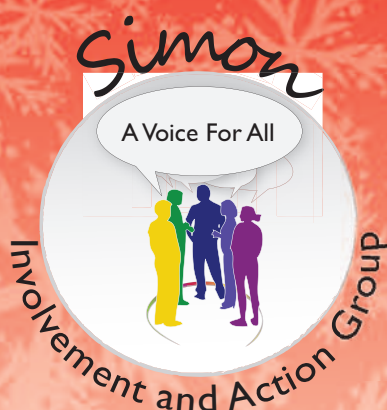




Simon Voices



Simon Speaking



Season's greetings to all our readers.

This is our Christmas edition of Simon Voices.



Thank you to all our readers for your contributions throughout the year. For the first time we are including a Christmas card - from us to you, wishing you a happy and peaceful Christmas. We hope to meet some of you at our monthly meetings in Dublin in 2014, where you will be made very welcome.

Is This The Way Home?

In their recent Homelessness Policy Statement (February 2013) the Government stated that one of the areas that they are going to focus on, in their attempt to end long term homelessness by 2016, is the 'Housing Led Approach'.

What is a Housing Led Approach?

A Housing Led approach is a way of working with people who are experiencing homelessness which supports their independence. It gives people choices about the support they will get and promotes

the harm reduction model. The harm reduction model is a way of working that aims to limit the harm caused by addictions. All with a view to getting people into permanent housing as soon as possible.

This is a different way of working. People do not have to be clean and sober or work their way up through emergency, transitional and long term housing and prove themselves to be 'housing ready' before they are offered a place of their own.

One example of a Housing Led

approach is the Housing First Model. This way of working was first developed in the USA by Sam Tsemberis who founded the *Pathways to Housing* organisation.

With the Housing First model a person who becomes homeless is offered permanent housing straight away, with the right support being given to the person, so that they can keep their tenancy and look at the issues that are affecting them e.g. ill health, unemployment etc. They can decide on how much support they want (they are expected to see a keyworker at least

IN THIS ISSUE...

A New HOPE...

Michael Mackey travelled to Prague to the FEANTSA General Assembly meeting on page 2.

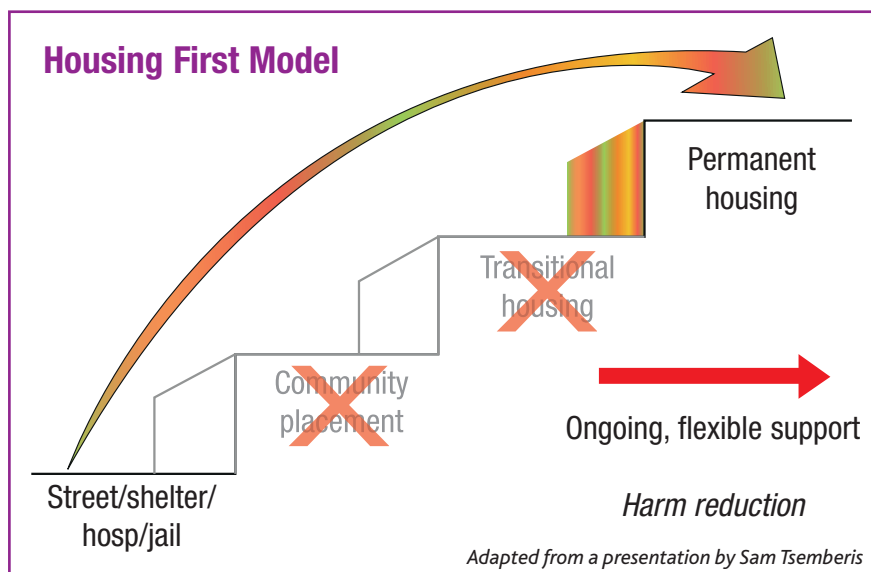
Writer's Corner

New pieces from our Cork and Galway Communities on page 3.

If we can do it...

Two delicious festive recipes on page 4.





once a week). People have a choice in what kind of accommodation they live in and where it is. All the accommodation is spread throughout the local communities, not all in one building or area.

What are the benefits for clients of working this way?

- More choice in where they live and in what support they receive
- Don't have to 'prove' that they are ready or have to 'earn' a place of their own
- Don't get stuck in homeless services
- It works as a way out of

homelessness

The Simon Communities of Ireland researched the Housing Led approach and in the report 'Finding the Way Home' make the following points:-

- Housing Led approaches should be part of the services on offer in Ireland, working to ensure wellbeing, choice and independence with the aim of providing an exit from homelessness
- The supply of affordable and good quality housing is essential to the success of Housing Led

approaches

- The focus has to be on more than just access to housing, it is also important to explore ways to tackle poor health and wellbeing, loneliness, isolation and worklessness

What do you, our readers think about the Housing Led model? We invite your comments, questions and opinions on this article.

Some people think when you give housing away that you are actually enabling people as opposed to helping them get better. Our experience has been that the offer of housing first, and then treatment, actually has more effective results in reducing addiction and mental health symptoms, than trying to do it the other way. The other way works for some people, but it hasn't worked for the people who are chronically homeless

Sam Tsemberis Founder & CEO Pathways to Housing

A New Hope, a New Voice

This November Simon Involvement and Action Group member Michael Mackey travelled to Prague to a meeting of HOPE. HOPE is an organisation of people from throughout Europe who have experienced homelessness. At the meeting they developed their statement of purpose –

"This is a Group for people in the European Union who are or have been homeless. The purpose of HOPE is to form an E.U. organisation protecting the rights of homeless people and to promote political issues that are important to the homeless people of Europe. No Government officials, NGO's

(Non Government Organisations) or people employed by organisations that provide services for the homeless can be members of this Group"

Currently eight European countries are represented on HOPE which includes Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Netherlands, Portugal, Romania Spain and Sweden. The aim of HOPE is that all EU countries will soon become represented.

Michael Mackey is Vice Chairperson of HOPE.

HOPE are designing a website, details will be included in our next edition.

Participation toolkit

Michael Mackey also attended a meeting of the FEANTSA Participation Working Group in Brussels in October. FEANTSA is a European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless. At this meeting the Group launched the Participation Toolkit. This is basically a step by step manual for organisations working with people who are or have been homeless. It shows how to involve people in all areas of the organisation,





across all levels of services, so that they can have their say.

At this meeting Michael Mackey also made a speech in the European

Parliament Buildings with many Members of the European Parliament attending. Below is an extract from the speech he made.

"Galway Simon was very proud to host the visit by the Feantsa Participation Working Group. It was a chance for us to learn from our visitors and hopefully they learnt something from us. We even managed to conjure up some sunshine while they were here. I took the Group on a walk around the tourist areas of Galway but was also able to point to the areas

associated with homeless people. We visited some of Galway Simon services and the Group were pleased to see they were situated in local communities, not set apart. A visit to Galway always has to include a bit of traditional Irish music and we did manage that as well. Visits like this help organisations to lift their heads out of the day to day business and think about the bigger picture.

I have briefly told you about my journey and what can be achieved when you have people who are willing to see you for who you are as a person, and not just as a description, such as homeless. That's what Galway Simon do. I urge you not to be afraid to include homeless people in decision making. We are ordinary people, we weren't always homeless and most of us get out of that part of our



Michael Mackey on St. Charles Bridge, Prague

lives. We have an experience that is vital if services are to meet the many needs of the people they serve. We know what is needed and with encouragement we are quite capable of participating and making decisions. You only have to ask and we will be there alongside you."

Look what our readers from Cork and Galway have sent in...

Dear Simon Voices,

Hello and thank you for inviting me to write for the Christmas 2013 issue of "Simon Voices". We are indeed very, very fortunate to have here in Cork city every night at 7.00pm the opportunity to avail of a wonderful home cooked hot dinner, at the shelter at Anderson's Quay. Without this evening dinner myself and my many wonderful friends would certainly not be in a very great place. I just wanted to say a BIG THANK YOU to all the lovely people who work and volunteer at Simon in Cork City. You are amazing and special and we are eternally grateful for you being there for us every night THANK YOU.

Sincerely

Michael O'Riordan

I would like to further wish you all PEACE AND CONTENTMENT at this time and always wherever or whomever you may be or where you may find yourself now or at any future moment in time GOD BLESS YOU.



Christmas is traditionally a time for celebration and forgetting all our daily woes to such an extent that the real meaning of Christmas has been relegated to a children's side show.

It's been said before that Christmas is for the childer as its childer who epitomise the simplicity, beauty, joy and the gift that Christmas is.



To Mary and Joseph we owe this Christmas and it is simply a little gift, a reminder of the old pairs big light. On a cold and frosty night oceans hears light.

Martin O'Brien

Simon Voices Needs You!

We want to hear from you. Please send your personal stories, letters, opinions, poems, pictures or news to Catri O'Kane, Simon Communities of Ireland, St Andrew's House, 28 – 30 Exchequer Street, Dublin 2 or email to catri.okane@simoncommunity.com.

If we publish your entry we will send you €10.00 phone credit (any network) or a voucher, as a small thank you.

We may not be able to publish everything we receive.

Thank you to everybody who has sent in a contribution.



Baked Christmas Ham



Cooked Ham (boil your ham as you normally do, or as directed on the package)

2 teaspoons mustard

3 tablespoons clear honey

1 tablespoon brown sugar

Rind of 1 orange, coarsely grated (optional)

METHOD

- 1 Place the thoroughly cooked ham on a roasting tray
 - 2 Using a sharp knife remove all the skin and cut lines into the fat (not into the meat)
 - 3 In a small bowl mix together the mustard, honey, sugar and orange rind if using
 - 4 Spread the mixture over the ham
 - 5 Bake the ham at Gas Mark 6, 200C/400F or 180C/355F for fan assisted ovens - for about 30 minutes, in the middle shelf of the oven, until golden brown
- Enjoy with your favourite vegetables

Simply Delicious Trifle



This recipe takes only minutes to make

Trifle sponge or sponge cake (enough to cover the bottom of your dish)
1 tin mixed fruit cocktail

1 box of readymade custard
1 tub of whipped cream
Decorations, optional

METHOD

- 1 Slice the trifle sponges in half length wise or slice your sponge cake
 - 2 Place on the bottom of a large bowl, so that the bottom is covered
 - 3 Pour over the juice from the fruit cocktail then spread the fruit on top
 - 4 Pour over the custard and then cover with the whipped cream
 - 5 If you want to decorate with hundreds and thousands, glaze cherries etc go ahead!
- Chill in the fridge until ready to serve.

Christmas word search

Words can go horizontally, vertically and diagonally in all eight directions. Words overlap and share 1 or more letters. When you are done, the unused letters in the grid will spell out a hidden message. Pick them out from left to right, top line to bottom line.

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s g o c o d t j e i s d e e r t r e h s a d i
t n r a g s a l i l n g d k a s a n t a m e r
h a e r r i v y e n g y s c a h r i j o y s t
g d c o m e a i e n g i s t c c o y o u y q j
i v n l s y g n o k n l c h f o r v v p e d x
l e a s l h y g x g a d e o t r m a f k k r m
y n d l e s n i t d x l e b l a n e t v r n w
e t o p d y f n r r r m f c e d e z t s u a b
n h c s d k k e e g s u q w e l r r t r t m y
m j u n l k d n n a k t d z o m l e w e n w r
i b p o r n n i m m h q x o r n b s c i f o r
h l i w o o k t s y o t j v l h s e n n x n e
c i d s d c s v i x e n m y m p c s r d a s m
v t e r o i n o r t h p o l e a h t x e y r e
g z y t r m k g n i d d u p e z l f g e k n p
q e s h n f s e l b u a b p l k p i n r i f t
r n c p m i s t l e t o e q k w q g p p w n v
  
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advent	comet	gifts	mistletoe	rudolph	stocking
baubles	cupid	holly	north pole	santa	tinsel
blitzen	dancer	ivy	peace	sing	toys
cake	dasher	jingle	pine	sleigh	tree
carols	december	bells	prancer	snow	turkey
chimney	doner	joy	pudding	snowflake	vixen
christmas	eggnog	lights	red nose	snowman	wreath
cold	elves	merry	reindeer	star	

Competition

Be in with a chance to win a €50 voucher!

Below are 3 anagrams of things connected with Christmas...

ORLCA GISRENS

ELSITN HINTG

TODSCAIEONR



If you know what they are send you answer's to Simon Action and Involvement Group, c/o Catri O'Kane, Simon Communities of Ireland, St. Andrews House, 28-30 Exchequer Street, Dublin 2.

Or text your answer to 087 799 3860.

Or email catri.okane@simoncommunity.com.

Closing date: 28 February 2014.