



Dublin
Simon
Community

WINTER UPDATE 2014

Serving Dublin, Kildare, Wicklow, Meath.

45 Years of Dublin Simon Community

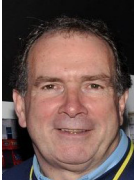
Dublin Simon Community has been supporting people who are homeless or at risk for the past 45 years. The Simon Community was originally founded by Anton Wallich-Clifford, a probation officer, attached to the Bow Street Courts in London. In 1963, he began to visit places where homeless people gathered, spending time with them and gradually gaining their trust. Anton then found a vacant basement and invited them to live together for mutual support and friendship and that was the beginning of the Simon Community.

As Anton and his fellow volunteers went about their work, they discovered lots of Irish people on the streets of London so in February 1969, Anton came to Ireland to try to stop this flow of people across the Irish Sea. He spoke with students in Trinity College and UCD and in response they started a one-night-a-week soup run. At that time, the soup runners met 40 – 60 people a night.

In addition to the Soup Run, which still goes out 365 nights of the year, Dublin Simon Community now provide many services which aim to help those who are sleeping rough on the streets, people who are in their own accommodation but at risk of homelessness and those who are at any of the stages in between.



Sam's Welcome



"The basic philosophy of the Simon Community is one of acceptance of people as they are, not as we want them to be."

- Former President Mary Robinson

Simon provides a community for people who have none. For those that have found themselves lost amongst society, we provide a helping hand to find their way back to themselves.

For some, this starts with a cup of soup and a friendly face. For others it is a voice of support at the end of the phone or a warm bed for the night. Across our community people have come to our door at all stages of their lives, and for all kinds of reasons. It is our responsibility to take people as they are, while also giving them the encouragement that they need to fulfil their potential.

Our outreach services for rough sleepers are crucial for this. For people who are going through the most difficult times of their lives, accessing basic needs such as food, clothing and the chance to see a doctor, is often the first step that they take on the journey out of homelessness. Our volunteers and staff use these steps to engage people, to establish the trust they may have lost through years of fear

and vulnerability; the reality of life sleeping on the streets. This reality is as harsh and dangerous now as it was when we began 45 years ago. It is no wonder that our Social Club is used to take a couple of hours out of the cold or get much needed sleep. We have seen the numbers of soup and sandwiches distributed by our Soup Run team, who are out every night of the week, 365 days of the year, increase to 28,000 in 2013. We worry that the numbers are even higher this year.

For the people who rely on our services every day, from outreach, to supported housing and recovery, we would like to thank you for your ongoing belief and generosity. It is because of you we can continue to light the path out of homelessness, and give people hope for a bright future.

I will leave you with one of the founding principles of the Simon Communities, as relevant now as when we began in 1969. *"Simon comes in where others leave off, to meet the need where the need is greatest."*

From all of us at Simon, I would like to wish you a Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year.

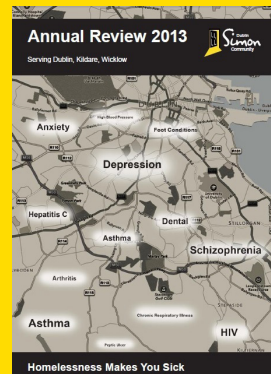
Sam

Simon Donor Charter

Dublin Simon Community are a registered charity CHY5963 in accordance with the Charities Section of the Office of the Revenue Commissioners

As a charity seeking donations from the public we, Dublin Simon Community, aim to comply with the Irish Charities Tax Research's (ICTR's) Statement of Guiding Principles for Fundraising. Our pledge is to treat all our donors with respect, honesty and openness. We commit to being accountable and transparent so that donors and prospective donors can have full confidence in Dublin Simon Community.

Our Annual Reports and Independently Audited Annual Accounts are available on our website www.dubsimon.ie



For more information and updates on what is happening in our services please follow us on:

Facebook @Dublinsimoncommunity Twitter @dublin_simon Dublin Simon Community

Simon Soup Run

The Soup Run was the very first Dublin Simon Community service. It still goes out 365 nights of the year and is often the first point of contact for people who want to link into our range of services.

The Soup Run consists of over 100 part-time volunteers who walk the streets in all weather offering soup, sandwiches, tea and a good chat if so desired, to people who are homeless.

In conjunction with the Rough Sleeper Team, the Soup Run volunteers conduct street searches for people sleeping rough, maintain contact with them and try to help them form links back into the community.

Roger, Soup Run Volunteer, describes what inspired him to dedicate an evening each week to the service:

"What motivated me to become a volunteer initially was after 30 years of being "on call" in my job I changed working 9-5. I found myself having free time for the first time and I always wanted to do something, to give back.

"After ten years or so of volunteering with the Soup Run the thing that makes me want to stay is the service that we give to people on the streets. Dublin Simon Community Soup Runners can offer more than just a cup of tea and a sandwich. We try and

link people with our Rough Sleeper Team and our Mobile Health Clinic. We also offer compassion to people regardless of their situation, and accept them for what they are; people just like us who are going through a crisis in their lives.

"The one lasting memory I have of my time on the Soup Run is of a young lady I met on a very wet and cold Thursday night. She was sleeping with her friend in a laneway just off Grafton Street. She was freezing cold and wet but she wouldn't leave her friend. I managed to get her a sleeping bag but sadly she died that night of a drug overdose. I often think of her when I'm walking on Grafton Street, with all the hustle bustle going on and the buskers playing. I think of the young woman who was spending her last night just down the laneway. Maybe she remembered the Simon Soup Run, the kind words and the dry sleeping bag before she died."



28,000
Hot drinks and sandwiches
were distributed by our
Soup Runners in 2013



Simon Social Club

The Simon Social Club is held twice a week. The purpose of the club is to encourage people who are homeless to get involved in meaningful activities while also having loads of fun. Activities include drumming, bingo, table quizzes, bowling, cycling, museums, walking tour and art classes. Members can also access a computer at the club and during the colder months often come in just to get some warmth or have a cup of tea.

This volunteer-led programme assists people who are homeless in the local community to develop social skills and networks to combat social isolation.

The team of part-time volunteers ensure members are provided a safe, secure, non-judgemental environment to come and engage in meaningful social interaction and provide support.

Aedeon, Social Club Volunteer, highlights the meaning of the club for people who have experienced homelessness: *“One of the most humbling quotes I ever had from a client describing why they attended Social Club was ‘Where else would somebody like me get a chance to chat to somebody like you?’”*



€100
could provide a
Home Starter Pack
for those who are
moving into
their own home

Leave something behind for those society has left behind.

“The mark of a man's success is not the wealth he leaves behind him when he dies, it's what he bequeaths to society while he is alive.”*

By thinking of Dublin Simon Community in your will, you will make a vital difference to the thousands of vulnerable people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in Dublin, Kildare, Wicklow and Meath. Bequests left to Dublin Simon Community have been enormously beneficial to providing all our services from housing to outreach, to our treatment services and make a lasting, personal difference to people who are homeless.

If you would like to remember us in your will or

would like further information about Dublin Simon Community and the people we help, please contact Carmel Dunne in confidence on **(01) 671 5551**. Alternatively you can write to Dublin Simon Community, 1-2 Cope Street, Dublin 2 or go to www.dubsimon.ie.

*Attributed to Tommy (RIP), client of Simon services.



Rough Sleeper Team - Harm Reduction

The Dublin Simon Community Rough Sleeper Team and Harm Reduction service operate 365 days and nights of the year, to provide support to people living on the street, with the aim of moving them out of homelessness and into their own home.

Contact with the team is the first step for rough sleepers to move from the danger and uncertainty of the streets to supported accommodation or independent living. They provide support to rough sleepers and help them engage with mainstream services including emergency accommodation, addiction treatment options, social welfare services and primary healthcare services. The team also provide assistance with food and clothing and a an Emergency Needle Exchange Service.

In partnership with Safetynet, Dublin Simon Community also operate a Mobile Health Unit three times a week. The Mobile Health Unit provides a free, drop in, GP service to people who are homeless and also provide referrals to hospitals and other health services.

Corinne from the team describes the need for these types of services, particularly access to medical supports, for people who are experiencing homelessness.

“People who are rough sleeping are among the most vulnerable and marginalised people in our society today. The provision of the Mobile Health Unit has brought medicine to many people who may have otherwise died on our streets.

“Being an outreach worker means there is a strong emphasis on being open and honest in your communication with rough sleepers, in order to build trust and a feeling of being safe with those seeking help. We are all too familiar that rough sleepers have endured and survived unbelievable and often humiliating abuse and violence, for which they are blamed by perpetrators, their families’ and society alike. Society’s misconceptions about the reality of the lives of these people often leave the person more isolated and vulnerable to continued abuse.

“Being homeless complicates accessing health care. Where does a homeless lady living with HIV store her life-saving medication? How does she take her medication with appropriate food and water when rough sleeping, and there is none available?

“The Mobile Health Unit has made a significant contribution towards the health of those rough sleeping and has provided pathway for people to access appropriate treatment.”

To read more about our services for rough sleepers please log onto our website www.dubsimon.ie



€10
could provide a
warm bed
for the night



President Higgins Visits Simon Services

President Michael D Higgins recently officially opened Simon Community's Supported Temporary Accommodation on Kilmantin Hill in Wicklow Town joined by the Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council, Councillor Christopher Fox and Simon Community staff, residents and volunteers. Speaking at the event President Higgins spoke of the issue of homelessness and the effect this can have on people:

"In recent months the issue of homelessness has become a topic of much debate both in the media and at political level. It has, I hope, caused many people to stop and think about the many implications of being without a place you can call home, and to not only hold in their minds the insecurity, anxiety and fear that comes with being homeless, but to decide that it is an issue they still put at the top of their policy demands when their opinions are sought.

"However, for the many people who are fortunate never to have been in that distressing situation, it can be difficult perhaps to understand just how profound a violation of the human right to full citizenship homelessness is.

"Being homeless is not just about being deprived of a roof over your head; it is about being deprived of a sense of belonging, a place within a community, full participation with a voice in society. There can be no doubt that a life defined by those three bleak



words 'no fixed address' is a life deprived of the most basic entitlements that most citizens take so much for granted. Whether that homelessness takes the form of being forced to sleep on streets and in doorways and in public parks; or being placed in emergency accommodation with all the uncertainty that entails; or having to care for a family in just one room with no access to cooking facilities or outdoor space, homelessness removes so many of the acts of discretion that define freedom.

"I know that the volunteers and staff at Kilmantin can and do provide a key point of contact and indeed, as a society we owe them and all those involved with the Simon Communities of Ireland an enormous debt of gratitude for their generous and tireless work on behalf of those who are most vulnerable and who live on the margins of our society."

Make Your Donation Work Harder

Setting up a Direct Debit allows Dublin Simon Community to plan for the future. It enables us to start new projects and develop new initiatives with greater confidence and assist people experiencing homelessness. It is extremely valuable to us in terms of long-term provision and ultimately helps get more people out of homelessness.

To set up a Direct Debit is very simple. Log onto our website www.dubsimon.ie and you can set one up online. Or, contact us on (01) 671 5551 and we will send you a form to fill out and return to us. We'll do

the rest. Setting up a monthly gift of €21 or more will mean that Dublin Simon Community can also claim the tax back on your total donations for the year. If you are able to set up a Direct Debit or make any donation you can afford, we can put it to work where it is needed most.

88% of all our income goes directly towards our homeless services.

The remaining goes on raising funds and support services.



Fundraise for Simon this Christmas

As the weather changes and we move closer to Christmas the number of people turning to us for help continues to increase. We are reliant on the generosity and commitment of people like you to meet this demand, so please consider supporting the Simon Community this winter. If you would like to organise any fundraising events with your friends, families, colleagues or communities we can provide sponsorship cards, t-shirts and collection boxes. We also have plenty of activities in the coming months to get involved with. Please contact the fundraising office on **01 671 5551** or email fundraising@dubsimon.ie to find out more.

Sing for Simon

Use Your Voice to End Homelessness! Get a group of friends, family or colleagues together and Sing for Simon - Anytime, Anywhere! Or, join us in singing or shaking a bucket at our Simon 24-Hour Carolathon on 19th December.

Simon Winter Woollies

During the winter months we are seeking donations of sleeping bags, hats, scarves, gloves, socks, warm jackets, shoes and thermal underclothing for the Simon Rough Sleeper Team and Soup Run Volunteers to give to people who are sleeping rough.

Send a Simon Star

Buy a Simon Star and give it as a meaningful gift this Christmas. The star comes inside a Simon Christmas card that you can personalise for a family member, friend, teacher or colleague.

Simon House of Light

Celebrate Christmas with your friends and families at the spectacular Simon House of Light projection show at the Powerscourt Townhouse Centre, 11th-13th December.

Simon House of Cards

The Simon House of Cards Appeal invites companies to donate to Simon in lieu of sending cards or gifts this Christmas. Companies will be featured in two full page advertisements in The Irish Times and will also be illuminated as part of the Simon House of Light show. If you would like to support this appeal as a business call save **1850 462 462** or log onto www.simonhouseofcards.ie.



Simon are there every Step of the Way

"Your words are like steps, your encouragement is like help. So you build the steps, and I will climb them."

- Simon Client, 1973



Soup Run and Social Club
providing food, warmth and support

100,000
meals
provided*

4,241
outreach
contacts
made*



Rough Sleeper Teams
providing outreach and
medical support
to people sleeping rough

Supported Housing,
providing shelter,
security and care



650
people
housed*



**Treatment, Recovery
and Counselling Services**

471
brought through
recovery*

383
people
secured in their
own home*



**Services to prevent people
from becoming homeless
and help them maintain a
home of their own**

**Education and employability
services to help people
get back on their feet**



325
accessed
personal
development*

*Figures based on numbers accessing Dublin Simon Community services in 2013

For more information and to support our services please do not hesitate to contact us:

Web: www.dubsimon.ie

Tel: 01 671 5551

Email: inforequest@dubsimon.ie