

COPE Connections

Spring 2022



COPE Galway



6. Encouraging Safe Social Connections

Working with our community to support

Ukrainian Refugees

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COPE Galway

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COPE Galway CLG is a registered charity in the Republic of Ireland.

Registered Office:
Calbro House, Tuam Road, Galway.
Registered Charity No. 20011314.
Revenue No. CHY6339.
Company No. 248134.

COPE Galway Services

Our Homeless, Domestic Abuse and Senior Support Services continue to operate with Covid-19 prevention measures in place to protect those who use our services. If you need to access one of our services, please call the service before coming in. Thank You.

Teach Corrib Day Centre

Supporting homeless individuals

091 525 259

Family Support Service

Supporting homeless families

091 527 571

Out of Hours

Homeless Service

From 7pm to 11pm

1800 788 887

Domestic Abuse Service

24-hour helpline for women

091 565 985

Older People's Helpline

Practical help and support

085 876 7785

Meals4Health

Meal delivery service

091 354 000

Welcome to our Spring 2022 Newsletter

As Spring approaches and we look ahead to warmer, brighter days it is important to reflect on a busy 2021 across COPE Galway's Homeless, Domestic Abuse and Senior Support Services.

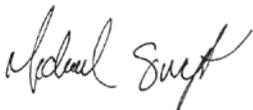
I wish to take a moment to acknowledge the hard work of our staff and volunteers during an immensely busy year. Notwithstanding the challenges presented by the pandemic, you continued to strive each day to support our clients and work to ensure a better community for all.

Our supporters, you the Galway community, gave generously enabling us to empower people, create change and strengthen our communities. Thank you for your ever present support.

As we look forward with hope and optimism, the world around us has become even more uncertain, the rising costs of living, crisis in Ukraine and the lingering uncertainty of Covid-19 challenges even the most optimistic.

One thing remains certain however, COPE Galway is continuing to support those in our community who need it most through this tough period. I hope this newsletter gives you a flavour of some of the ways in which we are working to make Galway a community where every person is valued, cared for and supported at every stage of life.

Go raibh mile maith agaibh,



Michael Smyth, CEO



News & Updates

Support for Ukraine

COPE Galway is working with Galway City Council in providing support for Ukrainian refugees arriving in Galway. While we do not have a formal role in respect of the response to the Ukrainian Refugee situation, we have been quietly offering our support by connecting staff, volunteers and translators where needed.

We will shortly run a campaign in Ukrainian to raise awareness of the availability of our Domestic Abuse Service for anyone who needs it. We are also looking at ways in which our Senior Support Services might support older Ukrainians in the weeks and months ahead.

This crisis is evolving day by day and COPE Galway will work with our community to provide supports in our areas of expertise.

50 Business Leaders join 10th Annual Sleep Out

It was a cold and wet Friday night last December when 50 business leaders came together for the 10th annual COPE Galway Business Sleep Out and raised the incredible amount of **€253,814** for homeless services in Galway. We are extremely grateful to each business leader, and to the Galway community who donated and supported them.

Funds raised from the Business Sleep Out will have a huge impact in helping us continue to develop innovative services to support children, women and men while they stay in temporary homeless accommodation, often for long periods of time.



Welcoming the Atlantic Technological University

Congratulations to all involved in the launch of the new Atlantic Technological University (ATU). Our CEO Michael Smyth, who was one of the speakers at the launch, welcomed ATU saying it created pathways to third level education for all, which is of paramount importance. The university also creates opportunities for social inclusion and plays a key role in community engagement and development.



L to R: Michael Smyth, COPE Galway CEO; Doreen Geoghegan, Health & Safety Officer, ATU Galway City; Turlough Rafferty, Operations Manager, ATU iHubs; Margaret Waldron, Head Librarian, ATU Galway City.

GTI Students mark International Women's Day



A team of incredibly artistic fashion students from Galway Technical Institute created a very special window display for COPE Galway's charity shop to mark International Women's Day. The display, inspired by artist and feminist icon Frida Kahlo, used clothes and accessories donated to the charity shop. While Frida is best remembered for colourful self-portraits, she often challenged the traditional depiction of women in art; and is a figure of female empowerment globally.

"We chose Frida because she dressed in such vibrant colours and patterns; and her creativity is a source of inspiration for women today."

The students were eager to learn more about the behind-the-scenes of charity retail, and thoroughly enjoyed searching for second-hand treasures in our shop and stockroom!



Luda, Sophie and Mairidh also modelled some outfits inspired by prominent women in history.



Senior Support Service

Encouraging safe social connections

While vaccinations are opening doors again, many older people are still hesitant and wary and need much encouragement to safely re-engage in society and social activities.

One of our main priorities is to offer one-to-one and group supports that encourage older people to reengage safely in their communities.

We are reaching out to older people living in housing clusters in East Galway namely Mervue, Melody's Court in Renmore and Whitehall Close in the city centre; and offering them one-to-one supports as well as linking people in with group activities.

Thanks to funding from The Ireland Funds and Galway City Council, we are now expanding our reach to wider areas across the community.

We have also availed of a bungalow in the centre of Mervue where a weekly coffee morning has already started and is attended by around 25 older adults. As people get involved, we actively link in with them for suggestions of further activities.

Chair yoga classes are a popular activity choice for people in the Bungalow in Mervue. An Art therapy group, around the topic of bereavement, took place over four weeks in February, funded by the Irish Hospice Foundation.

Our team is preparing the building and garden area to be used for a range of additional activities. We are planning a full programme of social and recreational activities for the summer months as well as supporting the reopening of our lunch clubs in the city and county.

Befriending Support

To support those who are more confined to home, we have developed 3 levels of befriending programmes. A weekly "Time to Care" friendly phone call, a 'Helping Hands at Home' visit which includes help with some light housework and a weekly visit from an AgeWell companion providing friendship and wellness support.

Our community support programme is broad and both proactive and responsive in nature. The impact of this work is greater connection, reduced loneliness and isolation and improved health and wellbeing.

"The months during lockdown were very hard. I couldn't do all the things I'm used to doing and I couldn't see my friends and family. COPE Galway became even more important. They made sure I had food, my pension and my bills were paid, but really what I loved most was having them call to my door to say hello and have a chat."

— Rita (client in her late 70s)

If you know of anyone who you feel would welcome a friendly face visiting weekly, please contact Noelle on 085 874 3803.



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Homeless Service

Rough Sleeper Outreach

Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, COPE Galway Day Centre outreach staff headed out every Thursday morning to connect with and support people sleeping rough on the streets of Galway. Recently, the service was increased to four mornings every week, with newly recruited volunteers accompanying staff on these days.

David Byrne, Advocacy and Policy and Outreach Service Worker, tells us about the new extended service.



What we're doing on a basic level is engaging with those who are rough sleeping in the city, offering them warm drinks, breakfast, and checking on their wellbeing. These people can experience isolation and marginalisation, may be unaware of our services and therefore may not link in with us. So, what we're actually trying to do is start conversations, build relationships and trust.

There's very limited work we can do on the street, so we try to encourage people to come to the Day Centre where we can link them in with other services.

The Day Centre works with individuals and couples without children who are experiencing homelessness. We primarily work with those who are rough sleeping, staying in tourist accommodation,

and those accommodated in the Cold Weather Response. We offer essential services from laundry, showers, a change of clothes and internet access, to health services such as a GP, nurse, a podiatry clinic and help with dental appointments. We also offer assistance with social welfare and housing.

For many, it's the first port of call, so our role here is sitting down with individuals and seeing what support they need. It's about them identifying their needs and telling us, and then us working with them to access those supports and entitlements.

It's very easy to just walk by people who are rough sleeping, it's very easy for them to disappear and be invisible. We do have an issue with rough sleeping in the city. Don't just walk by and look the other way, it's terrible to be sleeping out, but it's terrible to be invisible as well.

Support our Outreach Service

If you're concerned about someone who is sleeping rough, please contact our outreach team - details below. We always try to go out to people if we get calls, so that really helps. If it is safe to do so, encourage the person to reach out to the COPE Galway Day Centre and let them know we're here to support them.

We also need volunteers, people who can give an hour or two and join our outreach team. Volunteers are essential to our outreach work.



"Our volunteers are all different. They have different backgrounds and that's important because homelessness is not a homogenous group. It is good to have people from different backgrounds with different ideas on the team. Everyone is welcome to join!"

Contact the Day Centre

Our operating hours are **Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 4.00pm** and **Saturdays, 8.30am to 2.00pm.**

Phone: **091 525 259**

Out of Hours Freephone:

1800 788 887

Email: daycentre@copegalway.ie.

Interested in volunteering?

Find out more at:

copegalway.ie/volunteer

Our People

Meet Ailish



Ailish joined the COPE Galway Day Centre Outreach Team in December 2021. We caught up with her to find out more about her experience.

What did an average volunteer morning look like for you?

Every Monday I woke at half six, cycled up to the GoBus area, and Dave Byrne (Advocacy and Policy and Outreach Service Worker) and I would collect water, teas, coffees and supplies from the (Fairgreen) hostel. We'd start at about 7 on the same route around town every time. Because of that, you get to know people. You do the same thing to build up a routine and to build trust, I guess. It wouldn't normally take more than an hour, then I'd cycle back home and start work!

Have you learned anything that surprised you in your role?

I don't think I realised that homeless people are actively trying all the time to get on to social housing lists, and how difficult it is to get a house,

even when you're on the streets! Dave told me about one guy, he filled out the form but something in it wasn't right, he had to start over again. He was living in a tent, it was just ridiculous! You hear the rhetoric 'homeless people don't want houses, they don't want work,' in reality, they're trying all the time.

What did you gain personally?

A new perspective on homelessness, in Galway and as a social issue in Ireland, but also a different understanding of the world and other peoples' plight.



Natasha, Ciara and Ailish before leaving for outreach.

What would you say to someone thinking about volunteering with the Day Centre Outreach Team?

Do it! I've learned a lot through the experience. It's such a short period of time, just 45 minutes to an hour, it fits easily into your life and can make a great impact!

International Women's Day 2022

Our people, across our organisation, committed to Break the Bias by celebrating women's achievements and forging positive visibility of women. We also took the opportunity to celebrate the incredible women of COPE Galway - staff, volunteers, clients and supporters.



Above: Osterley Lodge Team
Below: Michael, CEO



Above: Community Catering Team
Below: Peter, Development Team



Above: Sarah and Zach, Family Services Team
Above: Ola
Above: Michelle and Geraldine, Head Office
Below: Elaine
Below: Day Centre Team
Below: Ash





Solas Óg Service

Supporting Children and Young People

Children who access our Domestic Abuse Service have their own individual needs and it is vital that these needs are met.

Children and young people need their own space to process their experiences, tools to help them cope and someone to support them along their journey.

The Solas Óg team works to ensure that every child who comes to our service has the support they need to heal and to grow up and have healthy relationships themselves.

Our support workers provide one-to-one and group support for children and young people. For many children they learn that they are not alone, that there are other children with similar experiences and it is ok to talk about it.

The **Solas Óg Playroom** in Modh Eile House is a space where children under 12 can engage in activities and supports such as therapeutic play, art, sensory work and more.

Solas Óg Youth Space is a dedicated space for young people aged 13+. It is a safe place where they can hang out, express themselves, just be and connect with other young people with similar experiences.

Our outreach team provide follow on support for children within their community, after they have left Modh Eile House.

Solas Óg also takes referrals from other services who work with children and run school workshops on healthy relationships which are targeted towards Junior Cycle and Transition Year Students. For over 30 years, our children's service has continued to adapt to meet the needs of every child as best we can.

For more information
about Solas Óg:
solasog@copegalway.ie
copegalway.ie/solasog

"A Day for The Pats"

Tuam Mart holds Auction Fundraiser in Tribute

The late Pat Dermody and the late Pat Devane, both auctioneers at the Tuam Mart, were well loved figures in the Tuam community. Their families, friends and colleagues organised a charity auction at the mart last December in their memory, raising €83,000 for two charities. The Dermody family nominated COPE Galway's Domestic Abuse Service as beneficiary of half of these funds.

The community rallied around with donations of about 150 items, from Agri tools to livestock. "We were truly humbled by the response. A huge thank you to everyone. The auction was such an incredible success, and we thank everyone that made it happen." Mart Manager Marian Devane said.

Leonie Woutersen, COPE Galway, said "It was a great tribute to the local community spirit that it was such a success and it is evident from the generosity and support shown

that the two Pats were very highly regarded.

Much of COPE Galway's work is reliant on donations, but also community support, in striving to raise awareness of domestic abuse, affecting one in five women in Ireland throughout their lifetime, irrespective of their background. We are grateful to the Dermody family for choosing us, to prompt new conversations and highlight the issue of domestic abuse in the Tuam area" says Leonie.

Members of the Dermody and Devane families and staff from Tuam Mart presented the cheques



Support from our Community

THANK YOU to every single person who has fundraised and made it possible for us to continue providing services. The difference you make is invaluable.

Walk for Ashling

Last January, Club iománaíocht Bearna-Na Forbacha, together with people from the local community, held a memorial walk for Ashling Murphy.

Those involved made donations to Modh Eile House, COPE Galway's domestic abuse service and refuge.

Our deepest thanks to the Club, local community, and event organiser Siobhan McDonagh for



Photo courtesy of Siobhan McDonagh.

this generous donation in memory of Ashling. These funds will go a long way to helping women in Galway who experience domestic abuse within their own homes.

ATU Students Donate Competition Prize Winnings to COPE Galway

A team of students from the Atlantic Technological University (ATU), won €4,000 to donate to a charity of their choice in the Goodbody Student Managed Fund National Final in Dublin last week.

Student William Figeuras said they chose COPE Galway as it "aims to support the homeless, domestic abuse victims and seniors. That really resonated with how we wanted to give back to our local community."

The Galway students competed against teams from some of the



The prize winning team L to R; Ikechukwu Ogbuchi, Frederick Kee, Arlene McGrath, Hans-Magnus Rüdinger, William Figeuras, Ross Severs, Nesson Leahy, Connal Reilly, Zara Feeley.

most prestigious universities in the country to win second place.

Air fryers from Medtronic Staff

Right now, COPE Galway are working with over 50 families who are living long term in Bed and Breakfasts. Some have limited access to cooking facilities in a shared kitchen or in some cases, just a microwave, kettle and toaster in their room.

Medtronic staff raised an amazing €4,360 to purchase air fryers for these families to increase options for cooking healthier meals. We are so thankful to the Medtronic team for their consistent efforts to improve the living experience of families in our homeless services. Last year they raised funds for iPads for children home-schooling through

the pandemic. Your support makes a massive difference to our clients – thank you Medtronic Galway!



SPAR Golf Tournament



Liam Killeen (pictured, left) and his team were victorious in the national SPAR retailers golf tournament in Loughlinstown last September – their win resulted in a €500 donation to COPE Galway's homeless services.



Charity AM AM

Galway Bay Golf Resort
Friday 10 June 2022
Team of 4 €400
(meal included)

copegalway.ie/golf

Main event sponsor



Main prize sponsor





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2022 VHI WOMEN'S MINI MARATHON

Sunday 5th June

Join #TeamCOPEGalway

Walk, jog or run the Women's Mini Marathon and raise funds for COPE Galway.

We are looking for 40 Galway women to join us on the #TeamCOPEGalway bus as we head to Dublin for the 40th Women's Mini Marathon.

Join the team for a fun day, and together, let's make a difference.

copegalway.ie/minimarathon



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