

Already this year, our dedicated staff and volunteers have worked tirelessly to help those who turn to us in need of support. The demand for our services is constant and it's only through the ongoing generosity of our volunteers, supporters and funders that we have been able to respond to this continuing need.

At Galway Simon Community, we are committed to preventing and addressing homelessness in our local community. You can see the impact of some of our work this year in the figures below.

Thank you so much for being a part of our community and helping to make a difference in the lives of others.



The result is that people have to be housed longer in emergency and transitional housing. This effectively blocks beds for those requiring short term emergency shelter. This is reflected in the growing numbers of people sleeping rough in Galway.

However, Galway Simon Community, with your support, continues to invest in preventative services. We try to get involved with people when their difficulties first begin and help them to find solutions that will stop their slide into homelessness. This involves working with people in their current home, helping them to maintain their tenancies with their current landlords. This is a far more effective way of supporting people as opposed to supporting them through the massive disruption to family life when they have no other choice but to enter emergency accommodation.

The greatest satisfaction in our work is when we can help someone without them entering emergency accommodation or when we prevent people from having to re-enter homeless services.

This is what your support helps us to achieve. This is the real difference your support makes in real peoples' lives.

You are a vital part of Galway Simon Community. Your generosity enables us to continue to help large numbers of people in these desperate times. On their behalf, I thank you.

Bill Griffin,
CEO

If we ever thought that the number of individuals and families requiring support from Galway Simon Community and its supporters would reduce in 2017, we would have been badly mistaken.

The Governments own figures, month after month, show an increase in the number of people in emergency accommodation of all types, such as hostels run by homeless agencies, hotel and tourist hostels, and now family hubs which are the latest addition to this plethora of emergency stopgap accommodation that unfortunately do not offer permanent housing solutions for those needing to avail of this provision.

Galway is a microcosm of the national picture. No social housing yet being built, throwing responsibility for the majority of housing into the private rented sector, where rents are continuously rising. People on social welfare find it hard to secure rentals in competition with other people looking to rent.

SO FAR THIS YEAR...

392
HOUSEHOLDS WERE
SUPPORTED

292
PEOPLE ACCESSED
PREVENTION SERVICES

81
FAMILIES WERE
SUPPORTED

100
PEOPLE
HOUSED



Figures from January to June 2017

HOW WE SPEND OUR MONEY

EXPENDITURE IN 2016 - € 4,424,928



- Service provision
- Fundraising and shops
- Administration and support
- Community Employment Scheme
- Volunteering and training

UPCOMING EVENTS

SUPPER FOR SIMON

ONGOING

The idea is simple: raise money by getting together for a meal with friends, family or colleagues. There is no wrong way to do it; the only thing that matters is that you do it! Log on to galwaysimon.ie/supper-for-simon to download your free Supper toolkit.

CHURCH GATE COLLECTIONS

SAT 23RD & SUN 24TH SEPTEMBER

Our annual church gate collections are vital for raising awareness and funds. This year, we need the support of our volunteers more than ever. If you can spare an hour to help out at a collection before Saturday evening or Sunday morning mass in your parish, please get in touch!

SIMON WEEK

2ND TO 8TH OCTOBER



SIMON ACTION DAY

2ND - 8TH OCTOBER

We're calling on local community groups to get involved in a day of action in support of the growing number of families and individuals experiencing homelessness. For more info, visit galwaysimon.ie/simon-action-day.

SLEEP OUT FOR SIMON

FRI 6TH OCTOBER

Experience for one night what thousands of people in Ireland face every day while helping to raise awareness and funds to tackle the current crisis. Join one of our Galway City or County Sleep-Outs or get a group together to host your own Sleep-Out event.

SOUP FOR SIMON

23RD - 29TH OCTOBER

Buy a bowl of soup in participating restaurants and cafés across Galway, Mayo and Roscommon and €1 will be donated in support of those experiencing homelessness.

CHRISTMAS HAMPER APPEAL

DECEMBER

Every year, we provide hampers to each of our clients at Christmas. Get involved by organising a food collection or by volunteering to sort and distribute hampers.

For further information about these events or if you have an idea for a fundraising event of your own please contact Amy in the Fundraising Team on 091 381828 or email amy.lavelle@galwaysimon.ie.

STAFF INTERVIEW



TRISTAN MCGEE,
YOUTH SERVICE TEAM

When people ask why youth homeless services are needed in a city like Galway, I often remind them what it was like to be aged 18 or 19. Maybe they were in college or working and maybe living at home. I ask them if they had a support network; **family, relations or friends they could rely on** or who they could turn to, if, like many young people do, they had a problem or didn't know how to manage a situation like an overdue bill or budgeting for rent.

For many of the young people I work with, they may have come from care or spent time homeless and **that support network may not exist**. They may not have anyone in their lives to turn to for advice or support through a crisis and that's when life can get really hard for a vulnerable young person on their own.

My job in Galway Simon's Youth Service is to work with young people 18-25 years of age who present to us in need of the supports we offer. The Youth Service team work closely with young people, both those living in our supported accommodation or in the wider community, who are at risk of homelessness. Many young people find themselves in insecure tenancies or couch surfing and our job is help them to explore and locate more secure accommodation options, and then in so far as is needed, to support the young person to maintain this tenancy.

We work to come up with a support plan with each young person that **focuses on their strengths and supports and builds on any life skills which need to be developed**. For those living in our dedicated Youth Service apartment complex, we work closely on building a community where young people who have experienced homelessness can **live and progress while being supported by their peer group**.

Galway Simon's Youth Service focuses on enabling that young person to improve their own situation. As well as working on independent living skills, budgeting and cooking, we also look at accessing training, employment and education. **We work intensively on what each individual needs to support themselves in the future and look at what they want their future to look like**. For someone who has experienced homelessness at a young age, their friends may have moved on with college and travelling but when you're struggling to meet the basic needs of having a secure base to address past and current issues, those experiences are far out of reach.

Every young person we work with helps us shape our service. When they move on to independent living, they leave our support workers better able to support the next youth who needs help by providing very valuable feedback, insight and experiences.

Supporters like you in our local community make this all possible and we couldn't have created a service like this without you. In the next pages you will hear from the young people living in our accommodation as they share their experiences and hopes for the future with you.

OUR SERVICE; OUR FUTURE

We sat down with the residents of our Youth Service (*Tuí Bhriain*) and asked them about their time with **Galway Simon** and their hopes for the future. Here is what they had to say:



"Living in *Tuí Bhriain* means independence, you know what you want in life and you go for it! I'm happy here and I think that's the biggest change people can see in me."

- **Bridget, 22**

People make you feel welcome here, I've been getting to know everyone and that's the best part of *Tuí Bhriain*, it's a lovely place to live. I want to go to college to get a good job. I'm interested in research and I want to study Law.

- **Ben, 22**



"Living in *Tuí Bhriain* is good, I get on well with everyone here. I have my own privacy and that's important."

- **Nathan, 18**

"My plan for the next year is to finish my education and move on with better life skills."

- **Aiden, 21**



"I'm saving up to move out into private rented accommodation and I'm going to go to college to study Business Management or International Business, which ever I get with the CAO next year."

- **Paul, 21**



"Living in *Tuí Bhriain* is an interesting adventure. It has helped me form new friendships and strengthen new bonds. I am happy and fortunate that I get on well with my housemate."

- **Callum, 21**



"While at *Tuí Bhriain* I hope to learn practical life skills like budgeting and cooking to help with independent living. I have started a security course and have started working as well"

- **Hannah, 18**



KEEP IN TOUCH

Want to hear what's happening in Galway Simon Community throughout the year?

Join our email list and receive updates on our services, fundraising, events and advocacy work.

Visit www.galwaysimon.ie to sign up or get in touch with us on 091 381 828.

VOLUNTEER

Want to help out in Galway Simon Community? Volunteers are a vital part of our organisation and without their hard work, we simply could not deliver the range of services we do in our community. We provide training to our volunteers and you will be supported in whatever activities you lend your time to.

There are a number of part-time volunteering opportunities including:

- Befriending/peer support**
- Charity shops**
- Events and fundraising**
- Housing support in our residential services**
- Skills sharing**

Interested? Talk to us to learn more, contact Jenny on 091 381828 or coord@galwaysimon.ie



VOLUNTEER INTERVIEW

At Galway Simon, we are fortunate to have dedicated volunteers like brother and sister Monica Coughlan and Paul Duffy, who help with fundraising, as well as in our Sea Road shop throughout the year.

We caught up with Monica and Paul recently and asked them about their time as fundraising and shop volunteers with Galway Simon Community.

How long have you been volunteering with Galway Simon?

Paul: I've been a volunteer with Galway Simon for over 6 years now. I volunteered for a year and a half before I took part in a CE scheme in the furniture shop in 2012. I've stayed on volunteering as it's such an enjoyable experience!

Monica: I started volunteering with the mini marathon in Salthill in 2013 and it's gone from there.

What kind of volunteering work do you do?

M: We do everything from bucket collections and the Christmas market to volunteering in the shop. I organise the Mervue church gate collections and Paul does St Patricks, they're always marked in the calendar every year!

P: I'm working at the moment in the Sea Road shop and it's fantastic to work with such a great team. The Galway Garden Festival in

Claregalway is always a great day and having been involved from the beginning it's great to go every year with our stall.

Why did you decide to volunteer with Galway Simon?

M: I feel very privileged to have a house to go home to and a job. Galway Simon's a great charity and I knew my time would be well spent with them, with Paul so involved with Simon, it was an easy decision to come on board.

P: When I retired I had time to spare and I decided that volunteering would be a great way to give back; we've a strong community in Galway and it's great to be able to support those that need help.

Do you enjoy volunteering with Galway Simon Community?

P: I really do, we enjoy ourselves. Walking home through town from a day in the shop you always feel good, you get a great buzz.

M: I love it, people are so generous and there's a feel good factor because you're giving back. You won't be sitting at home in your cosy house, you go out and you get a few bob for Simon on a rainy day and you're so delighted! It's a tight community in Galway, people look out for each other. We're proud to be involved with Simon and lend our support.



WE CAN HELP

If you, or someone you know, is homeless or at risk of homelessness, please contact us for support.

Call us on **091 381 828** or visit our website www.galwaysimon.ie/get-help for more information on how to make a referral.