

COPE Connections

Summer 2022



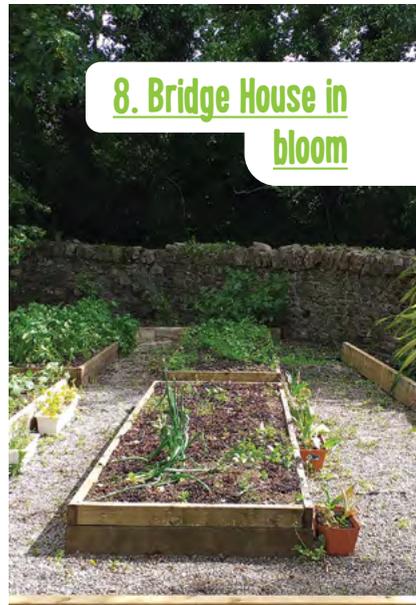
COPE Galway

11. Celebrating our volunteers



6. Music unites the generations

8. Bridge House in bloom



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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 Summer 2022 Newsletter

I hope you will enjoy reading about some of the recent highlights from projects in our services – projects that supporters like you are helping to make happen.

In this newsletter you will read about our Senior Support summer concert, our Domestic Abuse outreach service and our Bridge House gardening project. We also feature some of the ways in which members of our community are supporting the work of COPE Galway through volunteering and fundraising initiatives.

Positive Ageing Week, from 26-30 September is fast approaching, and is a wonderful way to acknowledge and showcase some of the inspirational older people in our community. On page 7 you will see ways in which you can get involved by nominating an older person who has had a positive impact on your life.

I want to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of our 400+ strong team of staff and volunteers who work relentlessly to make sure that children, young people, women and men in our community are supported at vulnerable times in their lives.

Whether you have recently joined our COPE Galway community of supporters or have been a supporter for many years, **Thank You**. Your kindness enables our work and supports us in creating **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



Helping Kids First

COPE Galway's Helping Kids First project has been awarded an RTÉ Toy Show Appeal grant for the second year in a row. The grant funds a dedicated Child Development outreach worker who supports the development needs of homeless children living in temporary accommodation in Galway. Since starting last Autumn, Helping Kids First has provided one-to-one supports to children and parents, organised homework clubs and parenting courses and arranged

for children to attend summer camps.

We will continue to expand the supports we offer to homeless children and to work with other voluntary organisations to tackle challenges experienced by many families living in emergency accommodation.

All children have the right to a bright future, and thanks to the support of the RTÉ Toy Show Appeal and the people of Ireland, we are a step closer to achieving this.

Mayor's Awards

We were delighted to have the opportunity to publicly celebrate some of our volunteers at the recent Galway City Mayor's Awards ceremony.

Jarlath Feeney was nominated for his tireless work with our Day Centre garden project, where he worked alongside clients on the project and engaged local businesses for their support. Jarlath was also acknowledged for his work as Chair of our Revenue Generation subcommittee.

Medtronic Galway was also nominated for its Spotlight Volunteer Programme – where they partnered with COPE Galway in the creation of meaningful projects which engaged Medtronic volunteers



From left to right: Síle MacMahon, Medtronic; Pauline Joyce, Medtronic; Jarlath Feeney; Mayor of Galway, Colette Connolly; Leonie Woutersen, COPE Galway and Patrick Curran, Medtronic.

and supported the delivery of our services. The programme commenced in December 2020 with in-person volunteering, however the pandemic forced a rethink of the plan for 2021, which led to a collaborative approach to designing and developing an innovative virtual volunteering programme. This is a wonderful example of how a corporate charity alliance can create connections based on meaningful engagement, positive outcomes and real impact for all involved.

Family homelessness in Galway on the rise

COPE Galway's latest quarterly census showed there were 84 families, including 217 children, in Emergency Accommodation on midsummer's night, a 24% increase compared to the same date last year.

The census, conducted on 21st June, also showed that 24 additional families entered homelessness in Galway city and county in the first five months of 2022.

Among the main contributing factors are the acute shortage of rental accommodation in Galway and the lifting of the moratorium on evictions, a temporary pandemic measure, in April 2021.

"In one year there has been a 24% increase in families living in emergency accommodation locally."



Martin O Connor, COPE Galway Assistant CEO said "We see that rents in Galway city increased by 13.8% in Q1 2022 according to Daft.ie rental report, while at the same time the CSO's preliminary 2022 national census findings showed 38% of rental properties were vacant in Galway city. This vacancy level in the middle of a homelessness crisis is simply beyond belief."

We are calling for immediate action to arrest this increase in homelessness including;

- **An immediate ban on evictions**
- **Steps taken towards ensuring that vacant properties are brought back into use**
- **Action taken against the persistent and unsustainable use of so many homes as short-term lets in Galway.**

Read the full press release at copegalway.ie/news

Charity Summit 2022 - good leadership matters

Our CEO Michael Smyth spoke at the Wheel's Charity Summit 2022 as part of a seminar on the topic of HR practices and our changed workplaces. Michael's talk 'managing the human side of change' centred on culture change and the learning organisation, and the importance of building a culture of curiosity, trust and continuous improvement

as we navigate our perpetually transforming workplaces.



Senior Support Service Summer Concert at the Bungalow

COPE Galway's Senior Support Service was delighted to host a short concert in the back garden of the Bungalow in Mervue.

5th class children from Radharc Na Mara National School, Mervue, entertained the audience with a great variety of songs. The children had spent a lot of time learning new music and practicing hard, having been guided by Ken Murphy, a gifted musician with a great love of music.

Ken worked with the children for some time, noting that some of them had never sung before. Under Ken's guidance and with his wonderful musical talent, together they entertained all those who came along.

Music brings people of all ages together and it was lovely to see the smiles on people's faces and hear the audience singing along with the children.

The Bungalow, which is located beside Mervue Church, is being used as a community hub for older people in the area. There are wonderful inside and outside spaces which allows us to provide activities and social events for the local community to enjoy.



Positive Ageing Week 2022

Do you know an older person who inspires you? Someone who has had a positive impact in your life, family, workplace or community? Or, someone who is a great example of positive ageing?

Positive Ageing Week 2022 (26-30 Sept) is a great opportunity to showcase those inspirational older people in our lives. If you would like to celebrate a special older person this Positive Ageing Week, [send your story to Jacquie Lynskey](#) (see details below). Tell us who they are and why they are your hero.

Positive Ageing Week in Galway is hosted by Galway City Council, Galway County Council, Age Friendly Galway, and COPE Galway.

For further details, go to

www.copegalway.ie/positiveageingweek

WHO IS YOUR POSITIVE AGEING HERO?

Positive Ageing Week is an opportunity to shine a light on older people who contribute to our lives, families, workplaces and communities, and/who are a great example of healthy, active ageing.

Do you know someone like this?

Wouldn't it be great to showcase them during Positive Ageing Week 2022?

Send their stories to Jacquie Lynskey
jlynskey@copegalway.ie | 086 021 1110

copegalway.ie/positiveageingweek

26-30 SEPT 2022

Positive Ageing Week.



Homeless Service

Bridge House Garden Project

For more than 10 years, the residents of COPE Galway's Bridge House have worked to transform its garden from wasteland into a lush, sustainable garden which produces an abundance of fruits, vegetables and flowers.

Bridge House, located just a stone's throw from the city, provides transitional accommodation for six men who are moving on from emergency accommodation and are not ready to move immediately to independent living. As you approach Bridge House on a typical sunny and showery Galway day, you can't help but stop and take in the stillness of the lily pads floating on the water as you cross the bridge. The working garden and polytunnel, interspersed with local flora and fauna, are nestled behind the house, and emit a unique aura of calm.

The garden has been developed by the men who are currently living at Bridge house, and by those who have passed through the service since 2011 when it resembled an untamed field. Today the garden boasts an impressive variety of fruit and vegetables, from broad beans, potatoes, lettuce and tomatoes, to strawberries, plums and grapes.

Ben Igoe, Housing Support Officer at Bridge House explains.

"When deciding on garden projects we go with what the clients want. So if we have clients that like chillies, then we will try growing some chillies. We often try some fun projects as well, just to see if they will work – last year we grew gourds, which are similar to pumpkins but are actually fruits.

A couple of the guys have done gardening courses, and with this knowledge we are now doing a crop rotation. When the food is ready the guys can use it to prepare and



share meals together or it is given to clients' friends and family or used as part of cookery skills programmes." The produce is also shared with COPE Galway's community catering service.

The Bridge House garden is part of Let's Get Galway Growing, a network of community based gardening projects, where interested clients have the opportunity to forge connections with others. Let's Get Galway Growing meetings provide a forum to share tips, trade seeds, visit and volunteer with other gardens, meet people with similar interests and take part in practical training such as first aid certification courses. Let's Get Galway Growing also provides funding to help to develop the gardens.

Bridge House residents are currently creating a sensory garden. Ben elaborates, "we are aiming at developing an interesting and welcoming space with herbs and scented flowers and with a seating area which provides a relaxing place to sit. It is really for some of the clients who are not involved in the planting but may be more interested in sitting down and simply enjoying



the space. We are potentially looking at keeping chickens next – I think it would be a great addition to the garden because some of the guys who might not be so interested in working with the soil might be really interested in working with the hens. With all of these projects we are turning Bridge House into a right little homestead!"

While the garden continues to grow both literally and figuratively, it is the residents' dedication and varying interests that remain at the heart of its sustainability and evolution.

Our People

Meet Breda



As part of her BA in Social Care Practice, Breda joined our Senior Support Service on a 12 week placement. Breda filled us in on the highlights and major accomplishments of her time in this role.

I did my placement in Sonas Day Centre in Mervue. The staff were really welcoming and the clients were just amazing! There was a small crowd in Sonas every single day, and the clients were always keen to have chats and tell their stories, it was a really interesting experience.

During this time I learned just how important social outlets are for older people, particularly during those times when pandemic restrictions were at their height.

Early on in my placement I successfully applied for a grant from The Irish Hospice Foundation, and with the funds, developed a four week long art project on the theme of bereavement.

The bereavement process is a major part of Irish culture, and as a society we have a long history in how we honour death.

The project came at a really good time as many people had lost loved ones to Covid-19 and with Covid-19 restrictions the opportunity to attend funerals was taken away or restricted and people weren't able to process their grief very well.

I worked with clients to develop the project, examining themes around death and grief, and then handed the project over to an art therapist, as I was finishing my placement just as the service users were starting the project.

I visited Sonas Day Centre recently and was really pleased to hear that the project was very successful. Participants enjoyed taking part and found it helpful to examine the process of grief which had been so badly affected by pandemic restrictions.

I saw the importance of working directly with service users to continuously develop ideas and the importance of sourcing funding for those ideas.

National Volunteering Week 2022



National Volunteering Week is a special week, not just for COPE Galway, but for many organisations across Ireland who celebrate the contribution and impact that volunteers make in so many different ways.

We are proud to have a team of over 180 volunteers at COPE Galway, who represent all ages and backgrounds, some volunteers who have recently joined us and many volunteers who have been with us for many years. Each and every volunteer plays a vital role, not only in our Senior Support, Homelessness and Domestic Abuse services, but also in our charity shop, volunteer office and fundraising team, as well on our Board of Directors and subcommittees.

During National Volunteer Week, we highlighted through social media the impact that our volunteers make. We also held our volunteer recognition event for the first time since 2019, and it was wonderful to be able to meet in person again. The day was all about reconnecting, acknowledging and celebrating the involvement of our volunteers in the work of COPE Galway and recognizing the invaluable contribution they make.



Street Outreach volunteer Ailish (left) with staff Natasha and Ciara.



Volunteer Neil Cronin

THANK YOU COPE Galway Volunteers! Your spirit, dedication and commitment makes a difference every day in COPE Galway. You are helping us to fulfil our mission: **empowering people, strengthening communities and creating change.**



Photo: Toa Heftiba on Unsplash

Domestic Abuse Service Outreach Programme

When you think of domestic abuse services, what springs to mind first? Many people think of refuges, which offer a safe haven to women escaping a physically abusive relationship. While refuges are necessary and can unquestionably save lives, the needs of women who contact domestic abuse services are complex and nuanced, and so the supports available must be comprehensive and diverse.

Amy Donohoe, outreach coordinator at Modh Eile House, talks about the outreach service provided by COPE Galway to the women of Galway city and county.

Outreach accounts for about 85-87% of the women who access our domestic abuse service.

Only 13-15% of our clients use the refuge, and this statistic is reflected in domestic abuse services in Ireland and Europe. The majority of women that we support are living in the community.

They could still be in the abusive relationship, but are (physically) safe

in their home. Many women will be considering leaving, or have left their relationship.

Our outreach workers meet with women on a one-to-one basis throughout Galway City and County. Depending on the area, we provide weekly, fortnightly or on demand clinics. These are appointment-led, we don't do drop ins, and we don't do house calls for obvious safety reasons.

Domestic abuse doesn't happen overnight. It is a slow burner. It usually develops over a long period of time and intensifies when a commitment is made, whether that is moving in together, having a child or marriage.

There is a misconception that once a woman is out of the relationship that the abuse stops. The dynamic and the intensity of the abuse changes, it is not in her home anymore and it is not a constant, but the fear is still very real and very much alive because abusers find it difficult to accept the relationship is over, even when someone has left.

Domestic abuse thrives in silence and it is often very difficult for someone disclosing an abusive relationship, past or present. Once you start talking about it, it can feel like opening Pandora's box. But Pandora's box needs to be opened to stop the abuse from continuing.

Every woman has her own story and her own journey. The outreach team's aim is to sit with her while she tells us as much or as little as she wants. It is a process and a journey that we are going on with her and it doesn't all happen in one session. Outreach generally involves meeting with each woman over a period of time, looking at her needs and then offering supports based on what she has told us. Each woman knows her relationship and situation best, and we have information that can be the key and give her the power to make the changes she wants to make.

We are support workers and not counsellors, and we focus on practical things such as parental access, financial options and housing, as well as Court orders, if they are applicable for safety reasons.

We also do vital work with community partners, both statutory and voluntary, asking them to come on board when we are doing any awareness raising events. Our partners are very supportive, particularly the Family Resource Centres in the city and county that allow us space to meet with women and are always great champions of our work.

We do a lot of work with communities because our ultimate aim is zero tolerance of domestic abuse. We can do all the firefighting with women that we want, but unless we as a society actually challenge the misconceptions and stigma attached to domestic abuse, we are always going to be needed to do this work.

Contact our Domestic Abuse Service (24 Hours):

091 394 880

modheile@copegalway.ie

Support from our Community

Every day, there are individuals, groups and businesses who do something positive to support the work of COPE Galway- organising events, fundraising, making donations and more. Every single contribution makes a difference in helping us to continue providing and developing our services. **THANK YOU** all for your support! ❤️

Women's Mini Marathon

We put out a call for women to join us to take part in the VHI Women's Mini Marathon and to raise funds for COPE Galway. Nine fantastic women answered the call and boarded the Team COPE Galway bus to Dublin on June bank holiday Sunday to walk, run or jog 10k around the streets of Dublin. A lot of fun was had, friendships were made, and an amazing €1,878 raised for COPE



Team COPE Galway at the Women's Mini Marathon.

Galway's services. It's not too early to think about joining our team for next year's event, 4 June 2023 - put the date in your diary!

Golf charity AM AM success

Turbulent weather didn't dampen the spirits of the golfers who took part in the COPE Galway golf AM AM event at the Galway Bay Golf Resort on 10 June. Thanks to the support of all the participants and our



generous business sponsors, an incredible €22,500 was raised. We would particularly like to acknowledge the support of Connacht Hospitality Group, who sponsored the golf course, and Golfstyle, who sponsored first prize.

Coast-to-Coast for COPE Galway

Galway family Georganne, Andrew, Tom and Matilda Foster, and their dog Lomond, took on an impressive fundraising challenge during their Easter break when they walked from one coast of the UK to the other. Over 16 days they tackled 300km of hillside, woodland, bogland and blisters, and raised €1,820 for COPE Galway. Georganne explained their motivation for choosing COPE Galway for this challenge "Every child deserves a home, and if we can play a small part in helping to make that happen, while at the same

time showing our children that the small things that they do can make a difference to others, then it will have been worth it."



Matilda, Andrew, Tom and Georganne Foster and Lomond the dog.

Charity Chop

11 year old Molly Skehill from Athenry is sporting a new bob after having her long locks cut at Sharon's Hair & Beauty, Athenry. Molly wanted to cut and donate her hair, and so with the help of her mom, Jenni, she set up a fundraiser

for COPE Galway. Molly has always had great concern for people living with homelessness and wanted to do something to help – and she has – so far, Molly's charity chop has raised a fabulous €785! Thanks Molly!

Below: Molly before the chop



Below: Molly's new bob





COPE Galway

Dinner Dance

Saturday 17th September
The Galmont Hotel

Book tickets at
copegalway.ie/dinnerdance

Individual €150

Table of 10 €1,400

events@copegalway.ie

085 859 7898 / 091 778 750

Fundraising event in aid of COPE Galway

Homeless Service | Domestic Abuse Service | Senior Support Service

copegalway.ie

