



Dublin  
**Simon**  
Community

# SPRING UPDATE 2015

Serving Dublin, Kildare, Wicklow, Meath.

## President Celebrates Simon Volunteers

Dublin Simon Community volunteers were delighted to be invited to a reception hosted by President Michael D. Higgins and Sabina Higgins at the Áras an Uachtaráin on St. Patrick's Day. Volunteers from Simon's shops, Soup Run, Social Club, fundraising and across our services joined over 120 people from other homeless organisations.

President Higgins thanked the volunteers and praised their dedication in supporting people who are experiencing homelessness, saying they provide a ***"light in the darkness of many difficult lives"***.

The President urged awareness of the effects of homelessness, as it continues to increase across society. ***"The human consequences of homelessness in all its forms: the fear and stress of seeking a place to stay, the terrible burden of not being able to provide stability for your family, the exclusion from basic social services and amenities which follows from a lack of an address."***

He continued: ***"Our response to homelessness must be humanitarian in the first instance, yes, but it must also be part of a progressive and sustained combination of measures and policies which will address the causes of homelessness and the factors that leave people exposed to the risk of homelessness, and which will ultimately support individuals and families to access secure homes."***



# Sam's Welcome



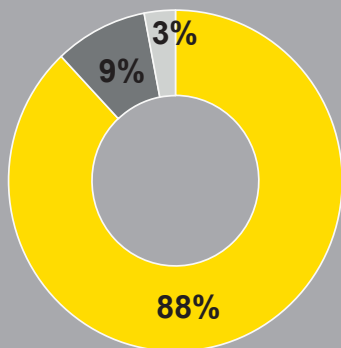
*"Everything is gearing up to the next stage. It seems to come in stages, you're doing something and then you build up for something else. When you haven't got blinkers on you can see more."*

- Tracey, Simon Client

When I wrote to you last winter the homeless and housing crisis had spiralled out of control and now, tragically, this is still the case. Many have now given up looking for emergency accommodation as there is "no room at the inn". This crisis continues to escalate, with a chronic shortage of long term affordable housing. People who desperately want to move on from homelessness are being blocked from doing so.

**Going forward, with your generosity, we will continue to open our doors and secure permanent accommodation units across Dublin, Kildare, Wicklow and Meath.** We will enhance both housing and support to ensure sustainability. You will provide this essential dual service to secure an end to long term homelessness for families and individuals.

## Where Your Money Goes



88% of all our income goes directly towards our homeless services. The remaining goes on raising funds and support services.

Services like our high support Residential Care Homes are providing a home for life for those who need accommodation long term. Our Housing Support service gives people their freedom, while helping them feel safe and secure with their community network around them.

Just last year Tracey, a client of our services, was sleeping out on our streets. Today, because of you, she is due to return to college in September. Your support has given Tracey the helping hand she needs to move towards a brighter future.

We are now in the process of acquiring a further 37 units to accommodate more children, families and individuals. It is our aim to have all of these units completed by June 2015, so any additional help you are able to give us this spring will be greatly appreciated.

**With your kindness, we will continue to help those most in need. You will give people the courage to stabilise and move on from homelessness for good.**

Thank you for your trust and belief in the Simon Community.

## Simon's Donor Charter

Dublin Simon Community is 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 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 us. **Our Annual Reports and Independently Audited Annual Accounts are available on our website [www.dubsimon.ie](http://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

# Residential Care Home - Riversdale House

Riversdale House was set up in October 2013 and offers 24-hour, high support, long term accommodation to people who have previously experienced homelessness. Riversdale House works with older residents, over 55 years of age, who require support for physical, mental and emotional health conditions, and life skills. We have two self contained apartments and a further 21 single independent en-suite bedrooms.

Residents work towards the goals in their support plan with assistance from the staff team. These include personal and professional development through one-to-one sessions and on site classes, aiming to improve existing skills while also developing new ones. A comprehensive key working and case management system operates to ensure that residents have access to appropriate services and supports in areas such as mental and physical health, stabilisation, welfare, education and training.

Gearóid, Homeless Support Worker at Riversdale House, explains the importance of the environment for our residents:

*"Our goal is to ensure our residents experience the highest quality of stay at Riversdale. Psychologically Informed Environments help address emotional and psychological issues. Such environments are intended to help staff and services understand where behaviours are coming from."*

*"This means we are able to work more creatively and constructively with people. The physical building has been created and modified to suit a comfortable, calming home for our residents. The colours, temperature, lighting system and spacious rooms throughout the building all contribute."*

*"Staff use a motivational interviewing approach for working with our residents. We also reflect on how we can be perceived, and how our natural reactions to events can be altered or controlled so as to not impact a client's mental health. Our team are regularly aware of changes within our project. We understand the impact of a poor physical environment on clients, with specific focus on the negative effects it can have on mental health and social interaction."*

***"We have and continue to operate a comfortable home of the highest quality in every sense, because that is what our residents deserve."***

Resident Rita describes her experience of Riversdale since moving into the service in October:

*"It just took me one week to settle in. The residents are very nice and very respectable people. They're of my own age group which is 55 upwards. We do painting on Tuesdays and I do my course every Monday. We have our residents' meetings once a month and we also go on outings."*

**"Now I'm in the best place with the Simon Community..."**

**...It feels like home."**



*"The volunteers here are very good because if we ever want to go to the shop or to the bus stop they help us out. The staff are very helpful and they say if I have any problems go straight to them. They always listen to me."*

Ben, who moved to Riversdale last April, gives his perspective on his first year living in the house:

*"I was reared in Parnell Street then I moved to the North Strand. Now I'm in the best place of the whole lot with the Simon Community. I love it here. In the summertime I go out the back and look at the lovely wildlife - gorgeous! It's just amazing."*

*"There is harmonisation and comradeship with everyone. Having that means an awful lot. It feels like home."*



**€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](http://www.dubsimon.ie)**.

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





# Housing Support

Dublin Simon Community opened a new Housing Support service, based in South Dublin City Centre, last June. We developed this innovative model of housing and support directly from feedback given by residents living in our medium support housing project at Hazelwood House. Residents had said that the fear of isolation and cutting ties from their keyworker were the main obstacles to living independently.

As a result we developed the Satellite Unit model, where there is a unique link between the medium and low support housing services. This new service is a block of seven self-contained apartments and residents have moved from Hazelwood House or other homeless services into their own apartments but still have a keyworker and access to supports. **Residents can then decide how long they would like this level of support and can continue to have indefinite access to the facilities in Hazelwood House if they wish. They can attend classes and activities or just have a cup of tea if they are feeling lonely.**

Mary Jane, Project Worker for the service, highlights how successful this process has been so far:

*"The first residents moved in last July and now we're full. The beauty of it is because it's a satellite, Hazelwood House is known as the base and that's where they can come back for services. So there would be regular keyworking, group work, outings and classes. This is all to combat the biggest problem for everyone - loneliness and isolation. Residents come to their keyworking each*

*week and would often stay and make coffee, sit and chat, go on the computer or watch television. We have a good communal area and garden, so it's a nice space to come down to. The volunteers arrange social outings to the cinema or bowling and we also hold computer and art classes. Each week we pop by the apartments, just to check everyone's okay. We do put an emphasis on the community as well and help them get to know the local area.*

***"Once they're settled the idea would be then to back away slightly, but they know we're always there. It's their home for life, should they want it to be."***

Ray, one of the first residents to move in, describes how he has settled into his new home:

*"I've been here six months and I really like it. Here I have my independence. I hadn't had my own place in 17 years so it was a big thing for me to get this flat. My family call up more and there's loads of local shops around the corner to get your messages. It means a lot to me and I can do it up the way I want. I hope that it will be a new life for me.*

***"I just want to thank Simon for helping me get my own place at last and thanks to all the staff for coming up and helping me settle in."***

**"I just want to thank Simon for helping me get my own place at last."**



# Update on Tracey's Story

***"Just try. You have to put out your hand for help, you have to want to do it."***

When we wrote to you last winter we told you the story of Tracey, a resident in our aftercare service, who became homeless following the death of her mother. Because of the support of people like you, in the past year alone, Tracey has completely turned her life around.

***"Last time we spoke other things were about to start and now they're coming to an end and other things are coming up for me. Everything is gearing up to the next stage. It seems to come in stages, you're doing something and then you build up for something else. When you haven't got blinkers on you can see more."***

***"I'm still up in the aftercare house. I'm doing the pre-employment course with Dublin Simon Community three days a week where we do communication skills, goal setting, interview skills, mock interviews and cover notes. I'm doing a care of the older person course one day a week. I also just got accepted to college so I am delighted to be starting social studies in September. Anything that comes up, if I can do it, I'll do it. I'm still going to the gym too, I'd be lost without it."***

***"When you come in first you want to be able to do everything all at once, but it does take time. It's getting easier now. I still have bad days and struggles but I'm sure everybody does. I'm a lot stronger. I can identify straight away the feeling if I need to talk to someone."***



***"It's reaching out for help and that's a very hard thing to do. The further I'm going I'm using all my supports. You hear how important this is when you first come into recovery. It all falls together now. You know if you look for your supports and use them it works."***

***"People say to me you should be proud of yourself but I still feel why should I be proud? What I've done I did to myself. Sometimes I beat myself up - but if I hadn't, I wouldn't be where I am now."***

***"This time last year I was still sleeping out. I just hit rock bottom really, I know I did. I know I wouldn't be here if it had gone on because I know how bad I was."***

***"I wasn't ready years ago. I'd lost a lot but I had a lot to gain. I had the children and the baby on her way. It needed to be my decision when I went into the Simon Community and not because of what other people were saying. There is a lot of help out there. My advice to others would be just try. You have to put out your hand for help, you have to want to do it. If I can do it, genuinely anyone can. I remember thinking I wouldn't be able to. The services are there, you just have to use them."***

## Reclaim the Tax for Simon

With your help we can reclaim the tax on your donations and continue to provide services to those who need it most. **If you are a PAYE or self-assessed tax payer and have given €250 or more in the course of a tax year, Dublin Simon Community can reclaim at least €112 back from the Revenue, at no extra cost to you.**

Tax relief on donations to Dublin Simon Community means that we can now make your generosity go even further to help people who are homeless.

**Please call (01) 671 5551 for more information or email [fundraising@dubsimon.ie](mailto:fundraising@dubsimon.ie).**

# Fundraise for Simon

We are reliant on the generosity and commitment of people like you so that we can continue to provide vital services to those most in need. 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](mailto:fundraising@dubsimon.ie) to find out more.

## Swim for a Mile

The Simon Community are delighted to be chosen as the charity partner for this year's Swim for a Mile Challenge on 18th - 22nd May. Organised by Swim Ireland, this challenge invites individuals and families to compete in national events to swim a mile and help raise vital sponsorship for Simon's services. To register please visit [www.swimforamile.com](http://www.swimforamile.com) and set up your fundraising page at [www.justgiving.com](http://www.justgiving.com).

## VHI Women's Mini Marathon

We would like to invite all mothers, sisters, daughters, friends and colleagues to dust off those trainers and raise funds for Dublin Simon Community by walking, jogging or running in the Mini Marathon on 1st June. Sign Up For Simon at [www.dubsimon.ie](http://www.dubsimon.ie) to receive a t-shirt and sponsorship card.

## Simon Fun Run

A Silly Run for a Serious Cause! The longest running charity event in the Phoenix Park, we will be celebrating 32 years on 3rd October. As well as an extra fun 5 mile run, this year we will have lots in store to celebrate the commitment of the whole community to the work that we do, providing services to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. For more information please visit [www.funrun.ie](http://www.funrun.ie).

## Run for Simon

Challenge yourself to take part in aid of Dublin Simon Community in the Dublin Marathon on 26th October. Run, jog or walk any marathon or fitness event this year and help stamp out homelessness with Dublin Simon Community. Please visit Run Ireland for a list of upcoming activities. We will provide you with a t-shirt, sponsorship card and encouragement!



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

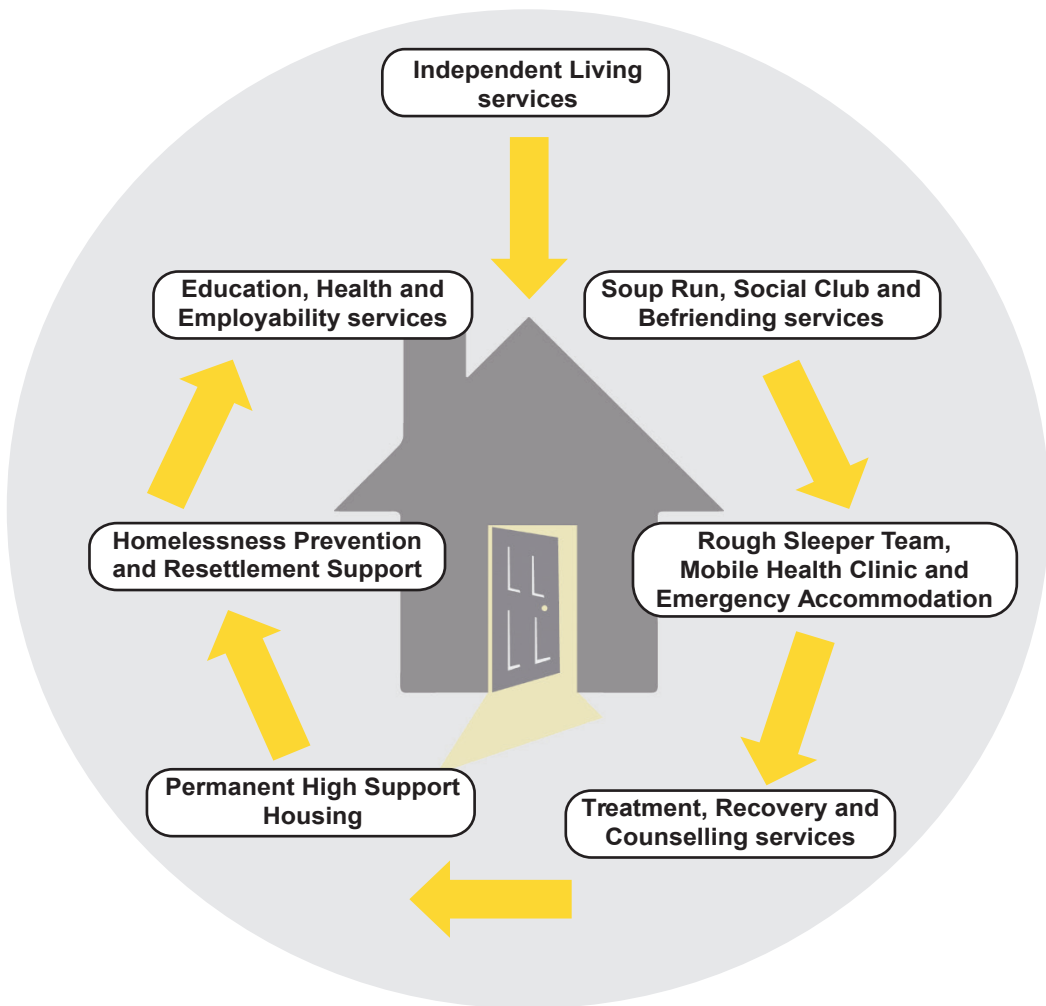
**Web:** [www.dubsimon.ie](http://www.dubsimon.ie)

**Tel:** 01 671 5551

**Email:** [fundraising@dubsimon.ie](mailto:fundraising@dubsimon.ie)

# You Provide Simon Services at Every Stage

*Because of your support, Dublin Simon Community provide services at all stages of homelessness and enable people to move to a safe place they can call home.*



## Set Up a Direct Debit to Make Your Donation Work Harder

By setting up a Direct Debit you will allow Dublin Simon Community to plan for the future. **Your regular support will enable us to start new projects and develop new initiatives with greater confidence to assist people experiencing homelessness.** Because of you we are able to plan ahead and give people the stability to get their lives back on track. By setting up a monthly gift of €21 or more you will ensure 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 will put it to work where it is needed most.

**Please do not hesitate to contact the Fundraising Team on 01 671 5551 or email [fundraising@dubsimon.ie](mailto:fundraising@dubsimon.ie) for more information.**