

Simon Voices



Simon Users Speaking

Seasons Greetings to All Our Readers

We would like to welcome you to the Christmas edition of Simon Voices. Simon Voices is produced by the National Group For People Who Use Simon Services. All the articles, stories and information in this Newsletter have been written by people who have experienced homelessness.

As we reflect on 2009 we feel pleased and satisfied with the work we have achieved

As we reflect on 2009 we feel pleased and satisfied with the work we have achieved. The National Group For People Who Use Simon Services has become stronger, working as a team with everybody participating. We take part in discussions, we listen, learn and support each other.

The Group is made up of people who have availed of Simon services and we always welcome new members.

During the year we have had meetings with staff from Simon National Office around Fundraising.

We have created links with Simon Community Northern Ireland, EAPN – European Anti Poverty Network and ADT 4th World (an organisation working with people living in extreme poverty to gain access to their fundamental rights).

We are currently looking at how people who use the services can be more involved in the Simon Communities National Plan 2010 – 2013.

We produced a leaflet promoting the Group and continued to work on producing this Newsletter.

Looking forward to 2010 we are hoping to hold a National Conference for people who have experienced homelessness. We hope to take part in training in Group Facilitation Skills. We will continue to work to encourage people from all eight Simon Communities to become involved in the National Group.



Simon Action Group launches Welcome Pack in Galway

The Simon Action Group is made up of people who avail of Simon services in Galway, and meet once a month in Knockree House. The Group decided to put together this Welcome Pack as they felt that nothing like this was available up to now. They wanted the people who avail of the services to be fully informed on every aspect of its operation.

The booklet contains information on moving in, what is on offer in Galway Simon, how Galway Simon operates, moving-on and useful telephone numbers. The Simon Action Group was working on this Welcome Pack for several months and it was launched at Kenny's Art Gallery during Simon Week in October.

The Group hopes that the people who avail of the services will find helpful information in this booklet.

IN THIS ISSUE...

Poet's Corner

Two new pieces from our Communities on page 3.

Pick Me Ups

Turn to page 2 for our list.

Easy Recipes

Have a go at Strawberry Cheesecake or Spaghetti with Tomato Sauce all on page 4.



Pick Me Ups

- Go for a walk
- Phone a friend
- Be good to yourself
- Watch a good movie
- Spend quality time in the bathtub
- Try to do one thing at a time
- Avoid too much seriousness, laugh, because you live on earth for a limited time only
- Learn to say no, this is actually one of the key habits for those trying to simplify their lives. If you can't say no, you will take on too much
- Have a cup of tea, put your feet up, and stare out of the window (Warning, don't do this whilst driving)
- Things may not have a solution today but tomorrow you may find one
- Don't point the finger, lend a hand
- If you want to lift yourself up, lift up someone else



- No one ever damaged their eye sight by looking on the bright side of life
- Hope means hoping even when things seem hopeless
- Never take a single breath for granted, it's a privilege to be alive.

Competition

Under what plant do you usually steal kisses at Christmas time?

- A. Holly
B. Mistletoe
C. Ivy

Send your answer to National Group For People Who Use Simon Services, Simon Communities of Ireland, 28 – 30 Exchequer Street, Dublin 2 for a chance to win a 50 voucher!

Closing Date: 29th January 2010.

Congratulations to our last lucky winner!



Simplicity

It's great to be sober, happy content, secure and know you have the support of others around you.

When I look back over the years of being lost, lonely, miserable, afraid, sick, dying from hangovers, not knowing where I was going. Sobriety beats that and wins hands down.

When you think of it, life is hard enough to deal with sober without putting more problems on top of that. Like coping with hangovers, trying to dodge people, dealing with courts for petty crimes. We don't need that do we, really?

It's nice to wake up in the morning and feel "I'm safe" instead of "Where am I?"

It's nice to have your own place and get up and make a cup of tea and have somewhere to get yourself ready and set for the day.

It's nice to have nice things around you that you can appreciate.

Even to read a book and relax "simple", but it's not easy to do when you are on the streets

Simple nice loving things make a life. They relax and content you.

When you're intoxicated you annoy people, trouble follows you, you end up sick and sorry. So why not keep it as simple as you can?!

Shelly



Poet's Corner



Starting

I'm sitting down trying to write
Poems that rhyme
But until then I will right
Poems that don't, forgive me
If I misspell
As I am poor at spelling
There is a name for that
But it isn't in the dictionary
I know how to spell Dictionary because
It's on the frunt of the Dictionary
That should be front
I just found it in the Dictionary
I will soon be able to spell Dictionary
Without looking at the Dictionary
I was canned a lot at school
Because I could not learn
Thanks for reading this thing
"Poem" sorry

Michael

Self-Centred

It's all in the mind or so they say
Pains of the flesh can be conquered in
thought
To dwell on the self is selfish indeed
To look outside our self is indeed
For the better

But what can I do to break out of me
What can I do to set myself free
I do know it's wrong to shut myself in
But what can I do to let my self out

I have been told to reach out and help
others
But who'd want me so ugly and dirty
Oh poor me with my awful dilemma
I will have to stay in my poor sick me

Michael

Gratitude



I am grateful to be alive
I am grateful to Simon to have found me, in my bad state of life
I am grateful for my two girls; I believe I will see them sometime
I'm grateful for the help I'm getting from counsellors, staff and
my keyworker
I'm grateful to be involved in things going on around me
I'm grateful to be finding out what I can try to do
I'm grateful for all the people who are helping me
I'm grateful for a roof over my head and a nice clean warm house
to stay in
I'm grateful to be able to have friends
I'm grateful to have a chat with people who care
I'm grateful for the friends I've met in the Simon house
I'm grateful that I can sit and have a chat with people
I'm grateful my life is changing because I was in a room all my
life and didn't share what was going on with me
I'm grateful I got to know all the people who listened to me
I'm grateful that I can see that I have an addiction and I have to
work very hard to make it
I'm grateful to have all the food that is in this house, because I
was often hungry and didn't want to eat
I'm grateful to wake up in the morning and have a roof and the
nice bed I slept in
I'm grateful to have a chance in my life and to be alive, because
I always wanted to die. But there is life out there
I'm grateful to AA and my sponsor that has helped me
I'm grateful to have made new friends in Simon, because they care
I'm grateful for just being me and to do things my own special way
To be able to walk talk and stand on my own two feet
I'm also grateful to God for giving me this special life
Thank you God

Words and Art Work by Cozzie



What is Life?

Life is a gift, accept it
Life is an adventure, dare it
Life is a mystery, unfold it
Life is a game, play it
Life is a struggle, face it
Life is beauty, praise it

Life is a puzzle, solve it
Life is opportunity, take it
Life is sorrowful, experience it
Life is a song, sing it
Life is a goal, achieve it
Life is a mission, fulfil it

Did you know?

It's impossible to lick your elbow
A crocodile can't stick its tongue out
A shrimp's heart is in their head
If you sneeze too hard you can fracture a rib

It's impossible to sneeze with your eye's open

An ostrich's eye is bigger than its brain

Cats have over one hundred vocal sounds while dogs only have about ten

Simon Voices Needs You!

We want to hear from you. Please send your personal stories, opinions, poems or news to: **National Group for People Who Use Simon Services**, c/o Catri O'Kane.

Contact details for any contributions or feedback: **National Group For People Who Use Simon Services**, c/o Simon Communities of Ireland, St. Andrew's House, 28-30 Exchequer Street, Dublin 2. Tel: 01 671 1606 catri.okane@simoncommunity.com

We may not be able to publish everything we receive. Thank you to everybody who has sent in a contribution. Sorry if it has not been included in this issue.

If we can do it – you can do it recipes

Spaghetti with Tomato Sauce



1 onion, finely chopped
2 cloves of garlic, crushed
1 tablespoon of oil
1 can of chopped tomatoes
½ teaspoon dried basil or 1 tsp of fresh basil
Salt and pepper
1 pound of spaghetti
50g grated cheese (optional)

Equipment

2 saucepans
Spoon
Bowl

Quick Cooking Method

Fry the onion and garlic in the oil for 5 minutes until soft. Add the tomatoes, basil, salt and pepper. Bring to the boil and then simmer gently for 15 minutes or until thickened.

While the sauce is simmering, cook the spaghetti in a large pan of boiling water for 10-12 minutes or until tender.

Drain and place in a serving bowl. Pour the sauce over the spaghetti and serve immediately.

Add grated cheese on top.

Strawberry Cheesecake



1 400g packet digestive biscuits
2 tablespoons melted butter
1 packet strawberry jelly
1 425g tin of strawberries
2 x 225g packets soft Philadelphia cheese
250mls whipped cream

Equipment

Mixing bowl
2 x Saucepans
Spoon
Round tin

Quick Cooking Method

Melt butter over a low heat in a saucepan. Crush the biscuits by putting them into a plastic bag and banging them with a rolling pin or a mug. Mix the biscuits into the melted butter and put into a deep base tin and flatten down.

Open tin of strawberries. Drain the juice into the second saucepan. Turn cooker ring onto low heat. Put saucepan with juice onto low heat and mix in the packet of jelly until it melts. Allow it to cool and then mix in the whipped cream and cream cheese. Put into the fridge to set.

Chop the strawberries and put all into tin. Leave in the fridge overnight to set. Enjoy!

Thanks to Trish for this recipe, it's been tried and tested by the National Group and it gets top marks 10/10