands regional service was a lifeline for Thomas. "The way I look at it is, you loved me until I could love myself. If I hadn't got help from MQI in Portlaoise, I doubt I'd be alive. I know you often hear people say that, but I do think I would have died."

Thanks to your steadfast support, Thomas completed his rehabilitation treatment at St.

Francis Farm in Carlow and has moved on to the MQI Leixlip Aftercare house in Co. Kildare.

"Without Aftercare, I don't think it would have been as easy for me to bond with people. We go to meetings together, and go on daytrips. We've been hiking and swimming together, enjoying the outdoors.

"There can be 30 of us out with no drugs, no alcohol, and our sole mission is to get to the top of a mountain and enjoy the whole journey up. Appreciating all the

scenery around us, enjoying the company we're in."

It's because of your kind donations that Aftercare activities are possible. So people like Thomas can start to build a drug-free future.

"I'm hoping to go back to education. I want to study philosophy or criminology. My family are so happy. I was with them this weekend for a big dinner. I went fishing with my godson. All normal stuff that people can take for granted. I'm so grateful for MQI supporters and the help they have given me."

Dermot from Cavan

For Dermot, who grew up in Cavan, MQI services saved his life. He first encountered drugs in primary school. "I had a couple of friends who smoked cannabis. We were really young, I was a bit scared, but they talked like they were heroes.

continued on Page 6

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"Addiction is everywhere, even in little villages. A lot of people are struggling. Without MQI's Midlands service I wouldn't have got into St. Francis Farm and turned my life around. They way I look at it is, you loved me until I could love myself. I'm so grateful for MQI supporters for the help and sense of peace they've given me." Thomas, MQI client, from Portlaoise

Hidden Talents Revealed Like Magic in the Woodworking Studio at St. Francis Farm

Thanks to your kindness, MQI can offer sessions in cooking, arts and crafts, horticultural therapy, and physical fitness for clients reclaiming their lives from addiction. The workshops you provide help to build confidence, nurture a sense of achievement, and a growing feeling of self-worth on the journey of recovery...



St. Francis Farm is MQI's residential detox and rehab facility in the peaceful countryside of County Carlow. It's a working farm, where clients who have struggled all their lives with trauma and addiction can embrace the healing power of nature.

In an outbuilding off the courtyard is a woodworking studio. Every Monday, MQI volunteer Ciaran, teaches woodturning to resident clients. Most have never felt the deep satisfaction, or even a flicker of pride in having made something with their own two hands. Some are hesitant, not used to trusting their own abilities.

As the lathe spins, Ciaran shows residents how to take a piece of seasoned beechwood and slowly reveal its gift – a bowl, a lamp, perhaps a clock.

As a retiree, Ciaran shares the pleasure and fulfilment of making beautiful things by hand. Working with small groups at a time, so each client gets the attention they need to flourish.

While clients begin to learn under Ciaran's gentle guidance,



"As a volunteer, I'm paid more than enough with a smile at the door. Clients can produce excellent work and it's very satisfying for me to be told by someone 'this is the best two hours I've spent in a long, long time.'" Ciaran, MQI volunteer

their confidence grows. As the wood turns, the finished object takes shape.

But something even more inspiring is happening too.

While working the wood into something beautiful, clients discover the gifts that were hidden within themselves.

Ciaran appreciates being able to offer that moment of revelation. "What's special about the woodwork is it's an opportunity for each person to create something. They might never have experienced that before. I had a girl here a few weeks ago and she made a nice little lamp. She had never even put a plug on a cable before in her life. She'd never worked with her hands, but she made a lovely table lamp and she was so proud of it."

"Once clients see themselves making something, their confidence rises. People can be vulnerable at any stage, and just because they



went down a certain path it doesn't mean they're any less worthwhile. But they need a helping hand, and without places like Merchants Quay they are certainly lost. So, I can't emphasise enough the value of the good work that MQI does with the help of all of our supporters."

Ciaran's reward is the happiness he has found in volunteering his time and skills, "I see people a lot differently now. Sometimes life can be very tough for people and they find it very difficult to cope. But what I've learned is that once you take away the problems, they are genuinely nice, appreciative people. I look at them and think, 'this could have easily happened to one of my sons'. If they were my kids, I would want somewhere like MQI for them to go."

Thank you, for every client whose hidden talent is revealed, for every new skill discovered. Your kindness to MQI has untold, far-reaching ripples of goodness.

In Your Honour – Celebrating the Nursing Care You Make Possible

With your support, MQI's nursing team continues to save lives. Curing and comforting people whose physical and emotional health is shattered. Clinical Nurse Manager, Mary describes how homelessness, illness and mental health problems go hand in hand...

Most patients we see have a background of serious trauma in their lives. They may have experienced abuse, missed out on education, lost contact with family, fallen into addiction. A person can be struggling with mental health issues that have been underlying for a long time. It's not something that's just popped up."

Mary describes how a holistic approach to nursing is what helps patients most. "MQI's Outreach Team persuaded a young man sleeping rough in the Phoenix Park to finally come to Riverbank. He was only 19, from down the country. His hair had grown long and matted. One trouser leg was gone from what he was wearing and his knee was cut. The poor

man was filthy, it's hard to even describe it. The clothes eventually had to be cut off him. He'd no socks and his heavy boots had put wounds on his feet.

"He hadn't eaten for days, so we offered him a meal. He was paranoid, suffering from serious mental health issues. He was completely disorientated, seeing things in the room, and didn't know where he was. To cut a long story short, it took two hours to persuade him to come to hospital with us. We waited with him for five hours until he was assessed by a psychiatrist who admitted him there and then."

Determined to ensure he had the best possible chance, our nursing team worked hard to put pathways of support in place for when he comes out of hospital.

"If you're not feeling great in yourself, or if you're physically poorly, you need the comfort of your own home. You don't want to be going out. But for our patients it's a different ballgame." Mary, Clinical Nurse Manager

"He was so vulnerable, a really nice kid. It was great to see him get the medical care he so desperately needed."

Because of your generosity and thanks to your support, the nursing team of two general health nurses and two mental health nurses work together to achieve the best result they can for patients.

"If we can get in there early with people and make a difference, we can change the outcome of someone's life forever. We can give them a chance at better health. And with this, people might get education, they might get somewhere decent to live, maybe link back with family – enjoy doing something with their lives and not ending it there in the street."

You make that lasting change possible through your kind donations.



Thanks to you, last year

769 people received vital healthcare from MQI's nursing team

127 health interventions each month to ease men and women's suffering

Our Christmas Gratitude Concert is Back!

A beloved tradition and one of our most wonderful donor events, we're delighted to once again host MQI's Christmas Gratitude Concert. Join us for an enjoyable afternoon of festive music and carol, featuring the Dublin Concert Band.

Where: Adam and Eve's Franciscan Church, here on Merchants Quay.

When: 3:30pm on Sunday, December 12th.

Seating may be limited. Book your places by ringing Maggie at **01 524 0139**

Or if you can't make it in person, we'd love you to join us online by webcam at www.churchtv.ie/adamandeve/

Thank you for being part of our Merchants Quay Family, this year and every year.

