A close-up, low-angle shot of a man with a weathered face, a beard, and a mustache. He is looking upwards and to the left with a contemplative expression. The background is a heavily rusted, brown metal surface. The overall tone is gritty and industrial.

working
through
hard
times



Dublin Simon
Community

Annual Review 2010

Annual Review 2010

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Review of Challenges

It's never a choice...

Our commitment to sustain services in 2010 was more essential than ever. People were experiencing constant pressure due to ill-health, vulnerability, uncertain access to accommodation and limited move-on options for those finding themselves homeless.

With increased presentations becoming a daily occurrence, we provided services to 2,532 individuals in 2010 and increased the number of emergency beds provided per night to 169 - an increase of 27.5% on 2009 figures. Emergency accommodation was stretched throughout the year, and in November the city-wide rough sleeper count was 60. We viewed this figure as an absolute minimum in relation to people sleeping rough in Dublin on any given night as this did not include people in squats, couch surfing or sleeping rough in parks.

The 2010 health snapshot of people using Dublin Simon services highlights again the extraordinary severity of the health and related issues facing people who are homeless. Homelessness Makes You Sick finds that at least 60% of respondents had underlying physical health problems; 43% had underlying mental health problems, 38% indicated problem alcohol use; 44% indicated problem drug use; 15% self harmed; and 8% had attempted suicide over the previous six months. These findings demonstrate the challenges that people who are long term homeless face in trying to repair their broken lives while being very sick and vulnerable, and are compounded by the fact that 35% of respondents have been homeless for longer than 5 years.

Unfortunately the previous Government's promises for 1200 units of accommodation did not materialise, leaving Dublin's critical housing needs unsatisfied. We still have people, many with deteriorating health, living for long periods in night-only shelters, with limited day services and support. This is because we currently have a housing "famine" where surplus housing stock appears to be stuck between NAMA and the Banks.

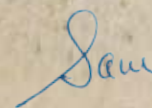
*"Simon is the place people turn to
when there is no-one or
nowhere else to go."*

We have over 2000 people in the greater Dublin area classified as homeless, with numbers continuing to rise due to both deteriorating individual and family circumstances. At least 1000 people are in emergency accommodation or sleeping rough every night throughout Dublin. This does not include people from abroad who are being treated like remnants of past times, left to hide, concealed in squats and caught also in our economic uncertainty with little apparent benefit or social consideration. Simon is the place people turn to when there is no-one or nowhere else to go. Today and throughout our history, very vulnerable people have faced this darkness. It is for these people that we provide a friendly face, a warm cup of soup and the support and shelter they need to help regain their self-worth and usefulness.

Without the services of Simon over the past 42 years, many lives would have been lost and many more would have continued to falter. It is with the support of the general public through both time and donations that we have been able to sustain our focus and we are determined to continue to do so.

With the tireless compassion that Simon staff, volunteers and supporters are recognised for and through our undeterred belief in the people that we serve we will continue to rebuild broken lives. Your help, consideration and belief in Dublin Simon Community secures our response and makes it all possible.

We appreciate your sustained belief. Thank you for helping us, it's very much appreciated always.



Sam McGuinness

CEO



Chairperson's Report 2010

There can be no doubt that 2010 has been interesting for the Dublin Simon Community, and the country as a whole, on several fronts. Aside from the issues which would be expected in relation to funding services in a struggling economy, there have also been major developments in the sector with the continuation of the reconfiguration of services under the Homeless Agency.

All of this has required everyone in the Dublin Simon Community from service users, volunteers, staff and the management team to show great flexibility, dedication and initiative. We know that there are more hard years to come but the excellent work done during 2010 and before will pay off come what may. The Community is leaner while continuing to fight against reducing the range of services available to assist people experiencing homelessness. Strong public campaigning combined with a constant positive engagement with the statutory agencies and the dedication of Community members is achieving results in terms of funding so that frontline services can be preserved, and we hope expanded, in the future.

Members of Dublin Simon want to see positive achievements for service users. It does not bring anyone joy to dwell on things like 'austerity' and having to fight for funds to help people who are homeless but it should bring a sense of achievement. To be thinking of how best to expand and develop in these times is a very good place to be. Already in 2010 Dublin Simon has moved to put its presence in Wicklow and Kildare on a firm footing. These are areas where people are experiencing homelessness and where previously no Simon Community had a presence. Co-operation with the other Simon Communities has intensified enormously over the past couple of years and we continue to look at how best the Simon Communities can make an impact nationally.



"May you live in interesting times" is supposed to be a Chinese curse and 2010 was interesting times. Nonetheless, because of the way Dublin Simon has met the challenge of recent years, it is not all about cuts; the future holds new opportunities for the Community to combat homelessness and continue to provide people experiencing homelessness with greater options, support and assistance.

The Dublin Simon Community is strong, we can be confident about the future which means we can keep those marginalised in our society at the top of the agenda at a time when that is likely to be more necessary than at any time since our foundation in 1969.

Ed Farrelly

CHAIRPERSON



News in brief

HEALTH SNAPSHOT SURVEY

During 2010 Dublin Simon conducted a health survey among service users. The results found that 60% of respondents had a diagnosed physical health condition, 44% had a diagnosed mental health condition, and 24% had a combination of both. It is evident from these research results that Homelessness Makes you Sick and the required supports need to be in place to support people with complex health needs to enable them to move out of homelessness. Simon are working towards these goals.

SPEAK OUT

This year saw our first ever Speak Out in November. The event was organised by our Service User Development Group and is a way for people to communicate with and influence people and organisations that make decisions that affect their lives. The initial outing was a tremendous success with 55 service users, staff and volunteers arriving in the Exchange in Temple Bar to swap ideas, suggestions and debate.

New ideas came to light and as part of the Service User Participation Strategy Dublin Simon, in conjunction with the Service User Development Group, will be working hard to bring as many of these ideas to fruition as possible. The event was such a success, a second one was organised to take place in early 2011.

PILOT MOBILE HEALTH CLINIC

In April 2010, the Dublin Simon Rough Sleeper Team, in conjunction with Safetynet, Chrystalis and the Order of Malta Ireland, piloted a mobile health clinic. The service, a mobile vehicle converted into a clinic, aims to bring primary health care and harm reduction services to people who are homeless and female street sex workers while also providing GP trainees with experience of working with hard to reach groups.

In 2010, the service provided medical care to 288 patients and

operated 66 GP clinics. The most common presentations reported were addiction related problems (27%) and respiratory related illnesses (18%).

On the successful completion of the pilot in 2011 a new 'made to measure' mobile clinic will be launched which will be able to travel throughout the city providing these vital services.

SLI

The Support to Live Independently Programme was rolled out in late 2010. This service is for people who are moving from homelessness to independent living. The overall aim is to help people integrate into their local community while also providing links to local services and supports in the area.

SLI Staff are based in all four local authorities in Dublin and will be working with approximately 100 people. For more information please call (01) 635 4888 or see www.dubsimon.ie/services

SIMON IN KILDARE AND WICKLOW

Dublin Simon Community continued to improve and expand services in 2010 with a strategic focus in the Kildare, Wicklow and Meath areas. Dublin Simon is working in conjunction with Dundalk Simon in the Meath region.

Research undertaken in Wicklow has highlighted the need for a low threshold emergency accommodation and also the need for Long Term Supported Housing. Similar research was ongoing in Kildare at the end of 2010. Simon will continue to work with local partners to provide the required services for people experiencing homelessness in these areas.

FUN RUN 2010

The Dublin Simon Annual Fun Run, held in the Phoenix Park, attracted a colossal amount of spectators and participants in

2010. The main event had over 2,500 people participating while other races on the day, including an U7's 200m dash and an 8 – 12 year olds Running Funny race, brought all the family out in force. The schools added extra colour to the park with plenty of fancy dress for Five Miles of Fun. Hartstown Community School maintained their hold on the Perpetual Trophy after an amazing fundraising drive by the school. Also a big thank you to media sponsors 98FM and Metro Herald who were pivotal in helping us attract the crowds. Roll on Fun Run 2011...

NEW SOCIAL CLUB NIGHT

A new night was added to our Social Club, thanks to the efforts and commitment of Pioneer Investments who will fund the extra night and provide volunteers. The social club is run by dedicated part-time volunteers. Pioneer is extremely supportive of our Social Club which now runs from Monday to Thursday.

The Club, while providing an evening haven for people on the street or in our treatment services, also encourages clients to get involved in meaningful activities and have fun while doing it.

MICHAEL CONROY ROOM & SMOKING SHELTER

Michael Conroy is a former and now deceased resident of Sean Mac Dermott Street. His family made a donation of €1500 in 2010 which was used to build a stud wall to create the Michael Conroy room; this much needed space is used for key working sessions and the facilitation of case conferences. A plaque bearing Michael's name is outside the door and his photo hangs in the room. In 2010, proceeds from the Donor 2 Deed project were also used to build a smoking shelter in Sean Mac Dermott Street.

Taking to the streets with Simon...

Dublin Simon Community works at the coalface of homelessness. Staff and volunteers are dedicated, through various services, to providing care and help to those who need it most. As well as our housing and treatment services, Dublin Simon has a number of services dedicated to these needs. Here's a brief insight into life at the fore over a 24 hour period...

Early Morning Street Work

Martina Bergin, Rough Sleeper Team. 6am.

The early morning street work shift begins at 6am and takes place every fortnight. The purpose is to give us a brief snapshot of numbers in the immediate city centre sleeping rough the previous night. The shift begins by checking the handovers for rough sleeping verified locations which we document on a daily basis. We've had numerous reports of people rough sleeping down by Connolly station so we made this our first priority for the morning and off we head.

After Connolly we met with Dublin City Council workers who direct us to the area around Cineplex cinema - we are told that three foreign nationals usually sleep rough in a lane way that runs parallel to the cinema.

Grafton Street and Henry Street are key spots for rough sleepers and we ensure that we check these areas as early as possible in order to meet or count as many rough sleepers as possible before they move on when the streets become busier. This morning six people are sleeping rough on Grafton street, three outside Brown Thomas, two outside BT2 and one outside the Hallmark store.

Fishamble Street is another of those areas that we always check as we are aware of a number of people rough sleeping there on an ongoing basis. This morning five foreign nationals are bedded down. Temple Bar, around the Wall of Fame, is also known to the team as an area for rough sleepers. When we check this location two people are bedded down, they appear to be white Irish males.

Internet cafés are often regularly used for rough sleepers and on checking the 24hour internet café on the quays we find one person sleeping on a chair. While counting rough sleepers on the street we also contact A&E departments and Garda stations in the city centre. Pearse Street Garda station have accommodated three rough sleepers that night and James Hospital have accommodated one.

Next we check in on our entrenched rough sleepers around the city who we're in regular contact with and ensure they are ok for everything. We finish our shift by calling to two of our rough sleepers who are in a car and escort them to see a doctor. After this we head back to the office and log all our findings onto the early morning street work statistics and handover for the day team to follow up on.

In total that morning we came across 22 rough sleepers in the city centre.

Rough Sleeper Team Day Shift

Christopher Gard, Rough Sleeper Team. 11am.

This morning, after checking in at the office for a briefing, I head to the new court building on Parkgate St. I have prepared a letter to give to Adam* whom I have known for the last number of years. Adam is one of our more entrenched clients who sleeps in a park in the south part of the city. I have met with him increasingly often over the last couple of months as he has indicated an interest in accessing an alcohol detoxification programme. He is in court this morning and my hope is that my letter stating our involvement might have a positive impact on the judge's ruling.

Adam's solicitor asks me if I could sit in while the hearing takes place as this might be of benefit for Adam. Naturally I agree and whether or not it was

my letter or the solicitors juggling that resulted in a suspended sentence I will never know. However, Adam is very grateful for my presence in the court room and thanks me profoundly for being there.

Afterwards we walk down the Luas line. When we come near the museum, I bring him over to Oak House where he can shower and change into some new clothes, or "clobber" as Adam calls it. The staff in Oak House are very accommodating and they understand the need of flexibility when we bring a client over to use their washing facilities.

Down on the quays I leave Adam as I am meeting with another client called Sarah* to help her fill in some paperwork and arrange an appointment at the Mobile Health Clinic.

After leaving Sarah I grab a very late lunch on the run, and go looking for a couple that the team has been working with over an extended period. They are both rough sleeping in the city centre and I thought today would be a good day to see if they needed any clothes from the Dublin Simon Shop. I find them in their usual spot and after ensuring they were ok with me visiting them I ask if they want to get some clothes. They gladly accept and I escort them over to the shop. I ask them how they're getting on and they say they are keeping their fingers crossed that they will be

Taking to the streets with Simon...

cont.

successful for the Housing First initiative. This is a new pilot scheme to help the most entrenched of rough sleepers come off the streets.

Leaving the couple I head towards the quays. On the millennium bridge I approach a young male that I have not seen before. Identifying myself and giving him our information card I ask if he has anywhere to stay. He had been asked to leave the family home a few days ago and had been sleeping rough since. He had contacted Freefone the previous night and was given a pick up time for the Nightbus of 12.30am. Unfortunately, all beds had been allocated by the time the Nightbus arrived and he was given a sleeping bag and sent on his way. I tried to explain how the system works and offered to escort him to the Central Placement Service (CPS) to register as homeless and see if a bed could be allocated for him tonight. At CPS we speak to one of the allocation officers and we are able to secure a bed for one night on the condition he could pay €4.50 at the door.

I arrange to meet him the following morning to sit down and go through his options with him so we can help him out of homelessness asap. When we part, I head back to the office to log up my actions on the database and handover for the evening team.

Soup Run

Vanessa Feenstra, Soup Run Volunteer. 18.45pm.

A typical evening on the Soup Run usually starts around 6.45pm when sandwiches are packed and flasks are filled. This evening, we plan on who is doing what route and if there is anyone in particular that the Rough Sleeper Team have asked us to keep a look out for. After deciding who's doing what we head out on the streets with our sambos, flasks and volunteer partners.

"Oh hiya luv, yeah cuppa tea would be great". It looks like tonight is turning into one of our regular Saturday evenings. "Your teeth are so white luv", I hear from a young girl on Grafton Street when we stop to offer her a sandwich and some soup. We continue down to Kildare Street and find one of our regulars. "Oh yes, the tulip girl, haven't seen you in a while. How come you're not on the bikes tonight", he says, remembering one evening last year when we did our route on the Dublin Bikes.

"How are the horses Vanessa?" another regular asks me. While my colleague gets his cup of tea and sandwich, I show him a few pictures of my horse on my phone. We continue to Dawson Street where another of our regulars chats with my male colleague about the GAA results from today. We keep going towards St. Stephen's Green and my fellow volunteer and I chat about how we fought through the snow last December doing the Soup Run.

As the night progresses to an end we have met 14 people. We referred one couple for the needle exchange, we rang the RST for one client who is looking for a bed and we had to disappoint 2 people that we don't carry coffee or cigarettes. Around half nine we meet back with our fellow volunteers in Capel Street who have been providing the same services on different routes that night, and conclude that tonight was all in all a typical night with the Soup Run.

Mobile Health Clinic

Tina McHugh, Rough Sleeper Team. 7pm.

Due to adverse weather conditions there's severe traffic congestion around the city centre so we hit the ground running tonight in an attempt to clear the back log of patients who need to access the Mobile Health Clinic. The plan is to service two locations; first, we park up at St. Stephen's Green and will, later in the evening travel to a hostel on the north side of the city. Tonight, as always, we have one team dedicated to the health unit and two others on the ground who feed into the service by approaching rough sleepers in the vicinity and escorting them to the clinic if they are in need of a doctor.

The first patient of the evening is a female in her thirties who needs treatment for a hand injury. She is currently rough sleeping in the Grafton St. area, is visually impaired and navigates her way around with the assistance of a guide dog. Originally from South America she is reluctant to present at A&E for fear of deportation.

Throughout the evening the GP has 12 consultations which is close to full capacity for this service. Half of those who present are women and most presentations are for treatment of injuries, respiratory conditions, pregnancy testing and detox referrals.

As well as operating as a Health Unit we also offer support with accessing emergency accommodation, provide emergency harm reduction paraphernalia and liaise with statutory agencies around entitlements/ payments etc. We carry out a brief assessment with all clients attending this service with a view to identifying areas of need, with immediate needs addressed on the night with a view to offering a follow up meeting for more detailed pieces of work.

Tonight, there is only one brief intervention with a patient who wants a 'script' for Benzodiazepines which we do not prescribe on the unit because of the seriously addictive nature of the medication.

After a busy and productive shift we wrapped up the clinic at 11pm on Morning Star Avenue and headed back to base in the Phoenix Park.

The Nightbus.

Eleanor Dwyer, Service Operational Worker. 8pm.

The shift started as always with the loading of sleeping bags into the bus – 22 bags were given out last night so we're taking no chances and filling every available space in the bus. Our next stop is the office to start the paperwork – this means imputing the ten sheets of names, dates of births and pick-up points and times for all the people that had called Freephone looking for a bed that night. Recording the correct information is an important part of the job for accurate and consistent data collection. Next we start the cursory phone calls to all the hostels, to see if there are any beds available to place our first pick ups, who we are due to collect at 9.30pm. There are four beds open, not nearly enough, so we have to cross our fingers and hope that only four Service Users will show up – but of course six do...

So off we go with six in the van and only enough beds for four. This means that we have to break into our supply of extra capacity beds – these were originally used during the cold weather snaps we had last winter, but now, even on warm humid nights these beds are required. We try not to use them until as late as possible, but with no other options and with another pick-up imminent we really have no choice. After 10pm more beds begin to free up so for a spell we place people in hostels thick and fast. Once the bigger hostels are filled we're back to the extra capacity beds

with a scattering of regular beds. Don't let the word 'bed' in extra capacity bed fool you into thinking it's anything more than a mattress on the floor. And while a considerably better option than sleeping rough, this is not the most suitable of options in the long term. And yet this is the only service available for many on a nightly basis.

So with the first ten sheets completed, and people placed it's time to stop off for some more. There's another thirty names to add to the sixty we've already received. We're fast running out of beds with sleeping bags looming large as our only option. The customary and difficult 'debate' over who should get the last remaining beds and who is forced to take a sleeping bag and face into a night on the streets, takes place outside Liberty Hall tonight. It ends with a few racial slurs being thrown at the lucky pair who got the final two beds – simply because they come to the Nightbus window first. After we doled out bags to the unlucky ones, it's a spin out to Dun Laoghaire for those in the bus. Following that drop off we go back into town to break the news to the next group that all that we can provide are sleeping bags. Given that we had told them that they would have to sleep rough, the Service Users were for the most part quite gracious in accepting their bags, a sign perhaps that they are resigned to the fact that sleeping bags have become a constant possibility if using the Nightbus Service. No-one should be resigned to that.

We field a few more phone calls from the Freephone service and offer out some more bags which are not always taken, and then it's back to the office to finish off the rest of our paperwork and reflect on the shift that's been. Tonight there were 59 beds available and 59 beds were filled. We gave out 9 sleeping bags, less than previous nights. It's nearly 4am. Our Rough Sleeper Team will be out and about in the next couple hours to meet many of the people that we've recently placed but will still have to leave the hostels once 8am arrives...

**Names have been changed to protect people's identity*

Housing Services

Rough Sleeper Team

The Dublin Simon Rough Sleeper Team encourages rough sleepers to access accommodation, health and social welfare services. In 2010, 1,955 individuals accessed Rough Sleeper Team services. These include referrals to emergency accommodation and longer term housing, and addiction and treatment services.

Mobile Health Clinic

In 2010, in conjunction with Safetynet and Chrysalis, Dublin Simon piloted a mobile health clinic for people who are homeless (see page 8).

Backpack Needle Exchange

The team also provide an emergency backpack needle exchange, focusing on harm reduction and provided an average of 212 exchanges a month.

Keyworking

Key workers also provide a care planning service working for individual's most pressing needs enabling clients to move away from homelessness and into safe and secure accommodation.

Emergency Accommodation

Dublin Simon Community provides low threshold 24 hours, emergency accommodation for men and women experiencing homelessness in Dublin. The emergency shelter provides 30 beds for up to six months with five beds ring fenced for women. A night shelter also provides a further 17 emergency beds. The opening hours of the night shelter were extended in 2010.

During the year 763 people required emergency accommodation. Of these 366 were presenting to these services for the first time. The majority of occupants are male, Irish and between the ages of 31 and 49, with over 50% stating they are homeless for periods of three to five years or more.

Many accessing emergency accommodation services require very little support to live independently. Just under half (44%) require no supports at all. For those who have been in longer term emergency

accommodation, this figure falls to 11% suggesting that extended periods of homelessness can increase the level of support required to live independently.

In 2010 DSC also reconfigured our Transitional Housing service to a short term stay service. People from the other Emergency Accommodations identified as being able to live independently were offered this service. Those using the service had the opportunity to live in their own apartments while sourcing more appropriate long term accommodation.

High Supported Housing

Dublin Simon Community provides three supported housing units with varying levels of support depending on the needs of the individual. Our two high support houses in Sean Mac Dermott St and North Circular Road (NCR) cater for 44 residents between them. The services are similar with one focusing on residents in the 31 – 49 year age group (60%) and the latter working with the majority of residents in the 50 – 65 year age group (48%). Residents in both services are mainly Irish with 30% female and 70% male.

Many service users who require high support accommodation have endured long periods of homelessness with 78% in NCR and 60% in Sean Mac Dermott Street reporting that they were homeless for more than five years. Long periods of homelessness has a substantial effect on an peoples health and wellbeing so demand for high support housing is extensive. Availability of beds results in a vast numbers of applications from services throughout the city.

Dublin Simon Community also provide low support housing for 19 residents in Canal Road where service users live in stand alone units and take care of their daily routine themselves. Staff are available during the day to provide any support they may require.

Specialist Services

Detox & Rehab

Dublin Simon Community provides a three week medically assisted alcohol detox programme and a three month rehab residential service which takes a holistic approach to help identify issues contributing to alcohol addiction. Dublin Simon provides the only residential low threshold addiction services in Ireland that work solely with people who are either homeless. Detox provides 11 beds with Rehab providing 12 beds usually accessed by people successfully moving on from the detox programme. In 2010 221 people accessed these services. Over 80% were male with 60% between the ages of 31 and 49. Long term homelessness is common among the service users with 36% in Rehab reporting experiencing periods of homelessness of five years or more. The majority of people accessing treatment services are registered as homeless and are referred to addiction services from a variety of sources including emergency shelters and the Dublin Simon Rough Sleeper Team.

The level of support required after leaving residential treatment services varies with 26% of service users leaving detox requesting housing with on site supports while almost 60% of those leaving rehab move on to housing with visiting support. Demand for Dublin Simon treatment services is high.

Aftercare

An aftercare programme is available to all services users upon leaving a residential treatment service and those who may be at risk of relapse because of homelessness. The programme has a two pronged approach with one to one sessions with a Project Worker who will support a service user in a number of areas including money management, accommodation and education. The group aspect of the programme involves sessions on relapse prevention and an open peer support group. In 2010 Aftercare, worked with 70 people, the majority are male with over 65% between the ages of 31 and 49. Just under one third of aftercare clients report that they have been homeless for more than 2 years with about 60% of them coming to the service directly from a residential addiction service.

Dublin City Tenancy Sustainment

Dublin City Tenancy Sustainment (DCTS) works with people who were previously homeless or in danger of becoming homeless in cooperation with Dublin City Council. DCTS works with single people, couples and families and provides a care planning service which helps them to maintain a tenancy by providing support in a number of key areas. In 2010, DCTS worked with 173 people evenly split between males and females with just over 60% aged between 31 and 49. Approximately 70% of people accessing the service have experienced homelessness before with many requiring visiting supports to help maintain a tenancy. In 2011, Tenancy Sustainment Prevention Service will be gradually phased out to be replaced with the new Support to Live Independently (SLI) service which operates in all four local authorities in Dublin.

Resettlement

The Resettlement team provided support to enable people to move out of homelessness and to find appropriate long term accommodation. The service identifies the needs of an individual and works with them to find appropriate housing as well as providing links to key services including health and education. The Resettlement team worked with 117 cases in 2010, the majority were male with almost 60% between the ages of 31 and 49. 58% of referrals to Resettlement in 2010 came from temporary homeless accommodation with about two thirds of resettlement cases requiring some form of long term housing with visiting supports. Resettlement was phased out in 2010 and has been replaced with the new Support to Live Independently (SLI) service which operates in all four local authorities in Dublin.

Volunteering

Volunteers play a significant role throughout the Dublin Simon Community and their contribution is an integral part of the services we provide. In 2010, nearly 200 part time volunteers were involved in operating our Soup Run, Detox, Rehab, Social Club for Service Users and shops. There are also over 300 part-time event and fundraising volunteers who assist with the Community's drive to raise much needed funds. As part of the Part Time Volunteer programme, participants are also encouraged to use their specific skills set to run classes such as Yoga, Tai Chi, Creative Writing and others.

Last year Dublin Simon had 40 full time volunteers working in a variety of projects ranging from addiction services to fundraising. Many come on University placements to Dublin Simon where they gain valuable experience in social care which in turn provides a solid foundation on which to build a career in the area. Full time volunteers are recruited from all over Ireland and beyond with many placements coming through the Léargas* programme. This important partnership encourages the diversity and compassion that is synonymous with the Dublin Simon Community.

In 2010, Dublin Simon began offering full time volunteers the chance to complete a Certificate in Volunteerism accredited by DIT. An inaugural recognition event was also held acknowledging, recognising and importantly, celebrating the commitment and hard work of our many volunteers. Without their contribution we would not be able to provide such vital and effective services for people who are homeless.

*Léargas manages European, national and international exchange and cooperation programmes in education, training and youth and community work and has been managing such programmes for over 20 years.



Fundraising

Fundraising is an integral part of what Dublin Simon do. Without the efforts of hundreds, often thousands, of volunteers, donors and supporters Dublin Simon would not be able to provide the vital services throughout Dublin, Kildare and Wicklow that are currently in place. On behalf of everyone in the Community to everyone who donated or supported our work in any way during 2010, THANK YOU.

Some of the highlights were...

Our two Direct Mail Campaigns had an extremely generous response, we are ever grateful especially in difficult times for many.

The Grand Canal Walk was a huge success, thoroughly enjoyed by all those who joined John Mulligan on the tour of the canals in Ireland. A big thank you to Barbara Whyte for organizing the event.

Our hikers climbed the High Atlas Mountains in Morocco, joined by the CEO Sam McGuinness – well done Sam and the hikers! A special thanks to the hiker committee of Sean O'Rourke, Louise McNamara, Bairbre Murphy, Mary Scanlon, Alan Markey and Stephen O'Donoghue.

The Women's Mini-Marathon went ahead on a wet day, but despite the conditions over 100 participants ran for Simon. Well done ladies.

We had record numbers participating in the annual Fun Run in October. Again, it proved a great day out for the whole family! The date for the 2011 Fun Run is October 8th.

Sing for Simon was a great hit for the third year running, with our 24 hour Carol-athon on Grafton

Street, and also over a thousand voices singing for Simon throughout the festive season.

And finally, a big thank you to those volunteers who assist us throughout the year with church gate collections and to the churches where they collect.

Corporate support is extremely important for Simon, with many organisations coming on board and helping us, not just financially, but through gifts in kind and workplace volunteering. Some of the major corporate achievements in 2010 included...

The House of Cards appeal went into its twelfth year and was again supported greatly by the business community. We would like to thank all the businesses and journalists that took part and helped make it a success. We would especially like to thank The Irish Times whose support make the Appeal possible and to WHPR and Irish International BBDO for their time and creative genius.

The Business Journalists Association also kindly organised a Corporate Challenge which was a huge success. Thank you to the organising Business Journalist committee and to all the businesses that took part in the Business Journalist Quiz.

The Food for Simon programme continued to be a terrific cost saving initiative for Dublin Simon Community. A huge thank you goes to all the participating companies and service suppliers who make this programme such a huge success by donating their products or services free of charge. During 2010 the programme was extended and also won a *Chambers Ireland Corporate Social Responsibility Award for Most Innovative CSR Project 2010*.

Our Shops continued to perform well despite adverse conditions. Winter 2010 was particularly difficult as the shops tackled the cold weather spell by making sure there were enough cold weather clothes to keep service users warm. We couldn't have done without the clothes donations from the public and from many companies who organised clothes drives. And also, thank you to the knitting clubs and individuals who knitted hats and scarves at a time when we were in dire need. Thank you.

Communications

Our Communications and Campaigning function continued to grow in 2010 with Dublin Simon featuring in numerous print articles and broadcast features and interviews throughout the year. We would like to sincerely thank those media outlets who choose to tell the story of homelessness and through their endeavours have highlighted the ongoing work of the Dublin Simon Community.

The campaigning agenda of Simon remained at the fore with ongoing liaison with the Simon Communities of Ireland and meetings with both government officials and opposition parties. The positive working relationship with the Homeless Agency is important to the ongoing commitments of Simon, while the Community continued to lobby relevant stakeholders on issues related to the implementation of the Homeless Strategy and others.

Simon Week 2010 was particularly successful at this level with Dublin Simon participating in a political briefing in Leinster House and also launching their Snap Shot Health Survey highlighting the relationship between homelessness and complex health needs, another issue which is constantly at the fore of our lobbying and campaigning message.

Dublin Simon would like to thank the many staff, volunteers and service users who have answered when called upon, to represent Simon on public occasions and of course the public, who have been generously on the receiving end. Without the real stories, little real work can be done.

Service User Participation

Service User Participation (SUP) encourages our clients to become involved with Dublin Simon Community in a positive manner; as experts through experience.

The SUP office established the Service User Development Group in order to achieve this aim. The SUDG consists of staff, volunteers and service users. Throughout 2010 we had 27 active members; 17 Service Users and 10 staff/volunteers.

The group met for the first time in May 2010 and continued to meet regularly throughout the year.

Some of the achievements of the group during this time include:

- Attending "toastmasters" meeting in July 2010 to explore a way of developing public speaking skills.
- Arranging and attending a training course on "meetings and minutes" skills in November 2010.
- Presenting at the organisational induction three times in 2010.
- Contributing towards three editions of the Simon Sun newsletter in 2010.
- Linking in with Simon Communities of Ireland service user group and continuing to attend meetings and share information between groups.
- Organising a "Service User Speak Out" which took place on the 18th November. 50 people attended this public forum which allowed Service Users to discuss issues that affect them. This progress has been in line with our 3 Year Service User Participation Strategy which aims to support service users to develop their full potential and capacity to move away from homelessness. Further developments and activities are planned for 2011 including a Volunteer Placement Programme and a Saturday Social Club among others.



Learning & Development

The Learning and Development Service aims to address the education and training needs of service users and residents by

- building service users' self esteem and social skills
- providing structure and routine for service users by engaging in meaningful activities
- supporting literacy and numeracy initiatives
- developing or redeveloping service users' positive life skills, and
- referring and engaging people into education, training or other progression routes as appropriate.

To achieve these objectives, the Learning & Development Service provide meaningful activities and information including literacy classes; life-skills; educational courses; information guidance; service user newsletters; referral to external education, training and employment related services and staff training.

In 2010, the Learning & Development Service delivered a variety of the above initiatives to 146 individual service users and 24 staff members. Of the 146 service users, 63 people engaged in external education and training courses and services. These included creative writing; literacy; arts & crafts; film-making; cookery; photography; music; newsletter production (the Simon SUN); and life skills training for staff.

TABLE QUIZ

THURSDAY

NIGHT AT 7

Learning and Development Activities & Events - July 2011						
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Health & Well-being NCR	Health & Well-being NCR	Health & Well-being NCR	Health & Well-being NCR	Health & Well-being NCR	Health & Well-being NCR	Health & Well-being NCR
Health & Well-being NCR	Health & Well-being NCR	Health & Well-being NCR	Health & Well-being NCR	Health & Well-being NCR	Health & Well-being NCR	Health & Well-being NCR
Health & Well-being NCR	Health & Well-being NCR	Health & Well-being NCR	Health & Well-being NCR	Health & Well-being NCR	Health & Well-being NCR	Health & Well-being NCR
Health & Well-being NCR	Health & Well-being NCR	Health & Well-being NCR	Health & Well-being NCR	Health & Well-being NCR	Health & Well-being NCR	Health & Well-being NCR
Health & Well-being NCR	Health & Well-being NCR	Health & Well-being NCR	Health & Well-being NCR	Health & Well-being NCR	Health & Well-being NCR	Health & Well-being NCR
Health & Well-being NCR	Health & Well-being NCR	Health & Well-being NCR	Health & Well-being NCR	Health & Well-being NCR	Health & Well-being NCR	Health & Well-being NCR

(16)

Well-being Workshops

ment Service are running Health & Well-being to encourage more positive lifestyle choices for physical and mental health.

Alternative treatments and information on sessions of the topics that may interest you.

The Sleep Factor

Acupuncture

Alcohol Awareness

Stress Management

Exercise & Healthy Eating

Tai Chi

Personal Care

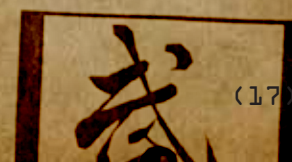
Meditation

by Tuesday, 2 - 4pm

HAZELWOOD HOUSE

CANAL RD

SATURDAY'S @ 11 AM



(17)

Area Development

Dublin Simon Community works throughout Dublin, Kildare and Wicklow. During 2010, ongoing developments in the Mid Eastern Regional Area (Kildare, Wicklow and Meath) have committed the Simon Community to the provision of homeless services in these areas.

Under the Mid East Joint Homeless Consultative Forum covering these three counties, the Simon Community undertook a commitment nationally to participate on the regional Fora and engage with statutory and voluntary organisations in each county to work to end long term homelessness.

Since 2009 we have committed to fund under the leadership of an Area Services Development Manager, Simon Support Workers in the three counties as well as a Service Management role.

This current configuration in 2010 was:

- One Area Services Development Manager for Kildare, Wicklow and Meath
- One Wicklow Homeless Support Worker
- One Kildare Homeless Support Worker (recruited in late 2010)

The purpose of the local Simon Community Homeless Service is to:

- Assess the need of people who are homeless
- Offer support and direction out of homelessness in the County
- Establish links with existing services that engage with people who are homeless

Information collected by the Wicklow Simon Community Homeless Service

Between July and December 2010 we undertook research looking at the extent of homelessness in Wicklow. The data collected is based on 117 households who met with the Homeless Support Worker, of which initial assessments were completed for 75 households.

The Research Highlighted:

52% of respondents required Long Term Supported Housing,

45% required Independent Accommodation with either no or some Visiting Support.

17 Rough sleepers were identified in the county predominately in the town of Bray. These individuals require Low Threshold Emergency Accommodation with 24 hour access, wet room facility and key working in place. This is not currently being provided in Wicklow.

Progress:

A Strategic Alliance was agreed in 2010 with Wicklow Council officials where we would share information and assist by providing our experience, proposals and recommendations to the Council on an ongoing basis.

Specifically, the Simon Community has made representations to Bray and Wicklow Council Officials to seek support for low threshold emergency accommodation with on site staffing support as well as provision for Long Term Supported Housing. Towards the end of 2010 we sought funding, through the Capital Assistance Scheme, to secure a premise in the county for Long Term Accommodation.

The end of the year saw further commitment by our Board to develop the local Simon Community Homeless Services in Kildare, Wicklow and Meath.

The Dublin Simon Community Board is committed to developing Simon Community Housing Services in the Mid Eastern Regional Area - Kildare, Wicklow, (Meath)



CHARTER OF RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

THIS IS A CHARTER FOR ALL PEOPLE WITHIN DUBLIN SIMON COMMUNITY INCLUDING SERVICE USERS, WORKERS, VOLUNTEERS AND VISITORS.

RIGHTS

- You have the right to be treated with respect and dignity at all times
- You have the right while in DSC to be free from threatening and violent behaviour (both verbal and physical)
- While in DSC, you have the right to be free from prejudice
- You have the right to fully participate in relation to your own care plan
- You have the right to come forward and talk about an issue if you feel you have been treated unfairly or disrespectfully and have it investigated in confidence as outlined in DSC procedures
- You have the right to access the DSC fair and efficient complaints procedure
- You have the right to access the DSC appeals procedure
- Under the Freedom of Information Act, you have the right to access any written information about you contained on your file
- You will receive advice on how to access relevant and appropriate services
- You are consulted and can present your views about issues which may affect the service in general
- Through existing DSC structures you have the right to participation and involvement



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