



*Merchants Quay Ireland  
A Community of Hospitality, Hope and Justice*

# **Annual Report 2000**

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What do Schubert, Mozart and Homelessness have in common? The answer is that they are all to be found in Merchants' Quay.

On a recent Sunday morning a magnificent Schubert Mass was celebrated in the Church. The singing of the choir was perfection itself. A small orchestra accompanied the majestic Church organ. One man described the whole experience as "deeply moving". While this Mass was being celebrated, one hundred and twenty people were sitting down nearby in Fáiltiú for their Sunday dinner. Most were homeless some were drug users. Merchants Quay is a place of classical church music and a refuge for the homeless.

For most of the year 2000 we have been working to bring these contrasting and very different elements together. Our strategic planning process sought to bring about greater integration and coherence within Merchants Quay, in our work with drug users, homeless people and asylum seekers. The plan also sought to include Adam and Eve Church as an essential element in our work. During the year a laywoman was employed as pastoral co-ordinator, part of her work is to develop the link between the church and the justice services in Merchants' Quay.

Any planning process involves wide-ranging consultation. A large part of the consultation was with those directly involved in delivering our services. The enthusiasm and positive energy experienced in the process was a real sign of our commitment to work together in our

service of the most marginalized people in the city today.

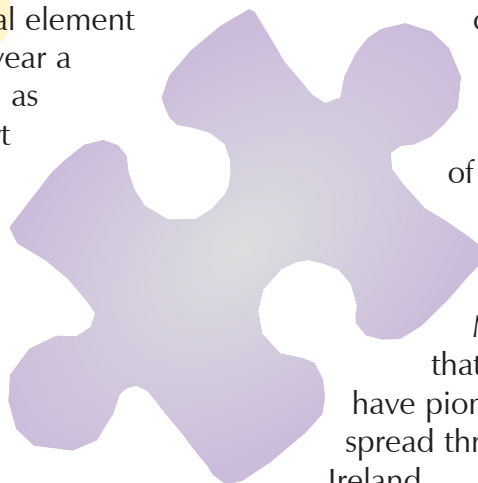
The word Community emerged as a key word in our vision and mission. We see ourselves as a community of hospitality, hope and justice. As a community we value each and every person who works with us and comes to avail of our services. Community is an antidote to the negative individualism that is destroying our society.

Hospitality is an important value for those who experience so much hostility in their lives. Drug users, street drinkers, people suffering from mental illness often find it hard to belong. The open door policy operated by Merchants' Quay offers a welcome to those who find themselves barred or unwanted in most other places in the city.

Our services cannot operate in a vacuum. We have contributed to the development of the National Drugs Strategy and the Homeless Agency's plan to work to eliminate homelessness in Dublin over the next ten years. Merchants Quay Ireland is committed to working in partnership with voluntary and statutory agencies, and with church bodies, to meet the needs of those who come to us.

Finally we changed our name. We now call ourselves Merchants Quay Ireland. We hope that the vision, values and services we have pioneered in Dublin's inner city may spread throughout the rest of the island of Ireland.

Gerry Raftery, O.F.M.  
Justice Director



# THE YEAR IN REVIEW

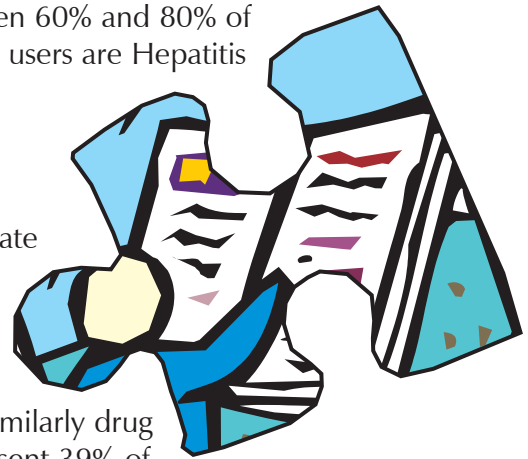
The year 2000 saw the establishment of Merchants Quay Ireland, bringing together the Merchants Quay Drugs Project, the Homeless Services of the Fáilteú Resource Centre and the Church Services of the Franciscan Community at Merchants Quay under a single management structure. This new structure provides a solid foundation to enable us to consolidate and develop our services in the coming years.

The year 2000 has also seen significant growth in the numbers of homeless persons coming to the Fáilteú Resource Centre from an average of 111 per day in 1999 to 176 per day in 2000. These figures clearly illustrate the continuing rise in homelessness in Ireland. We are now seeing younger people, more women and children and in particular more homeless drug users. This latter group are extremely marginalized and vulnerable. Their drug use often leaves them excluded from homeless services and their homelessness leaves them unable to participate in drug treatment programmes. In order to address this issue Merchants Quay Ireland formed a new and innovative partnership with Dublin Simon to provide an open access hostel that can cater for active drug users. We have formed a joint Management Group for this venture, which is supported by the Homeless Agency and backed by the Government. We expect to be able to open this hostel sometime in 2002.

We have continued to see an increase in the numbers of people accessing all our services for drug users. 3,360 individuals attended our needle exchange service, 645 of who were new drug users. In working with drug users we still face the same old problems of lack of access to harm minimisation and treatment services, long waiting lists and shortages of detoxification and rehabilitation places. In 2000 the Government began putting together a new National Drug Strategy. The new strategy sets clear targets for developing new drug treatment places. This is welcome, however, the strategy failed to offer hope to those unwilling or unable to engage in treatment.. For example, an important

that between 60% and 80% of Irish opiate users are Hepatitis C positive.

Of Irelands estimated 13,000 opiate users as many as 10,500 may be affected. Similarly drug users represent 39% of the 3000 people identified as H.I.V. positive in Ireland, yet the strategy has no targets for reducing these levels of new infections. It may already be time for a rethink.



We must seek to engage with drug users at as early a point as possible in their drug-taking career and provide accessible and attractive programmes aimed at minimising the health risks to which they are exposed. This means more resources for needle exchange services, for the development of peer led programmes aimed at teaching safer drug use techniques and for more targeted outreach services. The fact that the almost two thirds of all resources targeted at addressing the drugs issue still go towards a law enforcement and criminal justice response in disheartening. The worldwide failure of the “war on drugs” over the last twenty years must highlight the fact that drug use is least effectively addressed in the criminal justice sphere and is more effectively contained in the wider health and social affairs arena.

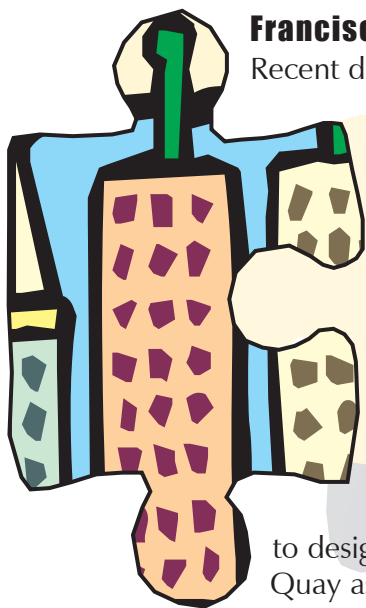
In 2000, as ever, the Church Services at Merchants Quay have been working for Justice in parallel with our Drugs and Homeless Services. A new Pastoral Co-ordinator was appointed during the year, and in November a major service was held to commemorate all of our friends who have died in recent years due to problem drug use or homelessness. Such events show the role of Merchants Quay Ireland as a community of hospitality, hope and Justice.

Tony Geoghegan,  
Director of Services



European Report on drug trends published in 2000 (EMCDDA) showed

# MERCHANTS QUAY IRELAND



## Franciscans in Dublin

Recent decades have seen new developments in the Irish Franciscans. Following the insights of the Second Vatican Council the Order looked at its Franciscan origins and at the signs of the times. The Franciscans decided to designate Merchants Quay as a community working for justice and

peace. While continuing their traditional Church work the friars in Merchants Quay were asked to spearhead a movement for justice and peace. They were to do this by providing immediate help for those in need and by working to change unjust structures of society.

## The Justice Initiatives

During the 1960's some Friars became engaged in justice activities. The first Simon Community Shelter was set up on the Friars' property in Winetavern Street in 1969. The Friars opened St. Francis Food Centre for the poor and homeless in the same year.

In more recent years drug use and its associated problems of HIV infection, crime, family problems, unemployment and poverty have affected the inner city area. The Friars at Merchants Quay decided to tackle the problem in 1989 and a project for people affected by drug use and HIV was established with the support of lay professionals and volunteers. In 1996 the Fáiltiú Resource Centre for homeless persons was established to augment the food service provided through the Tea Rooms. It includes a wide variety of vital social services.

In recent years a process began to restructure and reorganise the various services and companies at Merchants Quay to reflect the fact that all share a common vision and mission expressed through varying identities. Merchants Quay Ireland brings together the Church Services, the Services for Homeless Persons and

the Services for Drug Users together under one umbrella. These developments allow us to better plan and coordinate services at Merchants Quay and ensure that the organisation can be more responsive to the variety of needs emerging at our various services.

In 2000 up to 600 persons visit the various services of Merchants Quay Ireland every day. To meet the needs of all these people we have 15 Friars, 75 Full Time Staff, 80 Part Time Community Employment workers and up to 100 volunteer workers at Merchants Quay. The combined budget for the various services was just under £3m in 2000. The Merchants Quay Project worked with more than 4,000 drug users and Fáiltiú Resource Centre met almost 15, 000 homeless persons. Many thousands of people visited the church during the year for a variety of religious services.

## Values

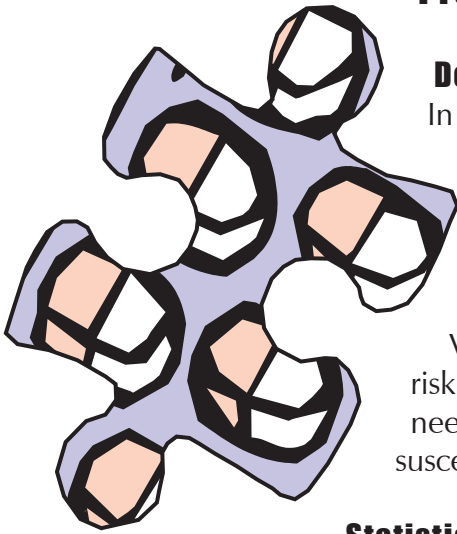
Currently the Franciscans have legal ownership of the Justice Services and are keen to retain a quality relationship with all who work in Merchants Quay. People from different religious traditions and people with no religious affiliations work in Merchants Quay. All are welcome. But all must share a common vision that embraces the following:

- *Respect for the dignity of each human person, wishing always to treat others, as we would wish to be treated ourselves.*
- *Not making distinctions between people on grounds of gender, race, colour, creed or social class.*
- *A commitment to the service of the most excluded people in our society today.*
- *Promoting mutual acceptance and good will among people, being a bridge between different social categories.*
- *A commitment to work for justice and the removal of structures that perpetuate inequality in Ireland today.*
- *Being open to learn from the poor through listening to them in a respectful way.*
- *Seeing power and status as a means to greater service.*
- *Solving differences through mediation and peaceful means, never having recourse to violence.*





## Problem Drug Use in Ireland



### Definition:

In general, the term “problem drug use” refers to those who as a result of taking psychoactive drugs suffer medical, psychological or social problems. Drug use can cause a range of problems among regular consumers. In Ireland heroin is the illegal drug associated with the greatest levels of harm to individuals, families and communities.

Variations in the purity of heroin expose drug users to the risk of death from overdose. Unsafe injecting practices (sharing needles, failure to sterilise equipment etc.) leave users susceptible to infection for HIV/Aid’s and hepatitis C.

### Statistics:

While there are no figures available for Ireland, UK research suggests that one third of the adult population (32%) have used an illegal drug at some point in their life, one in ten have used in the last year and one in sixteen have used in the last month. Sixteen to nineteen year olds have the highest prevalence rate among the using adult population with almost 1/3 having used within the past year. Men outstrip Women users 2:1 with three times as many men reporting to services for drug users. Best estimates suggest that there are more than 13,000 heroin users in the Dublin area, comparable numbers have been reported in other European cities.

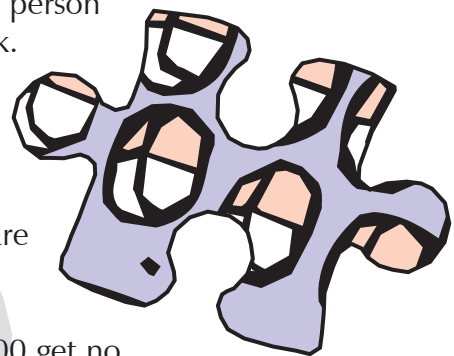
### Who are problem drug users?

Not all people who use drugs develop problems. Some drugs e.g. heroin are highly addictive, others are less so. Some forms of drug use (i.e. injecting, smoking) make people vulnerable to particular diseases or illnesses (HIV/Aid’s, hepatitis C, respiratory illnesses, cancer). Some individuals may be more vulnerable to addiction than others, especially those who have a background of poverty, exclusion or personal trauma.

Many young people experiment with drugs. Most use on an occasional basis and do not develop significant problems. For others the “buzz” they get from the drugs can prove an effective way of getting temporary relief from personal and social pain and draws them back again and again for more and more. What began as casual drug use can soon spiral out of control. At the beginning the person took the drug to feel good, it is now taken to feel ok.

### Treatment

Treatment options for heroin users include methadone maintenance (heroin substitute) and detoxification/drug free treatment. Currently there are fewer than 150 residential drug treatment beds in Dublin and approximately 5,000 drug users are receiving methadone treatment. The remaining 8,000 get no treatment.



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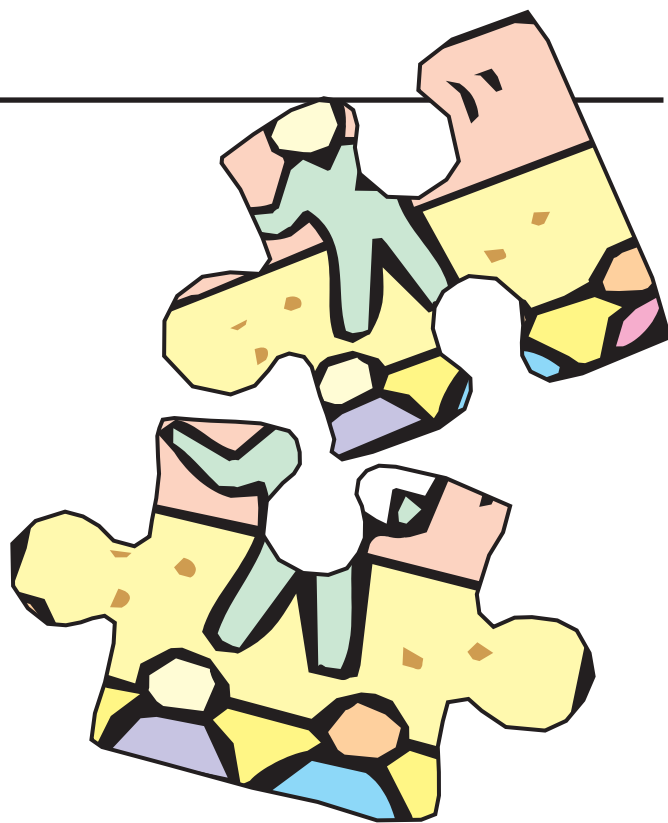
## Rethinking Drugs Policy

Merchants Quay Ireland views drugs as primarily a health issue rather than a criminal justice issue. We believe that policy in this area should focus on promoting health and social gain, reducing drug related harm and providing pathways to rehabilitation.

For these reasons Merchants Quay Ireland found much to welcome in the new National Drugs Strategy. We warmly welcome the reduction of all forms of drug related harm to individuals and to society as the central strategic objective of the plan. We also welcome the extension of the strategy to other parts of the country experiencing problem drug use.

The strategy offers a realistic framework in which all players – the relevant government departments, the criminal justice services, the health and education services and the community and voluntary sector can work together to ensure that the personal and social harm caused by problematic drug use is reduced to an absolute minimum.

Merchants Quay Ireland particularly welcomes those actions aimed at reducing risk behaviour associated with drug use by widening access to needle exchange services in Dublin. We were disappointed that there are no targets in the plan for reducing some of the greatest forms of harm, i.e. deaths through overdose and new HIV or HCV infections. This omission is scandalous in the light of figures suggesting that as many as 70 – 80 % of drug users are infected with Hepatitis C. If the government is committed to reducing harm to an absolute minimum, then they must put in place a range of new measures to ensure that risks associated with needle sharing, accidental overdose and dangerous injecting techniques can be minimised – these measures should include greater access to clean injecting equipment, advice and training on how to avoid overdose and infection, and safe supervised facilities where professionals can assist in minimising harm associated with actual drug taking.



There is further reason for disappointment. If by 2002 just 6,500 drug users are engaged in treatment, at least the same number will remain outside of treatment. There is no clear strategy for attracting hard to reach drug users into services. The strategy could have included clear targets for the expansion of services aimed at active drug users. Methadone treatment is not enough. We need more low threshold services aimed at providing crisis counselling and pathways towards treatment and we need more attractive prescribing options if we are to link drug users with services and see a decline in drug related death and illness. Drug Free Treatment places must also be increased if rehabilitation is to remain one of the goals of drugs policy. That the strategy has not comprehensively addressed these issues represents a missed opportunity.

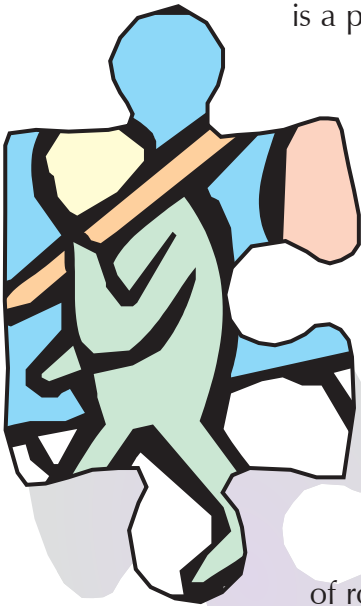
Merchants Quay Ireland remains committed to working in partnership with the Government and others to tackle the drugs problem. It is now time to deepen that partnership and the Government needs to ensure that representatives of the community and voluntary sector are included in decision making at the highest level. The sector should be represented on the Interdepartmental Group on Drugs.

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## Homelessness in Ireland

### Definition:

A person is considered homeless if he or she is “ sleeping on the streets or in other places not intended for night time accommodation or not providing safe protection from the elements or those whose usual night time residence is a public or private shelter, emergency lodging, Bed and Breakfast or such, providing protection from the elements but lacking the other characteristics of a home or intended only for a short stay...” Eastern Health Board 1999.



### Statistics:

The most recent assessment of homelessness (March 1999) showed that there were in excess of 5,000 persons homeless in Ireland at the time. Perhaps 10, 000 become homeless over the course of any one year. Figures for the Greater Dublin Region including counties Kildare and Wicklow showed that there were 2,900 adults and almost 1,000 dependent children homeless during the period of the survey. According to a recent survey jointly carried out by the Simon Community, Focus Ireland and Dublin Corporation (2000) the total number of rough sleepers in Dublin city centre was 202, this represents a 60% increase on the street count of December 1997.

### Who is homeless?

Homelessness is not a random occurrence. Persons on low income or unemployed, disabled or otherwise reliant on social welfare are more likely to experience persistent homelessness. It affects men and women, young and old and increasing numbers of children.

Homelessness is likely to occur as a result of a range of factors – both structural and personal. The key structural factor is the increasing scarcity of affordable accommodation available in Irish cities. Every day in Ireland thousands of people face a housing crisis. By the end of 2000 there were an estimated 45,000 people on local authority waiting lists and tens of thousands of others living in insecure accommodation in the private rented sector. In addition the cost of renting have been rising substantially.

Structural factors disproportionately impact on the more vulnerable members of society. People who become homeless are more likely to have experienced physical or sexual abuse in childhood or adolescence, family disputes or breakdown, institutional care in childhood, school exclusion and lack of qualifications, debts, especially rent or mortgage arrears, problem drug use or problem alcohol use or mental and physical health problems. In addition there are a range of events or crisis points which can trigger homelessness including relationship breakdown, leaving care or prison, deterioration in mental health, an increase in alcohol or problem drug use, a financial crisis, mounting debts or eviction.





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## A Partnership to Eliminate Homelessness

Merchants Quay Ireland has welcomed the Government's strategy for tackling homelessness announced in 1999. Since then a number of Action Plans have been produced in various counties aimed at tackling homelessness at a local level. Merchants Quay Ireland worked in partnership with the Homeless Initiative, Dublin Corporation, the Health Boards and other voluntary agencies in developing the Action Plan for the Dublin Region. This document presents a long term aim of eliminating homelessness by 2010. Merchants Quay Ireland believes this is a realistic and achievable objective.

The action plan focuses clearly on preventing homelessness in the future and on developing long term housing and other appropriate accommodation options for currently homeless persons rather than simply relying on more emergency hostels to cope with the immediate crisis. This is wise and prudent. It correctly identifies homelessness as the sharp end of social exclusion and recognises that homeless persons often have multiple needs which must be addressed in parallel with their need for housing.

*Specific targets include:*

- A reduction in street homelessness by two thirds.
- 100 additional emergency places for rough sleepers.
- Two 24 hour drop in centres in Dublin and one in Dun Laoghaire.
- 240 additional hostel and refuge places.
- 200 extra units of transitional housing.
- 1,500 additional permanent housing units for homeless persons.
- A 24-hour telephone helpline for homeless persons.

A new partnership structure, the Homeless Agency, has been established with responsibility for ensuring that the plan is delivered. A huge increase in government spending to tackle homelessness is now necessary if the plan is to be implemented successfully.

By May 2001 similar Action Plans had been adopted in Cork and Limerick. In those cities the plans are inevitably on a smaller scale but equally aim at prevention of homelessness, development of additional emergency, transitional and permanent housing options and improving access to health and social services. Other cities and counties are still in the process of developing their Action Plans.



While there is reason for confidence regarding the Government strategy on homelessness there are potential pitfalls.

Widening income inequality unless addressed will serve to further exclude and marginalize the poorer people in society leaving them vulnerable to the many crises that can trigger homelessness.

The current targets for development of public and social housing are inadequate, and are not being met. This bodes ill for the future. The tendency for housing policy to favour private ownership over all other forms of tenure and for policy to prioritise young middle income persons aspiring to home ownership over the needs of those most at risk of homelessness means that housing policy may undermine the homelessness strategy.

The best long-term solution to homelessness is undoubtedly the creation of a more just and equal society. We are concerned that the current Government does not show sufficient commitment to this ideal.

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## Welcoming Diversity

### Introduction

Ireland has been undergoing rapid change over the last ten years. We have moved from being an insular state run on the presumption that everyone within it was white, catholic, heterosexual and preferably male to a situation where we are beginning to look like any other European country – the needs and rights of women have greater prominence than was hitherto the case, there is greater visibility and acceptance of people who are gay or lesbian, greater political recognition is being given to the rights of travellers and other minorities. Moreover, increasing numbers of people from different countries and cultures are coming to settle in Ireland, sometimes for economic reasons and sometimes because political oppression in their own countries has forced them to seek asylum in Ireland.



Our ethos at Merchants Quay is very much one of welcoming diversity and recognising the unique worth of each individual regardless of their race, colour, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.



Merchants Quay Ireland is committed to ensuring that our services are accessible to all. This means that we have to be aware of and respond to the changing profile and needs of drug users, homeless persons and other excluded people.

Merchants Quay Ireland welcomes diversity. As society becomes increasingly diverse so too do the people seeking services at Merchants Quay. More than half of all Mass goes at Merchants Quay are women as are up to one third of the drug users and homeless persons availing of our services. In this unequal society, it is unfortunately the case that marginalized minorities are more vulnerable to poverty, which sometimes leads to drug use and homelessness.

In recent times we have seen increasing numbers of disabled persons, travellers, lesbians and gay men, asylum seekers, refugees and other immigrants availing of our services at Merchants Quay.

We have been working to ensure that our services are welcoming for all who come to us. In practical terms this has involved:

- *Establishing dedicated services for women involved in drug use and for homeless women.*
- *Developing a charter of rights for all services based on respect for the individual and specifically addressing issues of discrimination and prejudice.*
- *Developing employment policies based on the principle of equity and fairness for all employees and specifically ensuring that diversity is respected.*

Over the next few years we plan to:

- *Improve access for disabled persons to our services*
- *Develop information materials relating to drug use and homelessness in a variety of languages to meet the needs of non-English speaking persons in Ireland.*
- *Enhance the range of services on offer to meet the needs of minority groups.*



## Spiritual and Church Services

In 1974 the Church of the Immaculate Conception (Adam and Eve's) became the Parish Church for the Parish of Merchants Quay. In addition to providing religious services and spiritual guidance for the Parish the Franciscan Friars also have responsibility for managing the parish school, St. Audoen's National School. The parish of Merchants Quay is bounded by St. Augustine Street on the west, the river Liffey on the north D'Olier Street in the east and Dame Lane in the south. This area contains a population of more than 800 Catholics, but most of those attending church services at Merchants Quay come from further afield.

All of the sacraments are available at the Church, with 31 Masses being said each week, and confession being available on a daily basis

## Repository and Mass Office

The Repository and Mass Office is the point of contact for those interested in having Masses offered for particular intentions and for the purchase of religious goods. This office can be accessed from the quayside entrance to the church.

## Secular Franciscan Order

The Secular Franciscan Order (S.F.O) is a lay movement founded by St. Francis of Assisi. Both men and women promise to live the gospel life. According to their rule " they shall devote themselves to careful reading of the Gospel, going from Gospel to life and life to Gospel."

*Lectio Divina - How to pray the Scriptures*  
Lectio Divina is the very old way of reading the Scriptures, which has returned to

popularity today. We read a section of the Scripture to see what God did in the past so as to discern what God is doing in our lives today. Familiarity with God's past deeds helps one to recognise where God is today. The process of Lectio has three steps: reading, thinking and praying. Lectio Divina takes place during Lent each year at Merchants Quay.

## Church Organ

Adam and Eves hosts the largest Catholic Church organ in Dublin. The Director of Music at the church organises regular concerts in the church as well as bringing in top quality choirs to sing at church services. Reviewers have remarked on the excellent acoustics of the church and the "Regal" sound of the organ.



## Facing New Challenges

A Lay Pastoral Co-ordinator is in place to develop the Church in areas such as:-

- *Liturgy.*
- *Spirituality.*
- *Developing training/educational programmes for all who work in the church.*
- *Developing training/educational programmes for all who frequent the church.*
- *Innovative strategies to link the church with other work at Merchants Quay.*
- *Developing and implementing the church plan.*
- *Provision of Pastoral Services.*

## Services for Drug Users

### *The Open Access Services - Coping with Crises, Minimising Harm*

#### **The Contact Centre**

Here we work with drug users in real crisis. Not all become drug free or progress onto other programmes but all are supported in sustaining a better quality of life and receive help in minimising drug-related harm. Services include health promotion, needle exchange, advice on safer sex and safer drug use and general advice and information. Staff also offer a limited counselling service, prison visits and a range of holistic therapies (massage, acupuncture, reflexology and aromatherapy). In 2000 the staff and volunteers at the contact centre provided health promotion services for 3,360 individual drug users. Six hundred and forty five new clients were seen in 2000. Women made up more than 25% of service users.

#### **Women's Project**

Since 1998 Merchants Quay Ireland has been providing a specialised service targeted at vulnerable female drug users. This service is based in the Contact Centre and deals with the increasing numbers of women attending for help. The Women's Project offers one to one support to women drug users, weekly group support and advice on harm minimisation for women involved in drug use. 98 drug users availed of this service in 2000.

#### **Outreach Service**

Merchants Quay Ireland operates a Community Outreach Service aimed at reaching out to drug users not engaged with services and at minimising public nuisance associated with problem drug use. In 2000 the outreach team met more than 40 vulnerable drug users on the street each month, offering advice, information and referral. The team collected more than 200 used needles and syringes each month and also liaised with local community groups, the police, Dublin Corporation and local business interests.

### *Structured Support Services - Assisting Personal Growth*

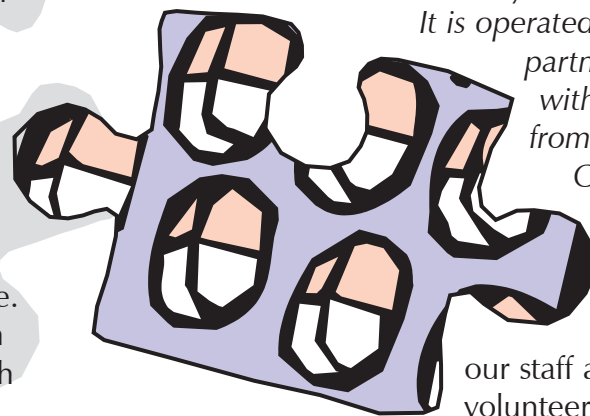
#### **Day Support Services**

Day Support Services can be seen as the first steps away from crisis drug use and towards rehabilitation. These services are aimed at people who are using street drugs, or are in treatment, and want to bring about more stability and structure in their lives.

Services include:-

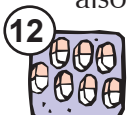
- *Methadone Prescribing Treatment and Support – substitution therapy helps people to break their links with illegal and high-risk drug use.*
- *Supportive Day Programmes – offering therapeutic groups, life skills training, personal development work and pre-employment training to help drug users in the process of reintegrating with society.*
- *One-to-one Counselling - assisting clients availing of the Day Support Services to deal with issues that have underpinned their drug use.*
- *The Family Support Group is a group for the families and partners of drug users and persons with HIV which focuses on self-help, personal development and stress management. This group meets fortnightly and there are also a number of residential weekends each year.*

*It is operated in partnership with staff from the Contact Centre.*



*In 2000 our staff and volunteers were able to offer*

*effective drug treatment and other structured support services to more than 200 drug users.*





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## **Residential Services - Towards a life without drugs**

The Merchants Quay Project Residential Programmes are aimed at meeting the needs of clients who wish to become drug free, and who are assessed as being likely to benefit from a period of residential treatment.

### **High Park Residential Programme**

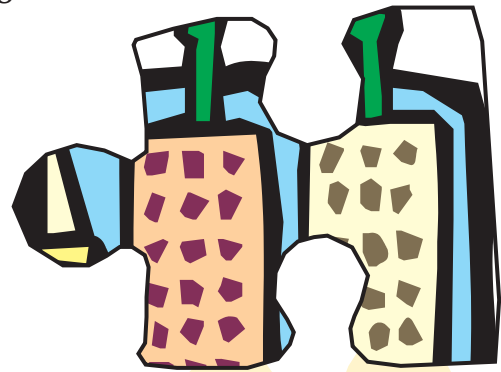
This is a 12-week fully residential programme. The aim is to assist participants to become and remain drug free. The emphasis is on assisting clients to gain insight into the issues which underpin their drug use and develop realistic relapse prevention skills. The High Park programme offers individual care plans, which incorporates in-house detoxification where necessary, individual counselling, group therapy, educational groups, work assignments and recreational activities.

In 2000 66 people availed of this programme. 21 managed to successfully complete the programme and are now drug free.

### **ST. FRANCIS FARM**

St. Francis Farm is a Therapeutic Community & Training Facility. Here we provide a one year residential programme aimed at providing training in a rural setting to former drug users. The programme provides a unique blend of individual and group development, education and practical skills training in a rural farm setting. Residents are offered training in animal care, farming and market gardening, catering and food preparation skills, social skills, personal development and computer skills.

The programme had 23 participants in 2000 – 5 graduated after successfully completing the full 12 month programme. Of the remainder 7 left the programme on a negotiated basis with pre agreed onward referral, 2 were discharged and the remaining nine were expected to successfully complete the programme in 2001.



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## Services for Homeless Persons

### *The Open Access Services - Coping with Crises, Minimising Harm*

#### **The Fáiltiú Resource Centre - Information, Advice and Crisis Support Service**

When you become homeless or are in crisis the first thing you need is support and information. At Fáiltiú staff are trained to help people in crisis, listening to their needs and offering information and advice on where you can stay, social welfare entitlements and finding long-term accommodation. This drop-in service is available between Monday and Friday each week. Work done within this service includes assessment of client needs, advice and information on health, social welfare, emergency accommodation housing and drug and alcohol treatment, any other issues and the production and distribution of informational materials of relevance to homeless persons.



#### **Meals Service**

To be without a home often means being without access to washing facilities or to regular nutritious meals.

The Fáiltiú Resource Centre aims at meeting these basic needs.

Homeless persons are offered two meals a day (breakfast and lunch), showering and washing facilities, a primary needs assessment and referral to

other services as appropriate. Almost 23,000 meals were provided at Fáiltiú in 2000

#### **Sunday Service**

Fáiltiú operates a limited crisis intervention and meals service every Sunday. An average of 120 persons attend this service each week. A full three course lunch is provided, showering and washing facilities are available and a dedicated team of workers are there to assist service users with any problems or crises they may have. This is the only such services available for homeless persons in Dublin on Sundays.

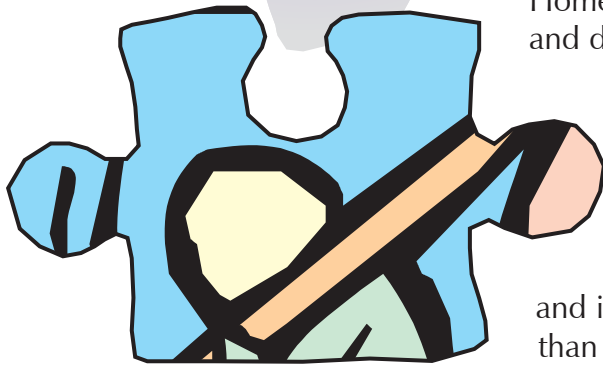
In 2000 just under 40,000 visits were made to Fáiltiú Open Access Services, an average of 176 visits per day. This is an increase of 38% on 1999. Fáiltiú worked with an estimated 1,480 individuals in the course of the year.

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## Structured Support Services - Assisting Personal Growth

### Personal Development Programme

If you are homeless there isn't a lot to do during daytime. Life can be punctuated by crises and by periods of boredom. Fáiltiú offers personal support and learning opportunities targeted, in particular, at those who are most vulnerable to assist them on the road towards settlement and independent living. The Personal Development Programme (Oasis) is focused on both learning and leisure and incorporates such topics as personal development, photography, arts and crafts, drama, parenting classes (where relevant) and men's and women's support groups. Substantial one-to-one support is provided before, during and after the programme. We also provide inputs on understanding addiction, with an emphasis on harm minimisation. Over the course of 2000 this team worked with more than 120 individuals.

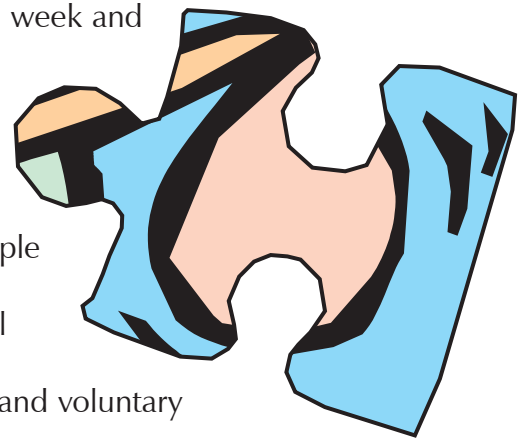


### Counselling Service

Homelessness is often associated with severe stresses and difficulties in life. Many people find it hard to cope. The Fáiltiú Counselling Service was established to help people cope with the stresses of life on the streets. A full time professional counsellor is available. This is a low threshold service available to clients free of charge. The counselling is provided on a one-to-one basis, and is non-directive and client centred. In 2000 more than 100 persons accessed this service. An average of 10 person attend for long-term counselling each week and

crisis counselling is provided for an average of 20 persons each week.

**The Fáiltiú Client Forum** began in October 2000 and meets every month. The forum has an independent facilitator and an average of 10 - 15 people attend. Issues discussed relate to the Fáiltiú Services, client needs and significant attention is paid to general policy and services for homeless persons. In 2000 it is planned to invite representatives from other statutory and voluntary services for homeless persons to address the group.



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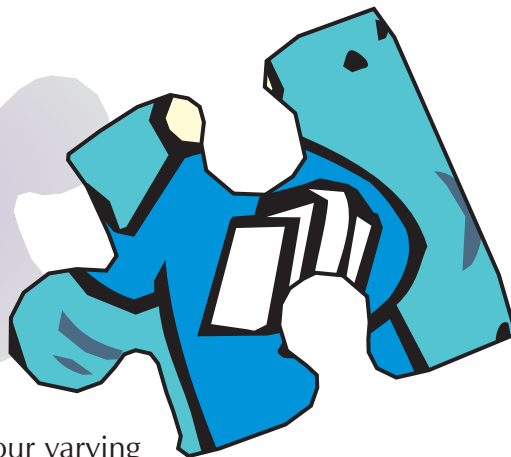
## Promoting Social Inclusion for All

### *Accommodation, Training and Work Programmes*



#### **Community Employment Services**

Merchants Quay Ireland has been working in partnership with Fas for almost 10 years providing hands on training for prospective drugs workers and for service users across a wide variety of community employment programmes based in our varying services. These programmes benefit Merchants Quay Ireland by providing a pool of eager trainees, many of whom have gone on to engage in full time professional drugs worker roles in Merchants Quay and other organisations. Community Employment benefits the participant by providing them with transferable skills that enable them to access work into the long term, and it benefits our service users as many of our CE Projects have offered the first experience of paid work for many.



Of the 82 persons who finished a Community Employment programme at Merchants Quay in the period 1999/2000 more than half moved on to paid employment (43%) or further education (10%).

#### **The CERT Training & Employment Project**

Merchants Quay Ireland in conjunction with CERT (the State Tourism Training Agency) coordinates a training and employment project in General Catering Skills at Merchants Quay. This course is open to those who are available for work but are not currently employed. Previous experience/qualifications are not necessary. This course is ideal for those who wish to return to the workforce and need to build up their skills and confidence levels before commencing employment. Upon course completion an internationally recognised qualification is awarded. The course also facilitates access to a range of further educational opportunities. In 2000 26 persons accessed this course. 15 went on to further employment or training in catering.

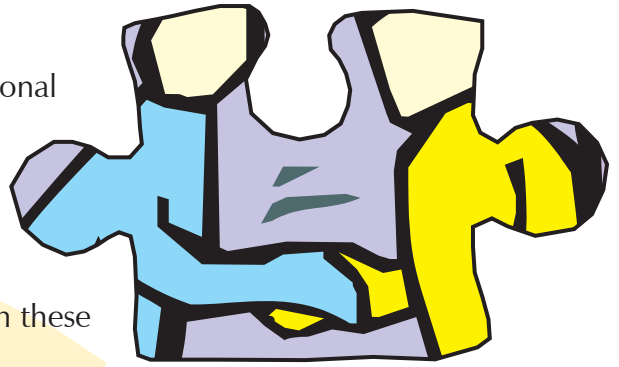




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## **The Education Equality Initiative (EEI)**

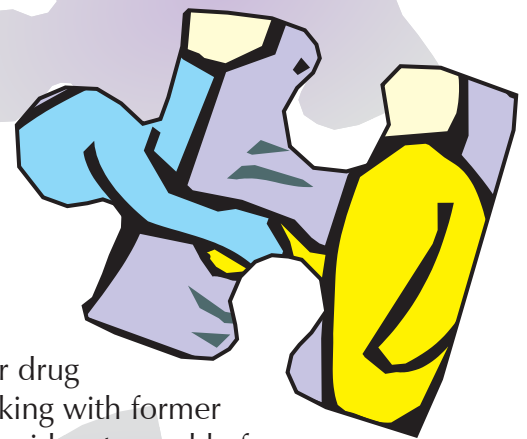
It is our belief that appropriate training and educational opportunities are central to the rehabilitation and integration of problem drug users. In 2000 we provided some training/education for clients in the following areas: budgeting, assertiveness and communication, C.V. and Interview Skills, Arts and Crafts etc. In 2000 about 220 clients benefited from these courses. At the end of 2000 the Education Equality Initiative enabled us to combat educational disadvantage experienced by our clients.



Through the EEI we will, in 2001, be able to provide more formal education for clients participating in the following day-time and residential drug treatment programmes:

- *Personal Development Programmes*
- *Easy Access Programmes*
- *High Park Residential Treatment Programme*
- *St. Francis Farm*

We will also provide Training for 30 potential community leaders and 30 Teachers and Health Care Workers to enable them to act as outreach agents in their local communities.



## **Resettlement and Integration Service**

This is an innovative programme aimed at integrating former drug users into mainstream society. The programme involves working with former drug users, with employers, trainers and accommodation providers to enable former drug users to access training, work and housing.

The programme also aims at equipping employers to deal supportively with issues of drug use as they arise in the workplace.

In 2000 we worked with 21 clients, of these 18 completed the programme and 14 are now in full employment. The other 4 have moved on to further education. We worked with a total of 6 employers and ran two training programmes aimed at trainers and community leaders.

## **Settlement Service**

Homeless persons need a variety of emergency crisis services to help meet their immediate needs. However the real solution for all homeless people is to find long-term appropriate, secure and affordable housing. The Fáiltiú Resource Centre Settlement Service was established to help persons with this task.

This service has a limited number of places (10) available at any one time. Referral to the programme is primarily from other Fáiltiú services, from the Merchants Quay Project's contact centre and stabilisation programmes and from outside agencies. The key services provided within the settlement programme include assessment, development of individual support plans, one-to-one key working service, personal development and life skills training, group support, post settlement support and outreach.

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## Developing Best Practice

### Research, Training and Information Services

The provision of high quality effective direct services at Merchants Quay Ireland is very much dependent on having high quality training available for both workers and, where relevant, for service users. To do this we need to have in place appropriate research and evaluation systems. In Today's information age we also need to have available high quality information about our services, about the issues we work with and we need to make use of information technology in responding effectively to the needs of homeless persons and drug users.

#### Research Department



As an agency Merchants Quay Ireland recognises that research is essential in identifying client needs, investigating the wider context in which problem drug use and/or homelessness occur and in assessing the effectiveness of various treatment responses. We established our Research Department in 1997.

The key aim of the Research Department is to increase the store of knowledge available on drug use, homelessness and related issues in the Irish context. Identifying effective strategies and interventions is dependent to a great extent on the quality and amount of knowledge available to key decision makers. Much of the work of this Department has been focused on evaluating the effectiveness of our services for clients, on developing systems for the regular evaluation of services in the future and on the conduct of other relevant research that can

inform both social policy and service development. A full publications list is included in Appendix 1.

The Research Department is also engaged in work relating to two trans-national research projects funded by the European Union; EuroExcludes deals with the investigation of risk behaviour amongst drug users in a number of "zones" of social exclusion in Dublin. "Elaboration of Concepts for Secondary Prevention of Drug Misuse" is aimed at developing strategies and good practice for demand reduction and harm reduction with young drug users involved in the techno-party/dance scene and young drug users living on the streets. The Research Team is currently working on an investigation of the health status of female drug users.

#### Information Services

This office is concerned with the production and dissemination of high quality and accurate information relating to client needs and the organisation in both traditional and electronic formats. These include service leaflets, newsletters, reports and website development.

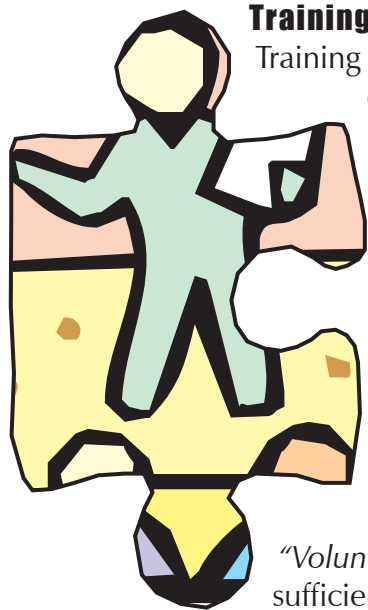
In 2000 a number of important documents were produced, most significantly "Drugs at Work – Resource Pack for Employers and Trade Unions" This Provides a range of information about drugs, drug users, drug and alcohol policies and Employee Assistance Programmes.

Two Websites will be launched in 2001, a Merchants Quay Ireland website (mqi.ie) and clubscene.ie a website aimed at preventing drug related harm for users of dance club drugs such as ecstasy and speed.



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## Training Department



Training is an essential ingredient in operating a professional service committed to high standards and best practice. Training is a process of educational enrichment that benefits workers, clients and the organisation as a whole.

The Training Office aims to meet the training needs of all workers, paid and voluntary, at Merchants Quay Ireland and to provide a high quality training service to other agencies that work with drug users.

### Training Services

Training courses provided include the following: -

*“Volunteer Induction Training”* - This training ensures that volunteers have sufficient knowledge and skills relating to drug use prior to beginning work in our services. The training takes place over a three-week period and involves two residential weekends plus two days training onsite. 42 persons undertook this training in 2000.

*“Understanding the Drugs Issue”* - This is a short course, pitched at the introductory level, and aimed at providing the basic knowledge necessary to begin working with drug users. A total of 64, mainly voluntary workers, completed this course in 2000.

*“Motivational Interviewing and Brief Counselling Skills”* - This is an intensive training course designed for people who interact and work directly with drug users and their issues. Twenty-two persons took this course in 2000.

*“Certificate in Supervision Skills”* – This course gives formal training in relation to supervision roles. It provides a practical and theoretical framework for supervisors.. 14 persons undertook this programme in 2000.

*“Drugs Counselling and Intervention Skills”* - This is a one year College Certificate course accredited by University College Dublin. A total of 40 persons began this course in 2000, and will graduate in the summer of 2001. The training team are currently working with UCD to develop a Diploma Level course which will begin in September 2001.



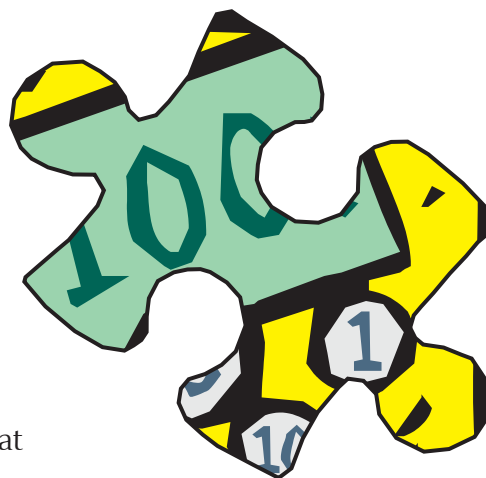
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## Effective and Efficient Management

### *Finance, Administration and Human Resources*

#### **Finance Office**

Sound financial management is a priority at Merchants Quay. In 2000 the financial controller has been working with his team to further develop financial management systems appropriate to the increased size and complexity of the organisation. The emphasis is on improving consistency and accountability across the organisation, integrating financial planning into the overall strategic planning process for Merchants Quay Ireland and providing high quality financial input into decision making at Merchants Quay.



The demand for the services provided at Merchants Quay has grown as more people become homeless and more turn to drugs. We have developed new services to meet these needs and we have spent increasing amounts of money to improve the quality of our services. In 2001 our costs across all services, including Church Services, grew dramatically to £2.84 million. However, income across the organisation grew by almost 20% in 2000, only just sufficient to match the corresponding growth in expenditure.



Currently government sources provide 67% of our income. The remainder comes from a variety of sources including corporate appeals, fundraising events, unsolicited and sometimes anonymous donations, legacies and grant giving trusts. A more detailed financial report is presented in Appendix 2. These accounts reflect the activities of the Drugs Services and the Homeless Services respectively.

#### **Administration**

Secretarial and administrative back-up is central to the effective functioning of any organisation. The Merchants Quay Project has a centralised administration office to meet the needs the organisation.

The team provides an efficient Administration service to all within the Project. All computers were fully networked by the end of 2000.

#### **Human Resources.**

In 2000 Services at Merchants Quay were provided by 75 Full-time staff, 82 part-time staff, including many working on Community Employment Projects and an average of up to 100 volunteers. Significant attention is given to ensuring that adequate training and support is available to all workers and to developing a range of policies and procedures to ensure best standards in management of staff.





## Financial Report

Total Income and Expenditure for 2000 was as follows:

	<b>Church</b>	<b>MQI</b>	<b>F.S.J.I.</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>£'000s</b>	<b>£'000s</b>	<b>£'000s</b>	<b>£'000s</b>	
<b>Income</b>	<b>367</b>	<b>2039</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>2855</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>423</b>	<b>1988</b>	<b>424</b>	<b>2835</b>
<b>(Deficit)/Surplus</b>	<b>(55)</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>21</b>

**Income:-** Church income primarily came from various collections from shrines, appeals and offerings and from the activities of a religious goods shop.

Grants from statutory agencies account for almost 67% of total income at Merchants Quay Ireland. The remaining income was raised by way of grants and donations from grant-making trusts, from individuals, from the corporate sector and through fundraising activities.

**Expenditure:-** In total overheads increased by approximately 20% in 2000. Church overheads include an exceptional charge of approximately £40,000 to take account of a change in accounting policy.

The balance sheets of the two limited companies at Merchants Quay are presented below.

*Basil Cronin,  
Financial Controller.*

### FRANCISCAN SOCIAL JUSTICE INITIATIVES LIMITED - BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2000

	<i>IR£</i>	<i>IR£</i>
<b><u>Fixed Assets</u></b>		
Tangible Assets		167,042
<b><u>Current Assets</u></b>		
Debtors	15,068	
Cash at bank and in hand	<u>112,378</u>	
	127,446	
<b><u>Creditors: amounts falling due within one year</u></b>	<u>(70,680)</u>	
<b><u>Net Current</u></b>		56,766
<b><u>Total Assets Less Current Liabilities</u></b>		223,808
<b><u>Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year</u></b>		(72,865)
<b><u>Deferred Grants</u></b>		<u>(113,151)</u>
<b><u>Net Assets</u></b>		£37,792
<b><u>Capital and Reserves</u></b>		
Profit and Loss Account		37,792
<b><u>Total Reserves</u></b>		<b>£37,792</b>

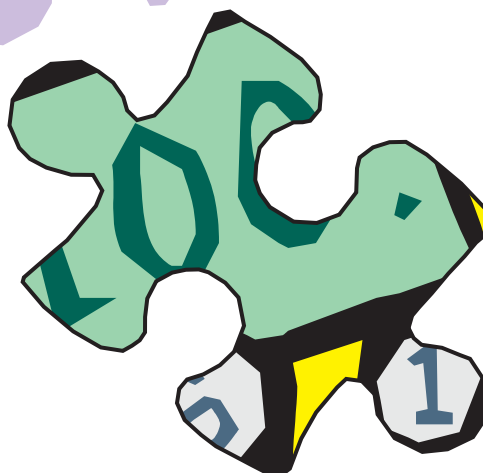


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## FINANCE REPORT - CONT'D

### MERCHANTS QUAY PROJECT LIMITED - BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2000

	<i>IR£</i>	<i>IR£</i>
<b><u>Fixed Assets</u></b>		
Tangible Assets		245,137
<b><u>Current Assets</u></b>		
Stocks		
Debtors	549,478	
Cash at bank and in hand	<u>223,121</u> 772,599	
<b>Creditors: amounts falling due within one year</b>	<b>(668,848)</b>	
<b><u>Net Current Assets</u></b>		<u>103,751</u>
<b>Total Assets Less Current Liabilities</b>		348,888
<b><u>Deferred Income</u></b>		<u>(153,913)</u>
<b><u>Net Assets</u></b>		<u>194,975</u>
<b><u>Represented by:-</u></b>		
<b><u>Accumulated Surplus</u></b>		<u>194,975</u>



The Friars at Merchants Quay host the services of Merchants Quay Ireland. They have for many years now been generous and caring hosts. I would like to thank all the Friars for their continuing support and generosity.

I would like to thank the many kind persons who have sent us unsolicited and sometimes anonymous donations, and those who donate to St. Anthony's Bread and other appeals in the Church. The money coming in this way is vital in helping us to deliver our services and the spirit in which this money is offered gives all at Merchants Quay great hope, as it shows that so many others share our vision of justice for all. I would like to make special mention of a substantial anonymous donation, for our work with younger persons, given in honour of Kevin MacGrath of Omagh and An tAthair Cuthbert Mhag Grath (Dr. Joe McGrath) O.F.M.

I wish to thank the Health Boards who have consistently made available funding and other support thereby allowing us to develop new and often innovative services over the years. In this respect special thanks go to the staff of the Aids and Drugs Services of the South Western Area Health Board and Northern Area Health Board staff working in the area of homelessness. Dublin Corporation, the Homeless Initiative (now the Homeless Agency), Comhairle and the National Millennium Committee also funded and supported our work and we thank all involved for this support. I wish also to thank all in the F.A.S Community Services Section at Jervis Street. With the support of FAS we have been able to develop a number of Community Employment Projects offering a valuable labour market intervention for the drug users, homeless persons and people from the local area and aiding us to deliver vital social services.

The Department of Justice's Probation and Welfare Service have been consistent in providing support for our work with offenders

and we gratefully acknowledge their continued support.

The South Inner City Drug Task Force have supported the Gateway Programme since its inception in 1998 and by doing so have helped us offer progression routes to drug users from the South Inner City. From 2001 this is being mainstreamed through the Health Board.

We also wish to acknowledge the continued support of the City of Dublin V.E.C for our training initiatives and the Combat Poverty Agency who have provided us with money to engage in research and other work related to policy. I would like to offer special thanks to all at the Ireland Funds, in particular the Canada Ireland Fund and the Dublin Inner City Trust for their continued and invaluable support in 2000. The support of the corporate sector is invaluable to us. Such support has been essential in developing our services.

I wish also to thank all of our staff, full time, part time and volunteer across all our programmes. It is their enthusiasm and dedication, which has shaped our services over the years and continues to make Merchants Quay such a vibrant place to work. I would also like to acknowledge the work of those who have sat on our Governing Body, Management Committee, and St. Francis Farm Advisory Committee, and the many others who have offered comment and advice.

Finally, a special thanks to all persons who avail of our services whether as Churchgoers or as homeless persons or as drug users. That so many choose to come to Merchants Quay and show such confidence in our services gives us all great encouragement that together we can promote positive change for the individual, for the community and for society as a whole.

Gerry Raftery, OFM  
Justice Director

# PUBLICATIONS LIST

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- Cox, G. and M. Lawless (1999) *Merchants Quay Project – Residential Programme Merchants Quay Project, Dublin.*

This 12 month study of the High Park Residential Drug Treatment Facility served to inform and design research instruments for the ongoing evaluation of this service, which began in June 1999.

- Cox, G. and M. Lawless (1999) *Wherever I Lay My Hat.... A Study of Out-of-Home Drug Users Merchants Quay Project, Dublin.*

This research was carried out as part of the Combat Poverty Agency funded "Poverty, Policy and Drug Use" programme. This findings suggested a strong association between drug use and homelessness and indicated that homeless drug users are at greater risk of suffering drug related harm.

- Lawless, M. and G. Cox (1999) *From Residential Drug Treatment to Employment: Interim Report. Merchants Quay Project, Dublin.*

- Lawless, M. and G. Cox (2000) *From Residential Drug Treatment to Employment: Final Report . Merchants Quay Project, Dublin*

The work for these two reports was carried out as part of our European Union funded Employment: Integra Programme which aimed to assist former drug users to access employment and training. The programme ran over two years and an evaluation report was published at the end of each year.

- Cox, G. and M. Lawless, (2000) *Making Contact: An Evaluation of a Syringe Exchange Programme: Merchants Quay Project, Dublin.*

The aim of this evaluation was to chart client outcomes over a period of time. The findings indicated that clients showed evidence of reducing injecting risk behaviour, employing health promotion strategies and of positive gains in terms of health and well being.



- (1) *'Drugs at Work – Resource Pack for Employers and Trade Unions'* (2000)  
Provides a range information about drugs, drug users, drug and alcohol policies and Employee Assistance Programmes.

- 2) *Merchants Quay Ireland – Information on Services* (2001)  
This information pack includes up do date brochures and leaflets on the entire range of services currently offered at Merchants Quay Ireland.



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