Cork Simon Community
Annual Report 2012
A moment of compassion

The artwork on the front cover of our Annual Report was created by Breffni O'Brien, a 5th year student at Loreto Secondary School, Fermoy, Co. Cork. Breffni used newspaper collage and pencil drawing to create her artwork, which she captioned "A moment of compassion."

Breffni says of her design: "The newspaper headlines focus on money, the recession and negative captions. It seems that money is the most important thing a person can have, when in fact a moment of compassion can be much more life-changing to a homeless person than money. Cork Simon Community offers compassion, friendship and opportunity to people who are homeless."

Loreto Secondary School Art Teacher, Mrs Eleanor Curtin supervised Breffni's artwork.

For the second consecutive year we held an art competition among secondary school students in Cork to create the front cover of our Annual Report. Breffni's artwork was chosen from a selection of over 140 diverse and thought-provoking entries drawn from 12 schools across the county.

This art project is part of a wider programme of Cork Simon activities in the education sector. Using a variety of tools, activities, education packs and projects, primary secondary and third level students participate in building their awareness of homelessness and in many cases become actively involved in tackling homelessness.

A selection of entries can be viewed at www.facebook.com/CorkSimon.
Cork Simon Community’s mission is to work in solidarity with men and women who are homeless, or at risk of becoming homeless.

**CHAIR REPORT - PAGE 4**
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**KEY DEVELOPMENTS - PAGE 12**
Starting with our new four year plan, we look at seven other key developments over the year.

**IN OUR OWN WORDS - PAGE 20**
Pat* and Elizabeth* talk to us about their experiences in Cork Simon Community.
*Not their real names.

**FULL TIME VOLUNTEERS - PAGE 24**
Alex and Laura give us an insight into their experiences as full time volunteers in Cork Simon Community.
THE STRENGTH OF CORK SIMON IS COMMUNITY – A COMMUNITY OF PEOPLE BELIEVING IN PEOPLE, BELIEVING THAT NO ONE SHOULD BE LEFT WITHOUT A HOME, WITHOUT HOPE, WITHOUT SOMEONE TO LEAN ON; A COMMUNITY OF PEOPLE THAT CARES. THAT STRENGTH LINED WITH TENDERNESS HAS PROVEN TO BE AN UNBEATABLE COMBINATION IN MEETING ALL OF THE CHALLENGES WE FACED THROUGHOUT 2012.
We were able to respond to a significant increase in the need for all of our services despite a further decrease in our funding from statutory sources. We were able to develop new services in response to increased rough sleeping and long-term homelessness. We were able to improve services so that people got the care and support they needed as quickly as possible. We were able to achieve all of this and more because of a community of hundreds of committed volunteers and thousands of generous donors working hand-in-hand with the worlds of business, politics, public services and other voluntary agencies, making sure that people who were alone and often forgotten had housing and shelter, access to healthcare and one-to-one supports, and a chance to hope for a better future.

One of the marvelous things about community is that it enables us to welcome and support people in a way we couldn’t as individuals. When we pool our strength and share the work and responsibility, we can welcome many people, even those in deep distress. With helping hands we can support people to find inner healing, self-confidence and renewed hope.

Those helping hands of neighbours can never be replaced by the impersonal hand of Government, but neither can we be so effective without it. The Government’s recently published Homelessness Policy Statement acknowledges the role it has, together with local authorities and the voluntary sector, in tackling homelessness. It provides for the rapid provision of secure housing together with the one-to-one supports as needed by each person. The overall aim is to end long-term homelessness by 2016. We warmly welcome this new approach and look forward to working with all involved in making it happen. If we are to reach that target, however, we now need to see an immediate and very significant step-up in the number of homes made available for people who are homeless. We need to see the Government’s renewed commitment to tackling homelessness matched by a commitment to maintain funding for homeless services – especially now as more people stand on the edge of homelessness. Our funding from Government in 2012 fell to 56% of every Euro we received. Yet, despite the ever shrinking financial resources of Government and other statutory agencies, they worked hard to maintain, as best they could, funding for homeless services here in Cork. It demonstrates a real commitment to care and to a community responding to homelessness.
Without that sense of caring there can be no sense of community. The essence of our community – its heart and soul, is reflected in the things we do and share because we care for others, and for the good of the place in which we live. That sense of community is what drives our new 2012-2015 four-year plan, ‘Homes, Health, Hope…Making Progress in Tough Times’. It has a singular focus of ending long-term homelessness and the need to sleep rough in Cork. Our shared values of respect, inclusion and participation, a shared commitment to social justice and, above all, a shared belief in people will guide all that we do to achieve our goals. I have no doubt that we will do so, but only if it is matched by a commitment of resources from Government and other statutory agencies. That’s what will see us continue to build on the very real progress we’ve been making in these tough times.

We’ve been progressing through the toughest of times since I started my tenure five years ago as Chair of Cork Simon’s Board of Directors. As I step back from the role I want to thank all of the members of the Board throughout that time – all of them volunteers. They had many tough calls to make. They did so skillfully and responsibly, and were pivotal in helping to guide the Community through a rapidly changing economic and social climate. Our statutory partners had difficult decisions to make too in the light of budgetary constraints. Their commitment in helping to maintain and develop much needed services was encouraging and most welcome. Our partners on the Cork Homeless Forum were valuable allies as we worked together to identify gaps and emerging trends, and co-operated in planning a collective response. Most inspiring of all were our donors, volunteers and staff – thousands of supporters who, despite the tough times, were big-hearted in their generosity; companies big and small, undeterred by a tough business environment, continued to recognise their role in helping to tackle homelessness; hundreds of dedicated and enthusiastic volunteers who proved time and again to be an invaluable resource; and flexible and committed staff who made sacrifices that helped ensure we remained efficient but effective.

If I’ve learned anything over the last five years it’s that there is strength in community. There is strength in the people whose lives we touch – people who are hurting, searching, trying. There is strength in working together. Thank you for all that you’ve done, for all that you continue to do, and for believing in people.

Dave Ronayne,
Chair, Cork Simon Community
Board of Directors.
CEO’s Report

OVER 20 FULL-TIME VOLUNTEERS, OVER 80 FULL-TIME AND PART-TIME STAFF, SOME 1,000 PART-TIME VOLUNTEERS AND OVER 14,000 GENEROUS DONORS – THESE ARE SOME OF THE PEOPLE THAT MAKE CORK SIMON A COMMUNITY. WE WORKED TOGETHER AS A COMMUNITY TO RESPOND TO THE 1,026 PEOPLE THAT TURNED TO US FOR HELP IN 2012.
We worked together as a community to make sure people had a roof over their heads, had someone to talk to and be heard, had the wherewithal to start leaving homelessness behind them, had a place in our community, had a place to call home, and had a chance to revisit hope.

With the recession raging on and austerity continuing to bite, as a community we chose optimism over despair; hope over fear. As a community we chose to make progress so that no one was ignored, forgotten or left behind. We chose to develop and grow our services, not in spite of, but because of the tough times and the impact they are having on people's lives. As a community we chose to respond, to make a difference, to believe in people.

Almost 600 people turning to the Soup Run for help – many on the edge of homelessness; over 400 people staying in emergency accommodation – including almost 70 people stuck there long-term because they had no other option; over 80 people living in high-support housing because they required round-the-clock care; almost 100 people supported in a Cork Simon flat, in private rented housing or in housing provided by other social housing providers – all of them working towards leaving homelessness behind them; over 200 people needing healthcare from the HSE team of doctors and nurses in our Day Centre. The needs for nourishment, shelter, companionship and human kindness were great; we worked together as a community to respond.

The big challenge of 2012 was rough sleeping. Over 160 people had to sleep rough for at least one night – such high numbers we haven't seen since 2008. It's an indication of the high toll that this recession is beginning to take. Cork's emergency shelters and hostels were full every night. People had nowhere to go. As a community we responded. We added an additional four beds per night at our emergency shelter. We worked closely with other emergency accommodation providers in Cork to manage all of the beds effectively. We were creative in freeing-up much needed emergency beds by directly addressing the severe housing shortage for people ready to move out of homelessness. In partnership with three other voluntary agencies in Cork we rolled out the Cork Rentals Initiative – leasing suitable housing directly from landlords and letting them to people ready to move. We continue to provide one-to-one support to people so that they have every chance of remaining out of homelessness. With the help of City Council we secured Capital Assistance funding from Government to develop five new high-support beds by extending one of our existing high-support houses. We completed building work by the end of the year. As a community we made real progress, put in place real solutions to homelessness, offered people real hope.
Beyond the heartbreak of numbers is that hope. People beginning to manage their health, deal with their demons and addictions, beginning to participate again in the wider community, reconnecting with family, finding homes, finding work, getting involved in training and education, working hard on their own personal pathways out of homelessness, and even smiling again. We learned of the major barriers people face in returning to employment, including poor education and literacy, because of early school leaving, long-term unemployment and low self-confidence. But the majority are keen to improve their circumstances – and many did through our Employment and Training Programme: 69 accredited certificates awarded and 28 people finding part-time and full-time jobs. Our community is working. We are making progress in tough times. We are making a difference.

We’re able to make a difference because of our 14,000 generous donors who contributed over €2 million in 2012 – a real demonstration of people caring about those who are less fortunate, less able to cope with all that is happening in their lives. Thank you. We’re able to make a difference because of the 1,000 volunteers who chose to give up their time to share their skills, experience and big hearts so that people who are alone, vulnerable and isolated can feel that they have a place in our community, a place in our hearts. Thank you. We’re able to make a difference because the business community in Cork and beyond continues to recognise the role it has in helping to tackle homelessness. Despite the toughest of trading conditions literally hundreds of businesses have played their part. Thank you. We’re able to make a difference because government – local and national, state agencies and politicians all recognise the need to include people rather than marginalise them. They’ve all had budgets cut; resources slashed. It’s inevitable that those cuts would be passed to us, but they all worked hard to minimise the cuts. Thank you. We’re able to make a difference because together we believe in community, we believe in hope, we believe in people.

Dermot Kavanagh,
CEO, Cork Simon Community.
New Four Year Plan

In 2012 Cork Simon launched its new four-year plan, Homes, Health, Hope... Making Progress in Tough Times. The plan has a singular focus of ending long-term homelessness and the need to sleep rough in Cork. It aims to build on the significant progress already made through the previous four years of recession and austerity. It wasn't long before the plan was severely tested.

Significant Increase in Rough Sleeping

2012 saw the biggest increase in Cork in over four years in the number of people sleeping rough. 161 different people were recorded sleeping rough on at least one night in 2012 - a significant increase of 330% compared to 2011; an increase of 210% compared to 2010; and an increase of 41% compared to 2009. The number of people sleeping rough began to rise in May, and continued to rise to a peak in October, when an average of 10 people per night was sleeping rough. The numbers started to fall in November as our response started to take effect.

Responding to Rough Sleeping

Cork Simon Community, in partnership with Cork City Council and other voluntary agencies in Cork, put in place a series of measures to address the significant increases in rough sleeping in advance of the cold winter months. With emergency shelters and hostels in Cork full every night there simply weren’t enough beds for everyone that needed one.

Emergency Beds

In November Cork Simon, using its own resources, temporarily increased capacity at its emergency shelter by 10%. 48 people per night continue to stay at the shelter every night. Cork Simon worked closely with other emergency accommodation providers in Cork to ensure all emergency beds were managed effectively.
Cork Simon respects the uniqueness of all persons. Collectively we strive to meet the diverse needs and promote the rights of all individuals and groups affected by homelessness.
Cork Rentals and Housing Support Initiative

One of the key issues contributing to the shortage of emergency beds in Cork in 2012 was a severe shortage of appropriate, long-term, affordable housing for people with medium levels of support needs and who were ready to start leaving homelessness behind them. Cork Simon teamed up with three other voluntary agencies in Cork – Focus, St. Vincent de Paul and Threshold, to put in place an initiative – the first of its kind in Ireland, that would offer people stuck in homeless services the opportunity to move on to their own homes with visiting one-to-one support as needed. We sourced suitable homes from the private rented sector, leased them at market rate, and then let them to people ready to move. Landlords are guaranteed the agreed rental figure, full management of their properties, and an assurance that their properties will be returned at the end of the lease in the same condition. Our collective Housing Support Teams continue to offer one-to-one visiting support to all tenants to help them maintain their tenancies. We all pooled our own resources to get the initiative off the ground.

Five New High-Support Beds

Another key contributing factor to the shortage of emergency beds in Cork in 2012 was the high number of people long-term homeless – those staying in emergency accommodation for longer than six months because they have no other option. People long-term homeless, because of their complex health and related issues, often require housing with round-the-clock care. Throughout 2012 Cork Simon provided 47 high-support beds in five separate houses. Early in 2012 we identified an opportunity to add five new High-Support beds to one of our existing houses in Victoria Road. We applied to Government for Capital Assistance Funding to develop the beds. During a visit to Cork in the summer of 2012, Minister Jan O’Sullivan hinted that funding would be forthcoming. With assistance from Cork City Council, funding was approved in the late Summer and we commenced building work immediately. Building was completed at the end of the year. As the new beds came on stream, five additional much needed beds per night were freed-up in our emergency shelter.
By working closely with Cork City Council and other voluntary agencies in Cork, by introducing new and creative initiatives, and by highlighting the role government can play in tackling homelessness, collectively we were able to make a significant impact in reducing the number of people having to sleep rough in Cork. The number remains unacceptably high, but we are making progress. Fewer people have to sleep rough; more and more rough sleepers are spending no more than one night sleeping rough. We will continue to monitor the effectiveness of our response.

Soup Run
The Soup Run was Cork Simon’s first service over forty years ago for people who are homeless. A team of volunteers continues to make the Soup Run available every night of the year for all who need it. In April we moved the Soup Run indoors. The new arrangements provided for a warmer, more welcoming environment, a more dignified setting than the street for people using it, and a greater opportunity to interact with people on a one-to-one basis. Soup Run volunteers continue to hit the streets and offer the same warm, nourishing food and friendly ear to anyone who may not be aware of the new arrangements or who may be reluctant to make the move indoors. Between April and December some 592 different people used the Soup Run.

Activities Programme
In response to feedback from Cork Simon residents and people using our services, we expanded the number and nature of activities offered to people. With the help of new volunteer recruits, a range of activities were added to the weekends, further enhancing the effectiveness of the programme.
People can
Our Homeless Emergency Support Service incorporates our Emergency Shelter, Outreach Team, a Rough Sleeper Service at our Day Centre, which also provides access to a team of doctors, nurses and counsellors experienced in treating general and mental health conditions that people who are homeless experience. It includes our Youth Homeless Drug Prevention Programme for 18-26 year olds, offering one-to-one support, advice and information to young people who are homeless and using, or at risk of using, drugs. Our Soup Run continues to operate every night of the year in a warm, inviting environment, offering hot, nourishing food, a friendly ear, and can often be a point of first contact for people who are homeless. The Soup Run is open to people sleeping rough and people struggling in their own housing – often people on the edge of homelessness.

Cork Simon's Housing Support Service incorporates our five High-Support Houses for people whose health and personal circumstances are such that they require round-the-clock care. It includes our Housing Support team that helps find long-term housing for people working towards leaving homelessness behind them. The team offers one-to-one support for as often and as long as each person needs it so that they can maintain their tenancies and become active participants again in the wider community.

Cork Simon's Activities Programme works across all Cork Simon services. By developing a range of social activities and pro-actively encouraging people to participate, the programme helps people to develop social skills, self-confidence, quality of life and better engagement with a variety of support structures. For some, particularly those using alcohol and/or drugs, the programme offers more constructive use of their time, works as part of reducing the harmful effects of drug/alcohol use, and can help with rehabilitation and dealing with addictions. The Activities Programme can often be a first-step for people towards entering training and education.

Cork Simon's Employment and Training Service works across all Cork Simon services offering support to people to return to training and education, to participate in work experience programmes, and to secure and maintain part-time and full-time employment. The service liaises with employers and training providers, offering support where and when needed. The service works to support people to develop and improve life skills, providing a critical step in supporting people out of homelessness for good.

CORK SIMON COMMUNITY PROVIDES HOUSING, CARE AND ONE-TO-ONE SUPPORTS FOR 127 PEOPLE EVERY NIGHT OF THE YEAR.
Cork Simon Community Services in 2012

Cork Simon Community supported a total of 1,026 different people throughout 2012 – 166 women and 860 men.

Emergency Shelter

410 different people stayed at Cork Simon’s Emergency Shelter throughout 2012 – no change compared to 2011. The Shelter was full every night of the year:
- 18% were women;
- 23% were 18-26 year olds;
- 41% were staying at the Shelter for the first time;
- 54% stayed at the Shelter for seven nights or less;
- 17% were long-term homeless – staying at the Shelter for more than six months because they had no other option;
- 39% required an appointment with the team of doctors, nurses and counsellors at our Day Service.

High Support Housing

83 different people stayed in Cork Simon’s five High-Support houses throughout 2012 – an increase of 19% compared to 2011:
- 18% were women;
- 13% were 18-26 year olds;
- 46% were staying in our High-Support houses for the first time;
- 86% required healthcare;
- 54% required mental health-related healthcare.

Housing Support

102 different people were supported by Cork Simon’s Housing Support Team – an increase of 17% compared to 2011:
- 22% were women;
- 12% were 18-26 year olds;
- 48% were in a Cork Simon flat;
- 23% were in private rented housing;
- 19% were in housing provided by other social housing providers;
- 25% were supported by the Housing Support Team for the first time;
- 49% required access to healthcare;
- 20% required mental health-related healthcare.

Youth Homeless Drug Prevention Programme

61 young people (18-26 year olds) were supported by the Youth Homeless Drug Prevention Programme throughout 2012 – no change compared to 2011:
- 31% were women;
- 28% were sleeping rough;
- 36% were staying with friends;
- 54% required access to healthcare;
- 18% required mental health-related healthcare.

Soup Run

At least 592 different people used Cork Simon’s Soup Run throughout 2012 (figures for April to December inclusive):
- 15% were women;
- 26% were sleeping rough;
- 15% were in a squat;
- 52% were in private rented housing – on the edge of homelessness.

Employment and Training Service

The service supported people in training and education to secure a total of 69 accredited certificates. 28 people were supported into employment.
The Community responds to the changing needs of those who experience homelessness and those at risk of doing so by providing a range of empowering and supportive care for as long as people need it.
Elizabeth’s* Story

“People are homeless for loads of reasons. For me, I just couldn’t find a home for my heart. I felt lonely. It’s when you feel happy inside…that’s when you find your home.

Sleeping on the street was frightening. I was terrified actually. My first night that I slept on the street, I will never forget it - right in the city centre. I had sleeping bags and what not, but when I woke up in the morning, people looking at me - I was mortified. But if people looked closer at us, they’d see something different.

I started heavy drinking when my children were taken into care. I just lost everything, the whole lot. Everything just collapsed around me. Then I hit the bottle. Then I started using heroin. It was blocking out the pain, so I didn’t care what it was. It could have been anything I could get my hands on. Before you know it you’re inside an addiction, or you don’t want to acknowledge it.

I loved every minute I was with my three kids. That’s the only point in my life when I was happy – when I had my children, when I had my family. My husband, even though he was beating me, I put up with it - just to keep the family together. He was such a good dad and I said I would put up with it, but I wish I didn’t - I had no family, I had no one. He wanted the best of everything for the kids, but towards me he was an animal.

My parents left us - me and my sister and brother, on our own for three days and three nights without water or food or nothing. We were only babies - that’s what we were told when we were growing up. We were fostered then. But from there on you’re confused. You don’t know where you’re going. Everything changes. You feel like you’re not loved, you’re not wanted. Then you start being homeless, from inside, from your heart.

And there was my neighbour - being abused by my neighbour when I was eight until I was about fourteen. I barely went to school. I hated it. I was never able to concentrate - looking out the window thinking where am I going to hide now when I go home. I couldn’t wait to get out of the house and sit on my own in a big field.

In our own words
I WAS IN THE SHELTER FOR ABOUT A YEAR. THEY LOOK AFTER PEOPLE; THEY UNDERSTAND PEOPLE. I KNEW THEY’D UNDERSTAND ME, MY ADDICTION; THE PROPER HELP THAT I NEEDED. I USED TO LOVE GOING TO BINGO AND DOING MAKE-UP, BUT I WOULD HAVE LOVED TO JOIN IN MORE, DO MORE THINGS. MY ADDICTIONS STOPPED ME FROM DOING THAT A LOT. IF I WASN’T SICK IN THE MORNING, MY NERVES WERE AT ME, AND IF IT WASN’T THAT, I WAS TOO DRUNK. THE ADDICTION TOOK A LOT OF TIME OUT OF MY LIFE - BUT IT’S NOT GOING TO ROB ANY MORE; IT’S NOT GOING TO TAKE ANYMORE OFF ME. I WAS GETTING NOWHERE; MY KIDS WERE GETTING OLDER, I THOUGHT THERE MUST BE A WAY OUT OF IT; THERE HAS TO BE A WAY OUT FROM BEING CONSTANTLY SICK AND LOOKING FOR DRINK AND DRUGS AND ANYTHING YOU CAN GET YOUR HANDS ON. I SEEN INSIDE IN SIMONS THAT THERE WAS A GIRL GOING TO AA MEETINGS. THERE WAS ANOTHER GIRL CLEANED UP, AND I SEEN ANOTHER FELLA, AND HE SAID HE WAS GETTING A FLAT. THAT WOULD ENCOURAGE YOU, SEEING PEOPLE CLEANING UP. I WAS DETERMINED TO DO SOMETHING.

A week before I came here to this house (a Cork Simon High-Support house) I was taking my libber (Librium) - and it was hard, but I had my mind set. It was time to face things. Moving here was a total big change. I’m delighted. It’s so peaceful and quiet. It’s lovely, absolutely brilliant. It took me about three or four weeks before I could sleep because it was so quiet. I think I can get myself together here. I’m talking more about my addiction; I feel safe here. I’m sticking to everything - my counselling, my school, reading and writing, computer classes. You have your own space. The staff are brilliant - they’re always there for you. You’re never alone. It’s absolutely brilliant.

I’m off the drink and drugs for two months and a week. It’s hard. It’s reality now that’s kicking in; I’m facing my fears, trying my best to socialise. I’m grabbing this opportunity with two hands and I’m not letting go. I love getting up in the morning - you can hear the birds in the trees; I had all of that forgotten - I left all that behind and I started running. In the kitchen the other day I was eating an apple - I actually got an apple just to smell it; I lost my sense of smell through the drink and drugs. It was amazing. It’s the simple things that matter most. I was sitting out there in the garden having a cup of tea - and the peace and quiet out there, just to think about your life. When you’re out on the streets you don’t think of anything else but running straight for the drugs or the off-licence.

The next 12 months? Staying sober. Trying to get contact with my children and being able to be there for them. I know what it’s like not to have parents around: you’re always thinking, no matter what people say to you, that you’re not loved; and I don’t want my kids feeling that way – ’cause I do love them.

I have a different perspective now after living on the streets: I’ll never look at someone living on the street again and say, ‘Sure god love him, he’s drinking and spending all his money’. No, there’s a reason behind that…”

* Not her real name
Pat’s” Story

"From the age of six onwards I was in and out of psychiatric wards and stuff. There’s no happy moments. There’s no happy thoughts, like coming down for Christmas morning - that’s frightening to me. There was a lot of violence and addiction in the family, alcoholism and all that. I was seeing a lot of violence happening, physical and mental abuse. It was a dysfunctional background. I didn’t get the stability that I needed. I didn’t get the support that I needed to grow. I was vulnerable, I was weak, I was lonely, I was shattered, I was broken, I was hurt. I didn’t have anyone older than me to turn to, to say: ‘Look, this is what’s going on with me’.

When I was 16 I was wild - off the wall, I didn’t care about consequences or family. All I wanted to do was create havoc. That was an adrenalin buzz for me. I don’t blame anyone for the way I turned out. My mother and father are beautiful people. All they could do was their best - I understand that today with what I know now. But I didn’t get the opportunity that I needed as a person to grow emotionally, physically, spiritually - I lost all that, so I had to learn from the street.

I made up with these friends that I had – and they became my family. We done everything together - horrible things; it wasn’t nice. That progressed from the likes of petty crime to the behaviour getting worse and worse. And then the addiction kicked in. I started experiencing drugs - hash, speed, acid, ecstasy and cocaine and stuff, and it progressed throughout the years. I’d do what I wanted; I never listened to anybody.

Between the ages of 16 until I was 37 I been in and out of gaol and been in hospitals and psychiatric wards because of the consequences of my drug addiction. It’s been a long journey. I was sentenced for three years back in ‘86 and it wasn’t a pleasurable experience. I was only a kid, but it made me tough. I never got to sit my Junior Cert or my Leaving Cert. I graduated you could say to a prison. So I was coming from one negative environment to another from a very young age - a lot of violence, a lot of drugs, a lot of defending myself, living with the loneliness, the fear and the rejection in prison - I never wanted that.

I’ve never had a home to myself. I hated the loneliness. I didn’t know how to live, how to manage money, how to feed myself. I had no experience of how to live as a person. I’d sleep on streets, on corners, in bus shelters, and sleep down the side of the Simon - anywhere. It was frightening, lonely, and scary. I was vulnerable, in shock, in fear of dying; I didn’t know when I was gonna get fed, if I was gonna be helped. I was crying out, I couldn’t find my voice. I’ve got beatings, I’ve got robbed, stabbed - all the consequences of my own behaviour, from my addiction and how I grew up.

The Shelter took me in. Getting in there was like winning the marathon. My key worker was very supportive. I realised in the end that enough was enough. I needed to do something about it because I was scared, lonely, I was suicidal. I made a pact with myself - I need some serious help. I knew the life that I had - being in and out of prison, forgetting about my family, forgetting about the people that mattered most in life, people that really cared for me but couldn’t do nothing for me. I lost my two kids due to the consequences of my addiction - I had no contact with them for years. I went to that stage where I was sick of being sick. It was life or death. I woke up one morning and I said to myself: ‘That’s it; I’m not using no more drugs, any more drink’. So I stopped, there and then. I went to my key worker and said I want to go to detox, see a counsellor, go to treatment. I want to get my kids back.

My key worker – a fantastic woman, gave me lots of things to do and to work on. We set goals in terms of getting to different stages before I got to treatment. I got there in the end. I got a lovely send off - a card off all the staff wishing me well. I was actually crying going up in the car reading the card: ‘We’re all behind you! I didn’t get that form anyone in the last 20 years - someone believing in me, thinking about me, taking time to write a message and to say: ‘Well done, we’re proud of you, keep doing what you’re doing’. One message stood out for me: ‘You don’t need luck, all you need is patience’. All the messages had their own inspiration. That gave me a massive boost.
“MY KEY WORKER – A FANTASTIC WOMAN, GAVE ME LOTS OF THINGS TO DO AND TO WORK ON. WE SET GOALS IN TERMS OF GETTING TO DIFFERENT STAGES BEFORE I GOT TO TREATMENT. I GOT THERE IN THE END.”

It was a three month programme - I graduated from that successfully. Cork Simon staff were ran off their feet for weeks trying to organise a flat for me. The day I came out of treatment it was there. It was lovely just to have my own key, my own front door. I'm loving the idea that I have a roof over my head and that I call it home: it's my safety. I love having my kids over at the weekends. My family calls over. They make me happy; make me want to be a better man. I've something to live for - two people that depend on me emotionally, physically and all that. But basically to let them know that I'm there for them in a different way this time; that I'm not the Dad I was before. They're loving it because of me being well, healthy and clean, and living in a nice environment - they see me as their Dad.

Cork Simon has given me that opportunity to move forward. I'm in FÁS every day from Tuesday to Friday; I'm doing interpersonal skills, communications, FETAC 4, addiction studies. I'm putting myself forward for every opportunity that's available, bettering myself the whole time. I've been interviewed for a job – for young people that have an addiction; they've accepted me. I'll be doing the Leaving Cert – I've always wanted to do it. Next step: college – community development.

This time two years ago I was living on the streets. To where I am today - from someone who was using drugs for the last 27 years to being 16 months clean, is massive. It's a complete 360. I'm loving it - smiling everyday because of it. All I want to do is move forward with my life and make positive decisions. I'm grateful for what the Cork Simon gave me. I'm grateful that I can just keep moving forward now with my life.

*Not his real name*
Full Time Volunteers
“BEFORE, WHEN PEOPLE WOULD ASK ME TO TELL THEM ABOUT MYSELF - TELL THEM MY QUALITIES, A FEW SHORTCOMINGS - I NEVER REALLY KNEW WHAT TO SAY. BUT NOW, WITH ALL THE REFLECTION, ALL THE TEACHING, YOU BECOME MORE AWARE OF WHAT YOU CAN DO, HOW YOU DEAL WITH THINGS AND HOW YOU REACT IN CERTAIN SITUATIONS. YOU GET TO KNOW YOURSELF BETTER.”

DEPARTING FULL-TIME VOLUNTEER ALEXANDRA CAPITANIA

A “turning point” in her life is how Alex describes her time volunteering full-time with Cork Simon - a time during which she grew in confidence and awareness, learned a great deal about herself, and developed skills she describes as “useful for life”.

“I’m very happy with my experience here. Anything I learned, I’m pretty sure is going to help me one way or the other life-wise, to be honest. You know the way you have those turning points in your life? Working here was my turning point. It really opened my horizons - I feel more confident to take on the world.”

Alexandra Capitania arrived from Romania in 2011 to volunteer full-time with Cork Simon for six months – and stayed for almost two years. “I didn’t know what to expect. I really came with the idea that I’d do anything”.

During her time at Cork Simon, Alex volunteered at three different services – at one of our High Support Houses, at the Emergency Shelter and with our Housing Support Team, a service that supports people living independently to sustain their tenancies. “I like to get the whole picture and I had this great chance to actually work in most of [the services]. It really opened my mind - I feel more confident to take on the world.”

Along with increased knowledge, Alex gained many skills during her time at Cork Simon and in the process leaned a great deal about herself. She was, for example, always curious about how she might respond to a challenging situation. “Maybe your natural feeling would be to freeze or to run. After the training I got, and watching other people, I feel more confident using my head and thinking what’s the best thing to do - thinking really fast and reacting in a way that maybe I wouldn’t have, and in an effective way too.”

She concludes she learned not only how to respond, but also that she can draw on her own resources. “You can be taught and you teach yourself. You become aware of all these resources and skills that you might have.”

With Alex about ready to pack her bags and move to pastures new – she is moving to Sweden to volunteer with young people for 12 months – she reflected on what she learned from volunteering at Cork Simon over the last twenty months.

“Before, when people would ask me to tell them about myself - tell them my qualities, a few shortcomings - I never really knew what to say. But now, with all the reflection, all the teaching, you become more aware of what you can do, how you deal with things and how you react in certain situations. You get to know yourself better.”

“I’m not pretending to cure anyone of anything, but it’s good to be a good listener, you know, and to help as much as you can the people around you, because it’s all about that. In the end, that’s what you want to do – offer support”
NEWLY ARRIVED FULL-TIME VOLUNTEER
LAURA SHARP

Reflecting on what she hopes to gain from her time volunteering full-time at Cork Simon, Laura anticipates first-off that the experience will help to guide her future study plans. She also hopes through volunteering to grow in self-confidence, learn to respond to challenging situations, and she hopes she will get to know herself better.

18 year old Laura Sharp travelled some 10,000 miles to volunteer full-time with Cork Simon. From Victoria in Australia, Laura is straight out of high-school, living away from home for the first time and happily finding her feet at Cork Simon. “I find it good here. I’ve settled in pretty well!”

Interested in studying nursing, Laura thought it best to gain some practical experience before starting a course. “I’ve always liked to help people and I thought [volunteering] was a good opportunity to learn some new things. Because I don’t have much experience in the area I didn’t want to make a full blown decision, so I figured getting some experience would be better.”

Laura approached an organisation called Latitude Global Volunteering to help her find an appropriate volunteer placement. “I told them that I wanted to go into caring and they set me up on a placement that they thought would suit me - Cork Simon happened to be it.” Laura was not in the least put off when she heard how far away Cork Simon was. “To tell you the truth, I’ve always wanted to come to Ireland. I think it might have to do with ancestors and stuff.”

Volunteering at one of our High Support Houses, Laura finds her new volunteer role interesting and challenging. “The different circumstances that you have to adjust to, and the residents’ life experiences and how they react to different things - it is pretty eye-opening. Even now with my two months, I’m having to already push myself a bit.”

However Laura finds support from her colleagues makes her new role, and also her distance from home, easier. “The staff and volunteers are happy with all my questions, and even when I’ve spoken about home, they’re always listening. They’re all really supportive.”

Laura has made use of her free time to explore Ireland and is also looking forward to the upcoming volunteer trips as a time to get to know her fellow volunteers. “I’ve taken a couple [of trips] already. Last week I went up to Dublin. I’ve got more trips planned of course to see Ireland. And then there’s the volunteer breaks every six months - it’s a time for the volunteers to get out and be together and get away for a bit.”

Happy with her new volunteer experience, Laura says, “I feel like I’ve settled in pretty well. I really enjoy being here. I slipped into the role and it’s been really good with the staff and the residents and everything. It’s just a good place to be.” Understandably, she concludes, “I must say, I do miss the sun!”
## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES | Year Ended 31 December 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Restricted funds</th>
<th>Restricted homeless funds</th>
<th>Unrestricted funds</th>
<th>Designated building funds</th>
<th>Total available funds</th>
<th>Restricted building fund</th>
<th>Total 2012</th>
<th>Total 2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>INCOMING RESOURCES FROM GENERATED FUNDS</strong></td>
<td>€</td>
<td>€</td>
<td>€</td>
<td>€</td>
<td>€</td>
<td>€</td>
<td>€</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary income</td>
<td>64,564</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>1,561,200</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>1,625,764</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>1,625,764</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bequests</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>278,739</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>278,739</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>278,739</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-analysed activities for generating funds</td>
<td>112,790</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>428,594</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>541,384</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>541,384</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incoming resources from charitable activities</td>
<td>3,785,936</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>367,622</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>4,153,558</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>4,153,558</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment income and other</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>118,029</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>118,029</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>118,029</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total incoming resources</strong></td>
<td>3,963,290</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>2,754,184</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>6,717,474</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>6,717,474</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **RESOURCES EXPENDED** | € | € | € | € | € | € | € | € |
| Charitable expenditure homeless services | 4,939,579 | — | 900,023 | — | 5,839,602 | 10,000 | 5,849,602 | 5,768,636 |
| Cost of generating funds | — | — | 835,969 | — | 835,969 | — | 835,969 | 709,719 |
| Campaigning and research | — | — | 206,549 | — | 206,549 | — | 206,549 | 174,035 |
| Governance costs | — | — | 47,004 | — | 47,004 | — | 47,004 | 43,000 |
| **Total resources expended** | 4,939,579 | — | 1,989,545 | — | 6,929,124 | 10,000 | 6,939,124 | 6,695,390 |

| **NET INCOMING/ (OUTGOING) RESOURCES BEFORE TRANSFERS** | € | € | € | € | € | € | € | € |
| Other Recognised Gains and Losses | (976,289) | — | 764,639 | — | (211,650) | (10,000) | (221,650) | 365,854 |
| Capital Assistance Scheme repayments relieved | — | — | 354,485 | — | 354,485 | — | 354,485 | 335,119 |
| Transfer from restricted building fund | — | — | 25,826 | — | 25,826 | — | 25,826 | — |
| Transfer from unrestricted fund | 976,289 | — | (2,576,289) | 1,600,000 | — | — | — | — |
| **NET INCOMING/ (OUTGOING) RESOURCES BEFORE OTHER RECOGNISED GAINS AND LOSSES** | — | — | (1,413,339) | 1,600,000 | 168,661 | (35,826) | 132,835 | 700,973 |

| Gain in value of investments | — | 43,429 | — | — | 43,429 | — | 43,429 | 3,988 |

| Net movement in funds | — | 43,429 | (1,413,339) | 1,600,000 | 212,090 | (35,826) | 176,264 | 704,961 |
### BALANCE SHEET | Year Ended 31 December 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FIXED ASSETS</strong></td>
<td>ε</td>
<td>ε</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tangible assets</td>
<td>6,589,334</td>
<td>6,667,429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial assets – investments</td>
<td>505,675</td>
<td>462,246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7,095,009</td>
<td>7,129,675</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>CURRENT ASSETS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tangible assets</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debtors</td>
<td>157,472</td>
<td>213,232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash at bank</td>
<td>3,978,245</td>
<td>3,546,876</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4,135,717</td>
<td>3,800,108</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>CREDITORS: Amount falling due after more than one year</strong></td>
<td>(808,959)</td>
<td>(891,369)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NET CURRENT ASSETS</strong></td>
<td>3,326,758</td>
<td>2,908,739</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES</strong></td>
<td>10,421,767</td>
<td>10,038,414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CREDITORS: Amounts falling due after one year</strong></td>
<td>(5,351,140)</td>
<td>(5,144,051)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CAPITAL AND RESERVES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unrestricted funds</td>
<td>1,709,176</td>
<td>3,140,515</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designated building fund</td>
<td>2,430,000</td>
<td>850,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Restricted Homeless Foundation funds</td>
<td>505,549</td>
<td>462,120</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4,444,725</td>
<td>4,432,635</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restricted building funds</td>
<td>425,902</td>
<td>461,728</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ACCUMULATED FUNDS</strong></td>
<td>5,070,627</td>
<td>4,894,563</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*BY ORDER OF THE BOARD*
D Ronayne
E MacCuirc
## ATTENDANCE AT BOARD MEETINGS IN 2012

### Number of Board Meetings in 2012: 11 meetings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Board Member</th>
<th>Appointed/Retired</th>
<th>BOG Meetings Attended 2012</th>
<th>Maximum Possible Board Meetings 2012</th>
<th>Attended AGM 2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>David Ronayne (Chair)</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joe Finnerty</td>
<td>Retired 21st May 2012</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ann FitzGerald</td>
<td>Appointed 10th December 2012</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Kevin Fitzgibbon</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cass Fitzpatrick</td>
<td>Retired 16th April 2012</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward Hogan</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eoin MacCuirc (Secretary)</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tim McCarthy</td>
<td>Appointed 17th September 2012</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angela McDonald</td>
<td>Appointed 25th March 2013</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bernadette McGonigle</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maureen Mullan</td>
<td>Retired 13th November 2012</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John J Murphy</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tomás O’Callaghan</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthony O’Donovan</td>
<td>Appointed 19th November 2012</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>James O’Shaughnessy</td>
<td>Appointed 16th July 2012</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Brendan Ryan</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emmanuelle Schön-Quinlivan</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Events through the year

1 Art from the Heart - Minister for Housing and Planning Jan O'Sullivan, TD receives an original artwork from Patsy Coffey of Cork Simon.

2 Achievers! Kathleen Lynch TD, Minister of State with responsibility for Disability, Older People, Equality & Mental Health presents certificates to people engaged with Cork Simon’s Employment and Training programme at a special Awards Ceremony at City Hall.

3 Frankie Sheahan presents Micky with a medal at an Olympics Awards Ceremony as part of Simon Week 2012.

4 Building works get underway to extend our High-Support house on Victoria Road to provide five extra beds.

5 Charging Ahead for Charity - 60 brave swimmers take the plunge for the 19th annual Whitebay Christmas Day Swim.

6 Hitting the High Notes – Charity Brass raise €15,948 in aid of Cork Simon from their impromptu city centre street performances in the lead up to Christmas. Company Sergeant Noel Galvin with Captain Brian Predergast, Brigadier General Diarmuid Fitzgerald and Cork Simon Chair Dave Ronayne.

7 Dear Santa - Jane Egar from Our Lady of Lourdes senior infant’s class in Ballinlough with her Santa Letter and Cork Simon Santa Stamp Envelope. Santa Stamp Envelopes ensure express delivery of those all important letters to the North Pole and raise vital funds for Cork Simon.

8 Cork Simon Chief Executive Dermot Kavanagh and Councillor Lorraine Kingston at the launch, during Simon Week 2012, of ‘Working it Out’ – a report on the barriers to employment faced by people who are homeless.

9 Full Time Volunteers Alex Schmidt, Kristin Trautmann, Uliana Moreas and Nora Frederich at the Simon Week Volunteer Recognition Event, Stars of Simon, at Blackrock Castle Observatory. We could not provide the services that we do without the generosity and dedication of our full and part time volunteers.

10 Chief Superintendent Michael Finn and Soprano Mary Hegarty discuss details ahead of the Cork Simon 40th Anniversary Concert which filled City Hall during Simon Week 2012.

11 UCC Simon Society line out - UCC Simon Society were active on and off campus throughout 2012, raising awareness and funds in support of people who are homeless.
Part Time Volunteers
Enda has volunteered with the activities programme for the last year.

"I really learned how being there for just a few hours a week makes a difference. One thing that really stands out is the sense of inclusion the activities bring – they’re a stepping stone in the right direction, helping people to get back into society."

"It’s helped me to develop personally, to respect confidentiality, to respect different people. I find it eye opening. I’m planning to go back and study in September - it was volunteering in the start, it’s a line of work I now know I’d be really interested in."

Lorna has volunteered for the past two years with the Employment and Training programme helping people to draft CVs and prepare for interviews.

"Growing up I was always aware of people on the streets. I went to quite a nice school and a beautiful girl from a good home became homeless – so I became aware that it can happen to anyone."

"I give them a bit of confidence going to interviews. They may have the skills but they may have been out of work for a while and lack the confidence. Also, because they’re homeless, sometime they don’t know how they’re going to be received. It’s fabulous when I get the feedback that someone has got a job and they’re happy."

"I’m helping somebody to help themselves get back on track. I’ve always been keenly aware of how lucky I am to have a big family who I can always rely on. I went back to education myself and I had a lot of support, so I was lucky and I know how important that support is."

Kevin has been volunteering with the activities programme for the last year.

"I had a bit of time on my hands and it was on my conscience about giving something back to the community. Simon were the ones that jumped out at me. I committed to six months and a year later I’m still doing it. It’s just part of my life now. It’s no load if you know what I mean."

"It certainly was a window into a whole world that I wouldn’t have been familiar with and may have had prejudice against. Definitely from that perspective it has educated me."

"The biggest benefit to me with the volunteering is that it’s fun. It is rewarding but there’s rarely a night that goes past that you don’t get at least one good belly laugh – it’s just damn good fun."

Danny has volunteered for three years. He spends time once a week with a resident at a High-Support house.

"We’d go for coffee, have a walk around town or have general chat or if he wasn’t feeling the best we’d just talk through stuff."

"It’s something else that he can be thinking about rather than his situation - just takes him out of his own head for a bit. Everyone needs somebody at the end of the day."

"I enjoy a few games of pool and I also enjoy talking to him, so it’s the best of both worlds really. I’m getting something out of it and hopefully he’s getting something out of it - it’s a 50-50 relationship."

Pat has volunteered at the Monday Night Soup Run since 2001.

"It was two or three in the morning and I was making my way home and I realised the number of homeless people out in doorways and it dawned on me – my life is pretty good, I’m sure there’s something I could give back. I wanted to help in a hands-on way."

"It’s good to see the fight and perseverance in people, it gives you inspiration and makes you realise how lucky you are to have a job and such – I suppose it makes you appreciate the good in your life."

Jason has volunteered for two years. He spends time with a resident at a High-Support house once a week.

"In whatever small way, you’re providing a space for another human being who’s having a very, very difficult time trying to connect with wider society, which is a tall order if one has been in that position for several years."

"You come away feeling you’ve played some small part in edging that person a little closer by virtue of just being there and having the craic and having no expectations - you’ve provided a little space to this person and for that made their day a little better."
Noel has volunteered since the early eighties, raising funds through ‘Charity Brass’ every Christmas.

“We’re a group of musicians drawn from the Army Band in Collins Barracks. Every year we put a programme together that we think the public would like to hear.”

“The feel-good factor is amazing. The response from the public is amazing. It’s a win-win-win for us the whole time. We come back from it, feeling rejuvenated, like we’ve really achieved something. That bond that we have as a group when we play out, it’s something that you don’t experience very often - it’s a very unique experience for us.”

“I met a guy and it was his story more than anything else that brought it home to me. He was very successful, he had a great career, he had a wife, family, the whole lot but if he was very drunk, he would sink to a different level all together and in the space of about three years he lost it all and was sleeping on the streets. He more or less said it had happened before he knew it had happened.”

“Being homeless is not a choice. It’s something that happens to you and in 99% of cases you have no control over it at all. There’s no way after seeing it that it would be a life choice.”

Sarah* has volunteered for about a year. She spends time with a resident at a High-Support house once a week.

“I used to say to my kids, imagine being out tonight, you don’t know how lucky you are and they said if you’re so concerned why don’t you do something about it. I had been thinking about it for a while.”

“I drop down on a Thursday and we go out - sometimes we go walking or we go for a coffee. It’s not like you’re doing the charity thing. I enjoy the afternoons, I look forward to them.”

*not her real name

Maura has volunteered in the Fundraising Office for nearly 8 years.

“I’ve always volunteered at something. I feel we all need to contribute to our community; Government can’t do everything.”

“It’s good for community and then it’s good for me too. I get to meet people and I meet younger people, which I probably wouldn’t do otherwise, apart from my own family.”

“If we can at all, I think we should all play our part.”
Annual Report Sponsor

Thanks to Bon Secours Hospital for their sponsorship of this Annual Report and for their ongoing commitment and support. www.bonsecours.ie

Acknowledgments

Thanks to the professional services of:

John J Murphy Solicitors
Pricewaterhouse Coopers
AIB, Patrick Street, Cork

Thanks to the Simon Communities of Ireland for their continued support, and to the Simon Communities in Dublin, Dundalk, Galway, Midlands, Mid West, North West and South East. www.simon.ie

Thanks to Huguenot for their help and advice in the production of this Annual Report. www.huguenot.ie

Main photography by Richard Gilligan. www.richardgilligan.com

Special thanks to our hundreds of volunteers and thousands of donors throughout the year who have all helped to make a real difference.