

STEP UP

Donor Update



Forty Years of Simon Bringing People Together

Last year Dublin Simon Community was delighted to welcome back many former volunteers of the organisation as it commemorated its 40th Anniversary. Founded in 1969 by a group of students from Trinity and UCD Dublin Simon Community has developed since those days to work with over 2,000 people every year.

A commemorative event was held in the Coach House in Dublin Castle in September where the last forty years of Dublin Simon were depicted through a photography exhibition and a display of past Simon memorabilia. Overall the day highlighted the people focused nature of the organisation that has remained at the heart of Dublin Simon Community for the past forty years.

Many of the founding and early volunteers of Simon were also present at the Commemoration. Guests of honour on the day included President Mary McAleese and also Bob Geldof, who was a volunteer during his early years with Dublin Simon. Both spoke inspirational words, President McAleese about the importance of such organisations as Simon and the work of volunteers while Geldof spoke of his belief in the practicality of what Simon does. He also described how his



President Mary McAleese is introduced to some of the early and founding volunteers of Dublin Simon Community Denis Cahalane, John Long and Peter Mooney (L-R) at the 40th Anniversary Commemoration Event in the Coach House, Dublin Castle.

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ambitions, which ultimately led to his creation of Live Aid, were founded during the hours spent collecting food from local grocers and helping those who sought shelter with Dublin Simon. Early volunteer Jim Murray also spoke movingly about his time with Simon in the early seventies and Luka Bloom provided poignant music on the day, particularly moving was a rendition of Streets of London, which Luka sang as

Streets of Dublin. This song was first recorded in 1969, the year Simon was founded in Dublin. Jimmy, a long-time service user with Dublin Simon also spoke of his experiences over the years while Brian, a former service user, read a beautiful and heartfelt poem he'd written about his experiences.

Dublin Simon Community would like to thank everyone who joined

Welcome



Looking back over this past Christmas and early 2010 period here at Dublin Simon we had multiple challenges in the community. We were constantly stretched managing a huge cluster of Fundraising events. Our "House of Cards" promoted in the Irish Times for 10 years now, the 24 hour Carolathon on Grafton Street, over 40 choirs to coordinate around the city and many, many church gate collections. We had special and generous support for our Christmas Appeal with Marianne Finucane. Christmas FM created great joy amongst all ages; Glen Hansard busked on Christmas Eve on Grafton Street with guests including Bono. All of these events were desperately needed to bridge the Dublin Simon funding gap.

Running frantically alongside all of this enthusiasm we had the work of the Dublin Simon

Community Soup Run and Rough Sleeping Team. These part-time volunteers and staff members were out day and night all over Christmas and the New Year. They worked tirelessly to contact and engage unfortunate people who found themselves homeless, often ill or stubbornly determined to be at home on the streets in seriously dangerous cold weather conditions of -5 to -10 degrees.

Thankfully, cooperation and coordination demonstrated by the DCC, HSE, the Gardaí, working with Night Shelters, Emergency Hostels, the Free Phone and Night Bus saved lives, unnecessary hardship and exposure to many people who were too weak, helpless, vulnerable and destitute to care.

Because of this 'ill wind' with such poor weather conditions, we had to succeed in reducing the numbers of rough sleeping on these dreadful nights to the

smallest possible. During these exceptional circumstances, with the Local Authorities and NGO's working together, we put 'Lives before Protocols' and opened wide the access to accommodation beyond the normal boundaries. We were asking "Why not?" rather than "Why" attracting and stimulating new leadership and achieving cooperation. The outcome was the lowest number of entrenched rough sleepers left outside across the City. We gave them nourishment, shelter, acceptance, respect – with encouragement and hope.

Your help and belief in Dublin Simon Community continues to make all this possible securing our presence for those most in need.

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us on the day and contributed to the event in so many ways. The event was sponsored by Jacobs Fruitfield and the food was provided by Baxter Storey, both of whom we wouldn't have had such a successful day without.

The 40th Anniversary of Dublin Simon is commemorated in our Annual Review which features a large memory poster with snippets of Simon over the last 40 years. If you would like a copy of this or any further information please contact (01) 6715551 or you can download a version of it on www.dubsimon.ie/publications/annual-reports



Bob Geldof is a former Dublin Simon volunteer and attended the 40th Anniversary Commemoration Event for Dublin Simon Community in the Coach House, Dublin Castle.

Dublin Simon Health Survey

PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS OF SERVICE USERS HIGHLIGHTED

Homelessness, by its nature, has an acute impact on the general well-being of a person. A recent health survey conducted throughout Dublin Simon services has highlighted just how extreme this impact can be.

The survey found that three out of five people using Dublin Simon Community services have a diagnosed physical health conditions while a further two out of five people have a diagnosed

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mental health condition. Of these more than one in four suffer from both a diagnosed physical and mental health condition.

The survey, which was conducted over a one week period, consisted of a representative sample of people accessing Dublin Simon services and covered both diagnosed and undiagnosed physical and mental health conditions.

The most common three diagnosed health conditions were Hepatitis B and/or C, liver related conditions and respiratory conditions. All of these conditions can be related to circumstances experienced by people who experience homelessness for a period of time and are evident



throughout Dublin Simon services.

Mental health issues were also very noticeable in the survey results, with many people reporting both diagnosed and possible undiagnosed mental health issues. The

most commonly reported was depression while anxiety and schizophrenia were also widespread.

The results from this survey highlight the long held belief within Dublin Simon that homelessness is not just about whether or not you have a roof over your head. Those that we work with on a daily basis need more than just shelter. As well as understanding and a friendly face the necessary supports need to be in place so people can move out of homelessness and receive the necessary medical assistance to overcome illnesses and/or care for health conditions aggravated due to prolonged periods spent homeless.

Throughout Dublin Simon services we provide help and assistance on a daily basis to people who are experiencing health conditions, both physical and mental. Importantly, we advocate continually for people so they can access their health entitlements while we also refer, and accompany, people to appropriate services that can help with their own specific issues if Dublin Simon is not in a position to do so. With ongoing changes in the provision of homeless services happening throughout the Dublin area, Dublin Simon will continue to voice loudly the need and necessity for the appropriate supports to be provided for people who have experienced, are experiencing, or at risk of homelessness.

The health survey can be downloaded from the Dublin Simon website at www.dubsimon.ie/publications or if you would like a copy sent to you please contact the Dublin Simon Community on (01) 6715551.

New Corporate Programme – Food for Simon



The words Bob Geldof shared with us at our 40th anniversary were "If you need food... just ask for it" and that is what we aim to do.

Jacob Fruitfield Food Group sponsors the Dublin Simon Soup Run. This relationship formed the basis of a new initiative encouraging the food industry to supply food to Dublin Simon services, free of charge.

This programme, the brainchild of Michael Carey (Chairman of Jacob Fruitfield Food Group), to date incorporates 10 food suppliers across 32 products using BWG distributors and Fruit and Veg for our Emergency and Long Term Residential Supported Housing. The annual savings goal is €450,000.

Participating companies include Jacob Fruitfield Food Group, Kellogg's, Shamrock Foods,

Barry's Tea, Britvic C&C, Premier Foods, Flahavan's, Zeus Packaging, Donnelly Fruit & Veg and Nestle. Mr Carey, through his extensive contacts in the "Food" industry, now envisages this programme extending to all food requirements, cleaning and medical supplies in Dublin. The programme will also pilot in Cork during 2010.

This programme has already become known as "Food for Simon" between Michael Carey and participants and has attracted much interest in the food industry.

To recognise companies involved and to recruit further support we will communicate the "Food for Simon" message through Checkout Magazine starting in April 2010. With the help of Kevin Kelly of Checkout and the design teams at Irish International BBDO we have received free



advertisement and editorial space to spread this message.

Keep an eye on this space for future updates on the Food for Simon programme.



In Dublin Simon Community Treatment Services nourishing meals are provided to 23 people three times a day, all of whom are at different stages of recovery.

A Day In The Life: Dublin Simon Detox

Every day in Dublin Simon's Detox Programme a group of people face into a challenge they have chosen; a challenge which will help them end the vicious cycle of homelessness and break their alcohol addiction. Next door sits the Guinness Brewery, while off licenses litter many street corners in the vicinity. The temptation is always at the door.

A day in Detox is never the same. There are 11 beds for men or women, and because residents are either on a 7 or 21 day medical programme, there are always people at different stages

Every Thursday a health talk is held, which gives medical advice and feedback around residents' behaviour.

As people go through the medically assisted detoxification programme they will come across difficulties and ailments that might not have been previously evident. For instance, someone

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of recovery. The house also accommodates those in longer term rehabilitation, but the two programmes are quite separate.

Night nursing staff hand over to day staff first thing in the morning, who then work on new admissions and referrals. Nurses also hand over to project workers and volunteers for the day, and dispense medications at regular intervals. A doctor is also available at the house 5 days a week.

Every day has a strict routine, which teaches residents about the importance of time and appointments. There are three group sessions each day – a morning meeting, an informative session such as relapse prevention, and then an emotional awareness or open session.

might have toothache or shoulder pain that inhibits them, which they hadn't previously been particularly aware of. They will also begin to face the pains and complications in their own lives that may have been screened by drinking. It is very important for staff and volunteers to be aware of these conditions when working with people who are detoxing.

As well as their key working and attending group sessions, all residents take part in house duties. These are usually things like tidying the kitchen or tv room. Regaining a sense of responsibility and inclusion is an important part of the programme.

Residents will often leave the house to meet up with family or friends, and depending on the stage of their recovery this too can also often be a difficult task.



A resident takes some timeout during the Dublin Simon detox programme.

Joanna, a full time volunteer in Detox, says her role is very much about spending time with residents and making them feel at ease. She says that especially when people arrive, they can be in a lot of pain. “Openness and honesty are very important. People here are dealing with their emotions, so these things need to exist for them.”

Her role is to assist staff, and she will often collect pharmacy medications or escort the residents to hospital or other appointments.

Residents who are due to complete the programme are urged to apply for a rehab programme which is a longer term rehabilitation programme. Following successful completion of this programme service users will continue to link in with the Aftercare and Tenancy Sustainment teams, who will support them in securing and maintaining accommodation.

To find out more about Detox and other Dublin Simon services please see www.dubsimon.ie/services

A Volunteer's Perspective

Emma de Bruyn, from Australia, is a full-time volunteer with the Dublin Simon Community and raises awareness of homelessness throughout the schools in Dublin. She does this through school visits, the provision of educational resources and supporting students in their homelessness related projects.

After leaving my home in Australia, I arrived in Ireland last June, and knew it would take a while to find work given the state of the economy.

When a friend recommended volunteering with Dublin Simon, I was thrilled to find out they were looking for someone for a role that was perfect for me. I am now spending a year as a Full Time Volunteer with Dublin Simon, as the schools and education speaker. My role is to visit schools and help raise awareness about homelessness.

“I think we all walk past people every day, not understanding how things became so bad and how individual people cope with their situation.”

In Sydney and London, I had worked with large companies, but I always knew the corporate environment wasn't ideal for me. I have worked in financial services, and with one giant investment bank in Sydney.

When meeting staff and volunteers in the Simon housing and treatment services, I see the true compassion and love for their work. Some staff have said to me that it's the type of work



Emma de Bruyn, School Volunteer at a recent trip to Hartstown Community School where the school was presented with the Fun Run School Fundraisers of the Year award.

they would do for free. I believe it is such a privilege to be in a role that is so rewarding and meaningful.

It is incredibly noticeable, not only since working with Simon, to see how many people are struggling on the streets of Dublin. I think we all walk past people every day, not understanding how things became so bad and how

individual people cope with their situation.

I thoroughly enjoy visiting the school classes – whichever schools, whichever age group. On the whole, students are very interested in the issues, and they can see homelessness both in their own areas and in the city centre. I realise I am the person representing Simon, and giving students an insight into the work that we do. I love it

when the questions are asked, because I feel they are exploring the reasons for homelessness and ways of addressing it, and also the types of issues that society faces. Education is a lot about giving people a new way of thinking, and a reason to ask questions in, and of, our society.

I also assist with general fundraising and communications activities – and no week in the office is ever the same. Between the annual Fun Run, corporate events, and the recent 24 hour Christmas Carol-athon there is never a dull moment!

The full time volunteer programme is a wonderful opportunity to take time out of a formal career, and to gain practical experience in social care, or grow personally.

There are over 250 volunteers with the Dublin Simon Community, over 20 of which are full-time. For more information on volunteering go to www.dubsimon.ie/volunteering

What's Coming Up in 2010

This year plans to be as busy as ever for Dublin Simon Community. With numerous changes going on in the homeless sector and the continued issue of homelessness still so evident on our streets we will be holding plenty of fundraising events to help maintain our projects throughout the year. Your support and/ or participation at any point throughout the year is extremely appreciated. To find out information on any of the below please contact (01)671551 or email fundraising@dubsimon.ie and we'll be in touch.

April 29th – 3rd May (Bank Holiday Weekend) Grand Canal Walk, Raise A Grand for the Grand!

Join travel writer and avid rambler John Mulligan on this five day walk from Ringsend in Dublin to Shannon Harbour in Co. Offaly. See the beautiful scenery and learn about the fascinating history of the Grand Canal on this cross-country ramble for people of all ages and experience.



May 15th – 23rd High Atlas Mountains, Morocco

Climb North Africa's highest peak Jebel Toubkal during a week of exhilarating treks in the High Atlas Mountains. You will stay in refuges and Berber villages throughout what promises to be the trek of a lifetime.

June 7th Flora Mini-Marathon

Get Fit, Have Fun and Help Us Put Homelessness on the Run! Join the Dublin Simon Mini-Marathon Team on June 7th. While getting fit and having fun you'll also be in with a chance to win a great fundraising prize with Girls Night In.

September 7th Launch of Annual Review

Attend and support the launch of Dublin Simon Community's Annual Review from 2009. The event will include guest speakers and look at issues topical to homelessness in 2010 while reviewing the year that Simon turned 40.

October 3rd Simon Week

Seven Days of Action on Homelessness will include awareness events throughout Ireland and in Dublin. Join in and get involved in helping us put homelessness on the agenda.

October 9th Dublin Simon Fun Run

For walkers and runners of all ages and fitness level, the annual Dublin Simon Fun Run is the longest running charity event in the Phoenix Park. So clean up those sneakers, dust off the Chicken Suit and join us on October 9th.



November and December Sing for Simon

Use your voice to help end homelessness this Christmas by either organising your own carol singing event or joining in with one of ours. We want everyone to Sing for Simon this Christmas.

House of Cards

Companies, big and small, make a donation to Dublin Simon instead of sending corporate Christmas cards. All donations are recognised in full page ads in the Irish Times.



21st December 24 Hour Christmas Carol-athon

Join our 24 hour carol-athon of non-stop Christmas Carols on the Longest night of the year, December 21st. Everyone can lend their voice to this 24 hour extravaganza on Grafton Street.

Christmas Gig

In previous years Dublin Simon Community has had support from Glen Hansard, Jack L, Mundy, Paddy Casey, and many more top class performers for their annual Christmas gig so keep your ear to the ground for this year's star line-up.

For more information on any of the above see www.dubsimon.ie or call (01) 6715551

Ushers Island Gardening Project

Recently, staff, volunteers and residents in Ushers Island (Dublin Simon treatment services) took on the project of getting their garden in shape. And some project it was! Former resident Paul Keegan put the experience down on paper.

SIMON OASIS

*We walk out the back door, let out a big sigh
Their could be bodies in there, the grass is so high
A shadow behind us, it's the one and only
Not Diarmuid Gavin, but a man called TONY*

*He sets out a plan and hopes it comes true
But knows there's a lot of work to do
He rallies the troops and we get down to graft
Twas might hard work, but also a laugh*

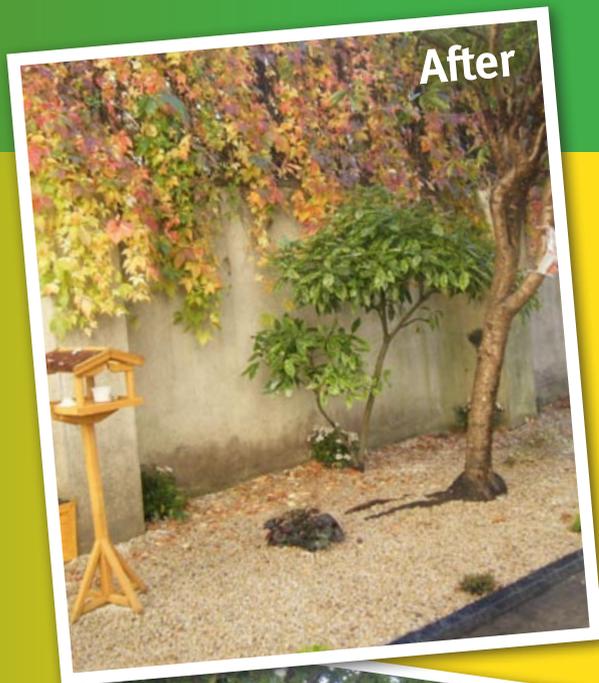
*Behind every man there is a great woman
And good aul LOUISE kept the money coming
The gazebo at first, then the gravel one day
And when the flowers came we all said 'HOORAY'*

*Slowly but surely it all came together
We ripped up the weeds, the trees and the heather
The gazebo was painted, the shrubs were put down
Smiles all around, not a sign of a frown*

*So fair play folks to one and all
Who put in the hours for the long haul
A good place to sit, relax or for reading
Our very own DUBLIN SIMON EDEN!*

By Paul Keegan
Former Resident.

The staff, volunteers and residents in Ushers Island are hoping to continue with their gardening achievements and would like to create a memorial garden in the front garden in remembrance of those who have passed away during their time homeless, many of whom spent time with Dublin Simon Community. If you would like to help them with this, you can donate specifically to this project from our website www.dubsimon.ie and choose Donate to a Project of Your Choice on the homepage.



To get involved or for more information
please contact:

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Dublin Simon
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