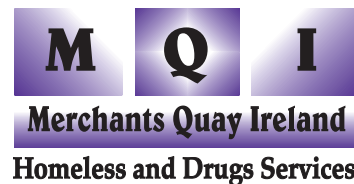


Quay Times

The Newsletter for Supporters of Merchants Quay Ireland | Autumn 2010



“That Was When I Was Young and Innocent...”

Liam's story is one every parent fears. And with 15,000 people across Ireland who are caught in heroin's grip, it's all too real. Read how it's turning out, thanks to you:



“That was when I was young and innocent,” Liam begins. “We used to go down to Seapoint, Dun Laoghaire baths. I used to love swimming...”

His story is one every parent fears. “I grew up too fast. Hit me teens, like. The ecstasy and smoking hash and I just tried to be part of the

“I wouldn't be here now if it wasn't for Merchants Quay Ireland. I'm very grateful for people who have helped out.” Thank you!

Liam, pictured at left, learned new computer skills at MQI

scene ya know, experimented in trying heroin.”

Heroin is one of the most addictive drugs available. In the span of 180 days, Liam was smoking heroin every day. “One day I woke up I was vomiting, shivering, bleeding. It had a hold on me.”

He was injecting by 19, to a point where he “had no veins left.” He robbed and was homeless for “three or four years, in and out of hostels. Being on the street definitely increased my drug use.”

With nowhere to turn, he came to Merchants Quay for meals. “I used to go into the drop in-at 7.30 when they opened for breakfast, just around the corner from the needle exchange.” Then a staff member helped Liam get on our Stabilisation Programme (see story below). He'd sought help before, but the

continued on page 4 >>

MQI's Stabilisation Programme: Behind the Scenes with David and Maeve

*A chat with
Team Leader Maeve
O'Callaghan and
Assistant Supervisor
David Sherry, of
Merchants Quay's
Stabilisation
Programme.*

MQI: Can you tell us about the Stabilisation Programme?

Maeve: People are chaotic sometimes when they approach us. Some of them can be homeless and looking for a space to connect in with, some can be in apartments and are sorted in that direction but not sorted in their addiction levels. Some come

in from another part of the country. So before they can move in any other direction in their lives, we have to try and stabilise their drug habits, their living habits, their life skills. That's the whole point of stabilisation. It keeps them on the level – connected with us, connected with doctors,

continued on page 3 >>

Merchants Quay uses your donations wisely. See how, page 2...

How Will You Be Remembered?

Leaving a gift in your will to Merchants Quay Ireland is a once in a lifetime chance to see that the homeless and those who struggle to overcome addiction have somewhere to turn for help, even after you're gone.

And for your kindness, we'll always remember you. To learn how easy it is to leave a legacy gift to Merchants Quay, ring Denisa on 01 524 0115.



MQI's Stabilisation Programme...

(continued from front page)



Maeve O'Callaghan, helping a client in the Stabilisation Programme

connected with any other teams to make sure they are looked after.

MQI: What life skills are they learning?

David: Well what Maeve said, the word 'structure.' The skill learned first is to get up and get somewhere; have a reason to get up in the morning. Every month there is a different programme. Life skills would be tied in with relapse prevention and say very basic maths. Some say they got involved in drugs young, and they

would have missed out on things in secondary school level. The emphasis is always on personal development. There are loads of projects, visits to art galleries, education programmes. The local employment services know we are here now. Stabilisation is a process of listening and trust and confidence building.

MQI: Are there any people that really stand out in terms of change from when they came through the door?

Maeve: Jessica (not her real name) was here nearly two, two and half years. She refused to take a chance and go outside and show what she was made of. It was a major thing for me that Jessica would be able to share the skills she had with other people. Now she has moved on to work experience and she does not want to come back. She's using the skills that she has learned, which is brilliant.

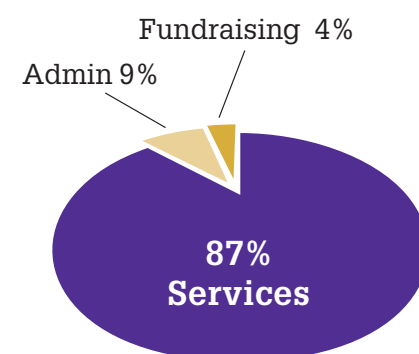
David: She even sounds different on the phone, doesn't she? It's fabulous. When you see it you say 'Wow. People can change.'

What's On at MQI?

Read All About It:

- **Just Released:** 2009 Annual Review reveals a 'rising tide of desperation' for people who are homeless; to read the review go to www.mqi.ie
- **MQI on Facebook:** Listen to client interviews and get the latest media updates on Merchants Quay's Facebook Page
- **Drug-Free Pilot Programme:** New day programme offers ongoing structure, education and counselling for clients who recently completed drug rehab
- **Scholarship Fund** to help keep education within reach for clients, page 3
- **New Aftercare House in Leixlip:** Grows capacity by 200%; provides six more places for aftercare housing and support in a drug-free environment
- **Addiction Counselling Services Contracted** by Irish Prison System: Merchants Quay to reach 1,000+ counselling hours per month in new four-year programme

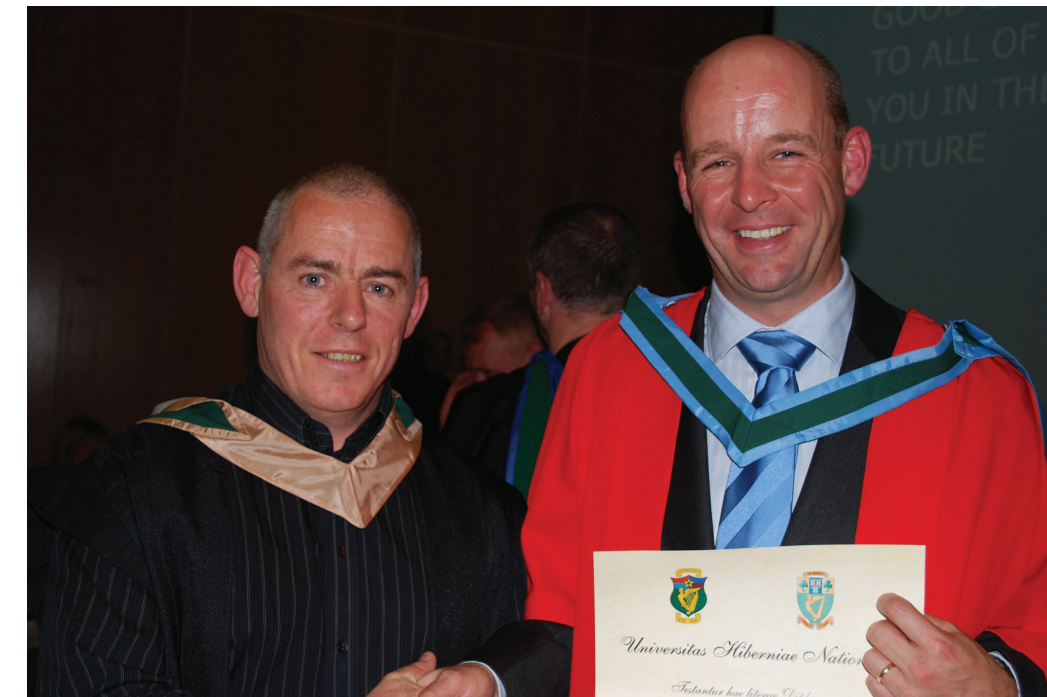
How Your Donations Are Wisely Used:



Thank you for caring.

Brendan Magee Graduates...Again!

You may remember Brendan Magee from our October 2009 Newsletter. He overcame his heroin addiction by availing himself of all MQI offers – 'graduating' from a cup of tea and needle exchange to residential rehabilitation and recovery. He got a place in college, completed a Certificate in Drugs Counselling and took up work guiding others on their way to a drug-free life. Now he's graduated again, officially: he's received his Diploma in Drugs Counselling Theory and Intervention Skills. Building on this he has now taken on a full time degree course in Social Science with University College Dublin. He will graduate yet again in 2012. Well done, Brendan!



Former MQI client Brendan Magee (left) is all smiles after receiving his diploma

(To read Brendan's full story, visit 'News and Events' on our website at www.mqi.ie, then scroll down for the October 2009 Newsletter, "From Heroin Addiction to Academic Honors." Or call us, we'll post you a copy.)

Introducing the Merchants Quay Scholarship Fund

When government cuts meant less money for school and job training, MQI clients and staff were left without needed funds to continue their education. See how, with your help, a new scholarship fund is bridging the gap.

The newly established Merchants Quay Scholarship Fund will provide help with tuition fees so clients can continue their education, taking FETAC-accredited courses geared toward employment. For staff and volunteers, accredited

courses must be aimed at building on-the-job skills to better help the homeless and those with addiction problems.

"With all the government funding cuts," said Denisa Casement, Merchants Quay Ireland's Head of Fundraising, "money for further education and

job training is becoming harder to find. We don't want anyone who has worked hard at getting their life on track to be stalled by a lack of funding."

For more information or to donate to the Merchants Quay Scholarship Fund, ring us on 01 524 0160.

For all you do, thank you.

A Message From Tony Geoghegan...

New Extended Day Service Helps Those With Nowhere to Go 'After Hours'

I wrote you in our spring newsletter that the Homeless Agency had identified a need for homeless services operating in the greater Dublin area during the evening time, in particular after 5pm.

In the works was a joint effort between Merchants Quay Ireland and Focus Ireland to launch a three-month pilot programme that would, for people experiencing homelessness, bring Extended Day Services to Dublin city centre.

Thanks in large part to your support of Merchants Quay, that programme is now reality.

The Extended Hours Day Service (EDS) is open from 4.00pm to 8.30pm weekdays and based in Focus Ireland's premises on Eustace Street and jointly staffed

by Focus and MQI. The service is:

- Free and available to anyone regardless of age, gender or nationality
- Reaches those who need help most including rough sleepers, those without 24 hour hostel accommodation, and individuals and families in crisis
- Offers a safe place off the streets in the evenings to homeless people – the young, adults with and without children, those with and without addiction issues, and people from new communities
- Provides emergency advice, hot food, toilet facilities, needle



Tony Geoghegan

exchange, primary health care and assistance in accessing hostel.

Together with Focus Ireland, and through your kind donations, Merchants Quay are pleased to be reaching out to men, women and

families who, before EDS, had nowhere to go in the evenings. We'll update you on the progress, and if you'd like a tour of EDS please ring us on 01 524 0160.

Thanks for helping make it all possible,

Tony Geoghegan
CEO, Merchants Quay Ireland

Young and Innocent...

(continued from front page)

Merchants Quay programme marked a turning point. "It put a great structure in my day. Stabilisation helped me move on from where I was."

For Liam, stabilisation meant getting referred through MQI to a safe, temporary accommodation. Eventually finding a permanent place to call home. Training courses in art, literacy, maths, and computers. "I bought a little netbook...it's only a small

computer. But before I started here I couldn't turn on a computer. Me Ma and me Da, they even say they are proud of me now."

His next step is Merchants Quay's drug-free rehabilitation programme at High Park. There's a waiting list, but he rings every Friday. "I want to learn stuff I left behind because when you are on drugs for so long, like you are blind to a lot of stuff as well," he says, then softly adds, "I wouldn't be here now if it wasn't for Merchants Quay. I'm very grateful for people who have helped out."

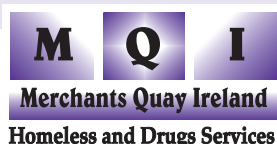
Coming to a mail slot near you:

Double Your Donation... No Extra Cost to You!

Now through 31 December, your generosity doubles – and does double the good – every time you give to Merchants Quay Ireland:

A long-time supporter is generously offering a **€50,000 Challenge Grant** over the holiday season. Every euro you give this Christmas will automatically double, starting now through 31 December, up to €50,000... at no extra cost to you.

Please watch your post for more details... or give, and double your kindness, today. Thank you!



Merchants Quay Ireland
P.O. Box 11958
Dublin 8

Located at:
28 Winetavern Street
Dublin 8

Head Office: 01 524 0160
Fundraising: 01 524 0115
Volunteering: 01 524 0128

www.mqi.ie