

*365 days a year, working to  
end homelessness in Ireland*



**Simon Communities of Ireland**  
Annual Review 2008 & Calendar 2010





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<b>A word from our Sponsor: A message from Jim Farrell, Roadstone Wood Group</b>	Page	<b>2</b>
<b>Simon - the homelessness charity: A message from our Chairman, Denis Doherty</b>	Page	<b>3</b>
<b>The Countdown to 2010 has begun: CEO's Introduction, Patrick Burke</b>	Page	<b>4</b>
<b>Local Simon Communities Activity 2008</b>	Page	<b>5</b>
<b>What the local Simon Communities do</b>	Page	<b>5</b>
<b>Simon Communities of Ireland National Activities 2008 - Best Practce and Full time Volunteering</b>	Page	<b>7</b>
<b>Simon Communities of Ireland National Activities 2008 - Campaigning</b>	Page	<b>8</b>
<b>Simon Communities of Ireland National Activities 2008 - Fundraising</b>	Page	<b>9</b>
<b>Cork Simon Community</b>	Page	<b>10</b>
<b>Dublin Simon Community</b>	Page	<b>11</b>
<b>Dundalk Simon Community</b>	Page	<b>12</b>
<b>Galway Simon Community</b>	Page	<b>13</b>
<b>Midlands Simon Community</b>	Page	<b>14</b>
<b>Mid West Simon Community</b>	Page	<b>15</b>
<b>How you can help</b>	Page	<b>16</b>
<b>Simon Communities of Ireland Financial Overview 2008</b>	Page	<b>17</b>
<b>North West Simon Community</b>	Page	<b>18</b>
<b>South East Simon Community</b>	Page	<b>19</b>
<b>Calendar Pages</b>	Page	<b>20</b>

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#### **With thanks**

Service Users, Staff and Volunteers of the local Simon Communities

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## A word from our sponsor

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### **A MESSAGE FROM JIM FARRELL, ROADSTONE WOOD GROUP**

2008 marked the completion of the first year of CRH's partnership with the Simon Communities of Ireland. In July 2008, we were delighted to confirm that CRH employees had raised over €777,022 through their efforts for Simon in the first year of our partnership.

CRH employs collectively 3,000 employees on the island of Ireland. Each one of those employees was key to ensuring the success of this worthy project and we have been heartened and encouraged by the response of our employees to the CRH Simon Safety Challenge.

The three main characteristics of the Safety Challenge - shelter, safety and the local community - naturally align themselves with CRH's businesses in Ireland and have helped ensure this project's success. Health and safety management is a daily management priority in every CRH company and location around the world - extending to some 93,500 employees in 35 countries. Globally, 82% of our locations were accident-free in 2008 - which means that nearly 3,000 CRH sites around the world experienced zero accidents during the period. However, we can never be complacent and hence our enthusiasm for the CRH Simon Safety Challenge which we hope will lead to even further improvements and higher standards.

We are pleased and proud to support the Simon Communities' excellent work and to continue to assist the organisation in working towards its ambitious goal of ending homelessness on the island of Ireland. It has been truly heartening to hear how CRH's donation has already been used - from funding an emergency shelter in Dublin, to launching the tenancy sustainment service in Donegal, to furnishing a new fifteen-bed accommodation unit in Derry.

We look forward to developing and enhancing our continuing partnership with the Simon Communities of Ireland.

Wish best wishes,

**Jim Farrell,**  
**Managing Director Commercial**

### **Celebrating Simon's partnership with CRH:**

In July 2008 the Simon Communities of Ireland celebrated the end of the first and the beginning of the second year of its partnership with Cement Roadstone Holdings (CRH). CRH has continued to show its strong commitment to supporting Simon in delivering much-needed services to those experiencing and at risk of homelessness on the island of Ireland.

The CRH Simon Safety Challenge is an all-island initiative that assists Simon's important work of tackling homelessness north and south of the border. For every accident free quarter (3 months) achieved at any CRH company location across the island of Ireland, a sum of money is donated to the Simon Community operating in that region. Company locations that achieve a full accident-free year get to donate an additional 25% bonus payment on top of the four combined quarterly donations. Simon Communities in Dublin, Dundalk, Cork, Galway, the South East, the Midlands, the Northwest and Midwest and Simon Community Northern Ireland all benefit from this Challenge. The CRH Simon Safety Challenge generated €777,022 in 2007-2008. This extremely significant donation made a real difference to the lives of people who are experiencing homelessness. The Simon Communities of Ireland sincerely thanks all at CRH for their commitment to working in partnership with us to end homelessness in Ireland and we look forward to a long and fruitful partnership in the years ahead.



**Jim Farrell,**  
**Managing Director Commercial**



## Simon: the homelessness charity

### **DENIS DOHERTY, CHAIR, SIMON COMMUNITIES OF IRELAND**

The format and style of our Annual Review means that it appears nearly a year after the period it covers therefore here we report on the year 2008. In 2008 we experienced the first effects of economic recession that has deepened since. On the other hand we were greatly encouraged by the support we received from our Corporate Partners.

Simon remained committed to our goal of realising our vision of an Ireland where no one is homeless. That goal will be realised by ensuring that all people who are homeless, or at risk of facing homelessness, are given every opportunity to realise their potential to live fulfilled lives in appropriate homes of their own.

The Simon Communities of Ireland (SCI) is an affiliation of local Simon Communities in Cork, Dublin, Dundalk, Galway, the Midlands, the Mid West, the North West and the South East. The Simon Communities of Ireland Office performs a coordinating role in campaigning in the areas of housing/homeless policy and the wider poverty and social inclusion agenda; best practice in service delivery and working with people who are homeless; and in the area of full time volunteering, promoting excellence and providing accredited training.

The onset of the current economic recession put Simon services everywhere under increased pressure in terms of a rise in demand for services and greater uncertainty about State funding and voluntary donations. The recession means that more people are at risk of homelessness and more people are likely to become homeless. As increasing numbers of people lose their jobs and their homes, some will inevitably turn to Simon for help. Homelessness impacts most on people who are on the margins with fewer resources in the first place, people who may have

experienced homelessness in the past, people on low incomes and people with little job or housing security. Many users of Simon services have complex needs - mental and physical ill-health, problem drug and alcohol use, fractured family relations, education and training needs, poverty and exclusion - and will be particularly badly affected if funding is reduced.

We wish to thank our statutory funders who supported our work over the course of this busy year. In particular, the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs and Leargas.

The recession impacts severely on the ability of corporate donors to provide the support they would like to provide. We are extremely grateful and appreciative of the support Simon received from our Corporate Partners during the year which allows Simon to continue to meet the needs of some of the most vulnerable people in Ireland.

- In July 2008 we entered into the second year of our innovative partnership with Cement Roadstone Holdings (CRH). The CRH Simon Safety Challenge generated €777,022 during the first year by promoting and rewarding improved safety levels on CRH sites around the country.
- Simon Week was initiated in 2008 with the aim of raising awareness of homelessness in Ireland. The project was generously supported by EBS Building Society who are long-term corporate partners of Simon.
- RIAI member architects once again generously put aside one Saturday in 2008 to donate their time and expertise to Simon raising an unprecedented €58,000.
- SCI was also in the fortunate position of embarking on a new partnership with Standard Life in 2008 supporting projects in Cork, Dublin and Galway Simon.

I wish to thank my fellow members of the Board of the Simon Communities of Ireland for their commitment, their expertise and their guidance in supporting the work of Simon. Our work in 2008 could not have been achieved without the highly skilled and committed staff teams in the Simon Communities of Ireland Office and the eight Simon Communities. Volunteering and the spirit of volunteerism are at the core of the work of the Simon Communities and we are very grateful for the commitment and valuable contributions made by our full time and part time volunteers. Simon would not be the same without them.

I also wish to thank the many donors who support the work of Simon. Every donation, however small, is greatly appreciated.

Most importantly, I thank the people who use the services of the Simon Communities. That people turn to Simon at such a vulnerable time in their lives confirms the need to continue the high quality of the services Simon provides. Simon strives at all times to meet their needs.

Simon will continue to offer practical solutions to ending homelessness and to be creative and innovative in responding to needs as they arise. The time remaining to realise the Government's goal to end homelessness by 2010 is shortening but it is still possible.



Denis Doherty, Chair



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*The  
Countdown  
to 2010  
has begun*

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**PATRICK BURKE**  
**CEO, SIMON COMMUNITIES OF IRELAND**

Despite Ireland's recent and short-lived economic prosperity homelessness never went away. During the years when the Celtic Tiger was at its peak the Simon Communities across Ireland were still working with thousands of people every year. These people certainly did not benefit from the upturn in our economy, and now as we find ourselves deep in recession, they are very likely to suffer the most severe effects of this sharp downturn. The economic downturn means that even more people than before are at risk of becoming homeless.

The local Simon Communities around Ireland are operating services which are at capacity - responding to increased demands and pressures - bracing themselves for an increase in those turning to their services for support. In the coming months the Communities will meet more people who are at risk of homelessness and more people who have actually become homeless. In addition, in the current climate the Simon Communities around Ireland are under increasing pressure in terms of funding with reductions in statutory funding across a range of budget lines and uncertainty in terms of voluntary donations. It is more important now than ever before that Simon services are guaranteed the essential funding to allow them to meet the needs of the most vulnerable people in our society. It is critical that we do not turn the clock back on the progress that has been achieved in addressing homelessness in recent years.

The Government has committed to achieving the following by the end of 2010: Firstly, ending long-term homelessness (the occupation of emergency accommodation for longer than 6 months) this commitment was included in the Towards 2016 Social Partnership Agreement, it is restated in the Homeless Strategy 'The Way Home' published Aug 2008 and was also recently reaffirmed in the renegotiated Programme for Government (Oct 2009). Secondly, eliminating the need to sleep rough, this commitment was also clearly articulated in 'The Way Home'. The Homeless Strategy with the Homeless Strategy National Implementation Plan is a blueprint to achieving the Government's key commitments, including prevention, meeting the long term housing needs of people progressing out of homelessness, ensuring effective service provision and improving funding arrangements. The National Implementation Plan must be updated on an annual basis, along with tracking activity to date and assigning/reassigning timelines and departmental/agency responsibility for the delivery of the remaining actions. This process should include all key players, including the voluntary sector.

While housing is an important part of the solution, homelessness is about more than housing; it is also about physical and mental health, it is about drug and alcohol use, and it is often about complex needs. Such needs are often interconnected; therefore holistic responses are critical to address to all these needs simultaneously. It is this group of people - some of whom need high levels of round-the-clock care - that have nowhere else to turn but Simon.

We are now only months away from the possible realisation of these commitments. We must once and for all address some of the greatest failings of our society, focusing on those who have been left on the margins - hopeless, sick and alone. We firmly believe that these commitments can still be realised and we are fully dedicated to working with all statutory and voluntary partners to make these commitments a reality.

The clock is ticking - the countdown to 2010 has begun.



Patrick Burke, CEO



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## What the local Simon Communities did in 2008

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**During 2008 the local Simon Communities continued to provide high quality services to a large number of people across Ireland who were homeless or at risk of homelessness, including:**

- **141 units of emergency accommodation for people experiencing homelessness.**
- **72 units of transitional accommodation where focused programmes of support are delivered supporting people to move out of homelessness and break the cycle of homelessness.**
- **A residential detoxification programme in Dublin for up to 9 people at any one time plus an 11 bed rehabilitation and aftercare programme working with approx 70 people per year.**
- **6 Simon shops around Ireland to generate much needed additional income for local Simon Community services.**
- **Approximately 1,166 volunteers gave support to the local Simon Communities, including the recruitment of over 52 full-time volunteers during 2008.**

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## What the local Simon Communities Do

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### **THE RANGE OF SERVICES**

Outlined below are the range of services available to people experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness across the eight Simon Communities based throughout the country - in Cork, Dublin, Dundalk, Galway, the Midlands, the Mid West, the North West and the South East.

**Day Time Support** - The local Simon Communities day time services offer support, food and a comfortable friendly environment for people experiencing homelessness during the day, when they often have no other place to go or no one else to turn to. They also provide healthcare access, education and training, counselling and support, information and advice, referral to appropriate services, and social events. A Day and Outreach Team operates in Cork Simon and Day Centres currently operate in Dundalk Simon and Galway Simon. The day centre in Galway opened in May 2007 and also serves as an out-of-hours crisis accommodation placement service.

**Soup Runs** - The local Simon Community soup runs provide much needed sustenance and friendship for those living on the streets, operating 365 days a year. The Soup Runs also serve as a point of contact and provide an opportunity to link people into appropriate services and supports. Both Dublin Simon and Cork Simon continue to provide soup runs in their respective cities.

**Outreach/Rough Sleeping Teams** - The local Simon Communities work with people who are sleeping rough and living in squats to ensure they have access to the care and support they need and to facilitate access to accommodation and other appropriate services. A Day and Outreach Team in Cork Simon, a Rough Sleeper Team in Dublin Simon and an Emergency Outreach Service in South East Simon all provide day and night support throughout these cities. In addition the Dublin Rough Sleeper Team offer a Needle Exchange and Information service.

**Emergency Shelter** - The Local Simon Communities operate a number of emergency shelters around the country that meet the short-term accommodation needs of people experiencing homelessness. This often serves as a first point of contact for people and referrals can be made into appropriate services and supports as required. Emergency shelters are provided in Cork Simon, Dublin Simon, Dundalk Simon and the Midlands Simon. In addition, Galway Simon Community provides an emergency cold weather shelter, in partnership with another organisation.

## What the local Simon Communities Do

**Specialist Treatment Services** - Specialist drug and alcohol treatment services offer short focused and longer-term residential rehabilitation programmes. Dublin Simon delivers a 21- day residential detoxification programme for up to 9 people. In addition, Dublin Simon run a Rehabilitation Programme which runs for a three-month period which is followed up with an Aftercare Programme. In the South, Cork Simon Community hosts the HSE Adult Homeless Multi-Disciplinary Team. The team consists of doctors, nurses and counsellors providing specialist physical and mental healthcare for people who are homeless. Galway Simon have a substance misuse counsellor working with people who are homeless in Galway city. This service is not confined to residents or users of Galway Simon Community services.

**Transitional Accommodation Projects** - The transitional accommodation services delivered in the local Simon Communities last between 6 months and 2 years with the aim of developing each person's capacity to enable them to 'move on' to appropriate accommodation in the longer-term. Residential transitional projects currently operate in Cork Simon, Dublin Simon and Galway Simon.

**Long-Term Supported Housing** - The local Simon Communities long-term supported accommodation services provide a safe, friendly and comfortable environment for those who are unable to live independently in the short or medium term. Many of those residing in long term supported housing have a range of complex needs - mental and physical ill-health, problem drug and alcohol use, fractured family relations, education and training needs, poverty and exclusion. Long-term supported housing projects are currently operated by Cork Simon, Dublin Simon, Galway Simon and Mid West Simon. In addition, Dundalk Simon runs a unique long-term supported housing project catering for people with learning disabilities.

**Resettlement And Housing Plus** - The local Simon Communities offer support services to assist people to access and move into appropriate accommodation that meets their needs. In addition, these services support people in the longer-term helping to prevent homelessness re-occurring. Galway Simon Community has a residential resettlement project in addition to their tenancy sustainment service. Cork Simon's Housing Plus project, Dublin Simon's resettlement service, Galway Simon and Dundalk Simon's tenancy sustainment services and Mid West Simon's 'Start' project all provide ongoing support that are needs based for people who have progressed into independent living. The

Midlands Simon regional settlement service targets those experiencing or at risk of homelessness in Laois, Longford, Offaly and Westmeath. In addition, South East Simon provides resettlement services in South Tipperary, Waterford and Kilkenny.

**Prevention and Tenancy Sustainment** - The local Simon Communities offer prevention and tenancy sustainment services for people identified as being at risk of homelessness to address their particular issues and ensure that homelessness is avoided. Dublin Simon and Galway Simon delivered early intervention projects to prevent people from becoming homeless. Dundalk Simon run an Outreach Prevention Service (ASSERT) and South East Simon have also expanded their Prevention and Tenancy Sustainment service recently. Midlands Simon's regional settlement service also targets those at risk of homelessness in Laois, Longford, Offaly and Westmeath. Cork Simon's Housing Plus project also has a preventative role working closely with other agencies in Cork to identify and support at-risk households. North West Simon Community commenced their tenancy sustainment and support service in May 2008 with the aim of preventing homelessness in the North West Region of Donegal, Leitrim and Sligo.

**Education, Training And Employment Services** - The local Simon Communities operate projects and deliver supports to facilitate access to education, training and employment opportunities for people experiencing homelessness. Specific initiatives are delivered in Cork Simon and Dublin Simon, offering tailor made learning opportunities and support. Galway Simon offer a range of such activities including a work experience programme in the Galway Simon Community shop.

**Simon Housing** - Housing has been acquired around the country for use by people that are ready to progress out of homelessness into independent living. The number of housing units in each Community area are: Cork Simon (27 units plus 15 units provided by Independent Housing Association Galton supported by the Housing Plus Team), Dundalk Simon (7 units), Galway Simon (10 units), Midlands Simon (6 units), Mid West Simon (8 units), North West Simon (7 units) and South East Simon (23 units.)

**Service User Participation** - The issue of Service User Participation continued to be an important focus during 2008. This builds on the work of the 'National Group for People who use Simon Services', which was established in 2005, and Galway Simon Service User Group was instrumental in this development. This group continues to meet on a monthly basis producing a Services User newsletter 'Simon Voices' on a regular basis. Some other practical examples of service user participation within Communities include participation on management boards of various Communities, input into policy development and the development of a Welcome Pack for people using Simon services.



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### **BEST PRACTICE AND TRAINING COORDINATOR**

The work of the Best Practice and Training Coordinator focuses on ensuring delivery of a high quality service to Simon's service users. The major focus continues in developing and expanding opportunities for service user participation - facilitating service users to have a voice and to influence all aspects of the work of the local Simon Communities. This year the National Group For People Who Use Simon Services began production of the quarterly Newsletter Simon Voices, a publication written by service users for service users.

Two successful national Best Practice workshops were held for staff during the year, the first 'Service User Participation – the Way Forward' and second 'Key working –Enabling Change'. Experts in the field, including service users from Ireland and the UK presented at the events, which were seen as very informative and valuable.

Managing outcomes has been another focus of the work over the year. Working with service users to monitor and understand the changes they are bringing about for themselves as a result of using our services, is becoming established in a number of the local Communities. The data we receive from this process will be analysed and we will use it to improve services as necessary.

An additional function performed by this department is the coordination of Garda vetting of relevant staff on behalf of the local Communities.

### **FULL TIME VOLUNTEERS**

As with previous years, 2008 proved to be busy with the recruitment of over 52 full time volunteers, each spending a minimum of 6 months living and working in local Simon Communities and assisting in delivering a wide range of services. Their interactions with Simon Service Users - underpinned with kindness, friendliness and empathy - have a hugely beneficial effect on some of the most marginalised members of our society.

Included in this group were 12 volunteers from the European Voluntary Service programme (EVS), which provides a fantastic opportunity for young Europeans to live abroad whilst volunteering. The programme has assisted us with the recruitment of European volunteers for the last 10 years and we look forward to continuing this work.

Throughout the year we welcomed volunteers from Australia, Columbia, France, Germany, Italy, South Korea, the USA, the UK and Ireland.

2008 also marked the launch of our accredited Full Time Volunteer Certificate programme in partnership with DIT. This programme offers all our Full Time Volunteers the opportunity of gaining a third level qualification while volunteering with us. The certificate is worth 10 ECTS (credits) and is recognised across Europe.

Since the launch we have had 47 Full Time Volunteers participate in the programme. This is a significant development for our organisation and volunteering in general and we look forward to supporting our current Full Time Volunteers towards achieving this award.



Simon  
Communities  
of Ireland National  
Activities  
2008

## CAMPAIGNING

It is widely acknowledged that structural issues such as poverty and social exclusion are the root causes of homelessness in Ireland. The vision of ending homelessness can only be achieved by addressing both the structural causes and the consequences of homelessness. Housing is an important part of the solution, but homelessness is about more than housing; it is also about physical and mental health, it is about drug and alcohol use and it is often about complex needs. The solutions must be appropriate and targeted, and inclusive of public health and social care interventions. We in the Simon Communities of Ireland and the local Simon Communities as service providers and as advocates, seek influence the approach of Government via our campaigning activities.

The Simon Communities of Ireland are represented in all major national policy fora including the Homeless Forum and the National Consultative Committee on Homelessness and lobby key stakeholders involved in shaping national homeless policy and other policy areas which impact on the lives of people who are homeless e.g. health policy and the National Drug Strategy. We follow this up by making submissions where appropriate opportunities arise. In addition, we perform a monitoring role in terms of the implementation of government policy and bring attention to deficits and time delays between policy development and implementation.

Agreed policy positions are developed across the Simon Communities in relation to all aspects of homelessness, enabling us to communicate common campaign messages to exert maximum influence and improve awareness of homelessness issues around Ireland. We work to ensure that the voices of our service users, staff and volunteers are reflected in all the policy positions developed. To this end we have established an internal 'Policy Development Committee', which involves representatives from all the local Simon Communities. In addition, we also participate in a range of partnerships and networks with other organisations that share our aims e.g. MakeRoom Alliance - together with St Vincent de Paul, Focus Ireland and Threshold; Community Platform; the European Anti Poverty Network (EAPN) and FEANTSA - the European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless. We are also committed to evidence based policy making and base our campaigning on the most reliable evidence available.

## KEY SCI CAMPAIGNING MOMENTS 2008

There were a number key campaigning moments during 2008 which warrant mention here:

Submissions were made to Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government on the Homeless Strategy and the Homeless Strategy National Implementation Plan.

A pre budget submission was made to the Department of Finance and 'mini' submissions were made to the following departments focussing on their areas of responsibility Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Department of Health and Children/HSE, Department of Social and Family Affairs, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.

A Simon delegation led by the SCI office met with the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Social and Family Affairs on the 9th of July 2008.

A Simon delegation led by the SCI office met with the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Health and Children on the 18th of November 2008.

SCI were part of the MakeRoom delegation who met with the Joint Oireachtas Committee on the Environment, Heritage and Local Government also on the 18th of November 2008.

Meetings were attended with key stake holders and decision makers including; Mr Michael Finneran, TD Minister for Housing, Urban Renewal and Developing Areas and his officials, the Health Service Executive and members of the opposition.

As part of Simon Week 2008 a very successful political briefing event was held with the Simon Communities of Ireland and all eight of local Simon Communities in attendance. Here almost 60 Members of both houses of the Oireachtas were updated on the issue of homelessness and the work of the Simon Communities around Ireland.

In addition, we engaged in ongoing campaigning work as part of the MakeRoom Alliance focusing on the Homeless Strategy and Implementation Plan and a concerted campaign to 'Put Homelessness at the Heart of the Housing Bill' (the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2008). The major 'win' here has been the fact that the Local Homeless Fora and the Local Homeless Action Plans identified in the Homeless Strategy – The Way Home (Aug 2008) will be put on a statutory footing in this bill. The government tabled amendments to this effect 3rd June 2009.

In Autumn 2008 we held our inaugural *Simon Week – Seven Days of Action on Homelessness*, kindly supported by EBS Building Society, with a wide range of activities and events taking place nationally and at local level. Simon Week is an annual event which aims to raise awareness of homelessness and the ongoing work of the Simon Communities. In addition, it is hoped that the activities during this week will mobilise members of society to get involved and play their part in ending homelessness throughout Ireland. This was a collective multimedia campaign incorporating bill boards, bus poster boards, radio ads, website, door drops, high profile Simon Week supporters (the Corona's) and lo-call phone donation line. This was a hugely successful initiative upon which Simon Week 2009 will build.

Visit the publications sections of our website [www.simon.ie](http://www.simon.ie) to view the range of publications and submissions from 2008.

*Simon  
Communities  
of Ireland National  
Activities  
2008*

**FUNDRAISING**

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all of those who supported us in 2008 and continue to do so. Simon can only continue to make such a difference to the lives of those experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness with the generosity and support of individuals and companies throughout Ireland.

**OUR INDIVIDUAL SUPPORTERS**

Throughout 2008 the Simon Communities of Ireland ran a number of appeals asking individuals to help in whatever way they could to support the work of Simon. Without the continuing generosity from our committed supporters and regular givers we would not be in a position to continue our work.

**OUR CORPORATE SUPPORTERS**

The Simon Communities of Ireland would like to sincerely thank each business that donated to us in 2008. We very much rely on the assistance of corporate supporters in a wide range of areas. We hope this wonderful support can continue in the future as we work through the challenges we face today.

**NATIONAL CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS**



Simon is extremely grateful to CRH for its ongoing support. We would like to extend a huge thank you to everyone in CRH for making this partnership so successful and in turn generating the massive sum of €777,022 in year one of the initiative. We look forward to even greater success as this partnership moves into year two. To find out more about the CRH Simon Safety Challenge please turn to page 2 whatever page the sponsors info page 1?



The EBS Independent Living Initiative has been at the core of the Simon Communities of Ireland Corporate Partnership Programme for the last 6 years. This initiative is central to Simon's work of supporting people who are experiencing homelessness to move to a place they can call home. EBS

provides an investment to Simon, after which Simon can contribute the 5% funding necessary, through the government's Capital Assistance Scheme which has helped many individuals and families move from the crisis of homelessness to a home of their own. To date 90 homes have been provided through this scheme.

In 2008 EBS kindly supported our inaugural Simon Week - Seven Days of Action on Homelessness. Through this national awareness raising campaign, we were able to target key stakeholders and members of the public. Overall it has been a great success.

With further support from EBS, Simon produced an educational DVD and schools information pack entitled "Close to Home" for distribution to most post primary schools nationwide. This pack would not have been possible without the generosity of EBS.



The Simon Communities of Ireland has been in partnership with the R.I.A.I. for over five years. Simon Open Door is a truly unique and worthwhile initiative with architects putting aside one Saturday a year donating their time and expertise to Simon. Members of the public can log onto [www.simonopendoor.ie](http://www.simonopendoor.ie) and sign up for a one hour session from a selection of architects around the country. In 2008 members of the public donated €75.00 for an hour's session with an architect and a fantastic €58,000 was raised making it the most successful Simon Open Door to date. We would like to thank the R.I.A.I. for all of the hard work and initiative put into this event and we also extend our gratitude to each architect who has given time freely to us over the years.



We embarked on a one year giving partnership with Standard Life in 2008. Standard Life and its staff raised a significant €50,303 for Simon over the course of the year via staff events and matched funding. This money has supported projects in three local Simon Communities in Cork, Dublin, and Galway and also supported work at the National Office.

**House of Cards**

For ten years now, Irish companies and many of Ireland's leading individuals have been contributing to the Simon "House of Cards" Appeal. The money raised helped us to offer support and shelter to thousands of people experiencing homelessness across Ireland. The House of Cards appeal raised €470,000 for Simon's vital services in 2008.



Colette Kelleher, Director, Cork Simon Community

*Cork Simon Community works in solidarity with men and women who are homeless, offering housing and support in their journey back to independent or supported living. Every night Cork Simon provides accommodation for 115 people.*

The range of Cork Simon’s accommodation and supports include:

**Emergency Shelter** - offering safe, secure accommodation and one-to-one support for 44 men and women each night.

**Day Services and Outreach Team** - critical to people sleeping rough, offering direct access to a team of doctors, nurses and counselors.

**High-Support Housing** - Long-term accommodation for 32 people with a high level of health support needs.

**Gateway** - providing 12 places in transitional accommodation for some of the most vulnerable and marginalised people in Cork, people who have a complex range of health and support needs.

**Housing Plus tenancy sustainment** - empowering people to return to independent living.

**Soup Run** - A team of volunteers, supported by the Outreach Team, is on the streets every night of the year offering nourishing food, befriending and support to people sleeping rough.



Volunteers from PepsiCo Ireland lending a hand to redecorate one of Cork Simon’s high-support houses’



Lord Mayor of Cork visiting Cork Simon’s Emergency Shelter

**Training** - helping to build the skills and confidence necessary for independent living.

Throughout 2008 Cork Simon supported 853 people.

There were over 650 active volunteers, including 18 full-time volunteers.

Gateway, a transitional accommodation project for some of the most vulnerable and marginalised people in Cork, opened in October 2008.

Cork Simon published its four-year plan to tackle homelessness in Cork. ‘A Better Life, A Better World – Creating Pathways for Change’ which aims to minimise the length of time people have to stay in emergency accommodation, provide routes to more permanent forms of accommodation, and provide supports to address personal issues that affect people as a result of being homeless.

Cork Simon continued to actively participate in the Cork Homeless Forum. Cork Simon also continued to work with a broad range of statutory, voluntary, corporate and community groups, establishing strong partnerships for the creation of viable solutions to the changing needs of people in Cork who are homeless.

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Sam McGuinness, CEO,  
Dublin Simon Community

*During 2008 Dublin Simon Community continued to address the many complex needs of those seeking our services, working with nearly 2,000 individuals throughout the year. Overall 708 people accessed our supported and emergency accommodation and drug and alcohol services while 1159 individuals accessed the services of our Rough Sleeper Team. Our Dublin City Tenancy Sustainment Team worked with 213 tenants and the Resettlement Team worked with 170 people.*

Throughout the year a number of service developments took place throughout the Community including:

- The provision of a new 17 bed low threshold night shelter in Island House. The need for this service was identified and in conjunction with Dublin City Council, Dublin Simon opened this shelter in June and has since maintained a 96% occupancy rate.
- A night only shelter was opened in February in partnership with the Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council as part of the Cold Weather Strategy. This service was then extended to stay open until lunchtime in September allowing for increased referrals to more appropriate local accommodation, nursing intervention on site as well as links to learning and development and other mainstream services.



Alan and Theresa, North Circular Road. Photo: Paulo Nunes dos Santos

- Our alcohol medical detoxification unit increased from eight beds to nine beds, with further plans in place to increase bed capacity to 11 in 2009. Detox is part of our overall treatment services which also includes a three month Residential Rehabilitation and an Aftercare Programme which provides addiction support and aftercare accommodation.
- Full-time volunteer numbers increased from 11 to 23, with over 200 part-time volunteers working throughout the Community.
- A new three year strategic plan was developed, following extensive consultation within the organisation. The strategic plan will run from 2009 until the end of 2011.
- Resettlement and Tenancy Sustainment successfully closed 90% of their cases with individuals sourcing appropriate accommodation for their needs and receiving the support they require to maintain it.
- The Rough Sleeper Team expanded their services, including the successful growth of their Needle Exchange and Information Service. Volunteers also now assist the Rough Sleeper Team on street searches, accompany individuals to accommodation and provide information on services available.

**Dublin Simon Community**  
1 - 2 Cope Street, Dublin 2.

T: 01 671 5551  
F: 01 671 5524  
E: [inforequest@dubsimon.ie](mailto:inforequest@dubsimon.ie)  
W: [www.dubsimon.ie](http://www.dubsimon.ie)

# Dundalk Simon Community



Niall Mulligan, CEO,  
Dundalk Simon Community

*Dundalk Simon Community worked with a total of 341 people in 2008. These people were either at risk of becoming homeless, living within our emergency accommodation, being supported within the community having previously worked with our settlement team or living in our supported housing project.*



Minister of State, Michael Finneran with Valerie Reel and Geraldine Dollard of Dundalk Simon Community

Seatown House Day Centre continues to offer a range of therapeutic, educational and socialisation opportunities to Simon Community clients and others. Now in its third year of operation, an average of 25-30 clients visit the centre each day.

The Community House in Barrack Street is the point of first contact for people homeless in Dundalk. Here we always attempt to provide accommodation for all people in the Community House, and if we are full, people will be referred to the Gatehouse, which is the night shelter.

We have a total of 25 beds in the Community House and they were mostly occupied during 2008 with over 23 people on average staying each night. The services go beyond the provision of accommodation and shortly after admission each resident is appointed a key worker who will carry out a thorough needs assessment.

The Gatehouse was opened in 2004 in response to a need for emergency accommodation for rough sleepers, people who are exceptionally vulnerable. This is a wet hostel with 7 beds, operating at the coalface, staffed with people who have considerable experience of working in this environment.

We are delighted that 35 people were assisted through the settlement programme in 2008 – this means that over 300 people have now been supported through the resettlement process into the wider community of Dundalk. The team also maintained contact and gave support to over 80 former residents. Some people require minimal or crisis support, others need higher levels of support in order to assist them in maintaining their tenancies.

The new outreach prevention service (A.S.S.E.R.T) was established in 2007 thanks to funding secured from the DoEHLG. This service has a central emphasis on preventing people from becoming homeless. In 2008, 17 individuals were supported to sustain and/or improve their tenancy – some of them continue to require ongoing support in order to live independently. None of them became homeless

A very successful Service Users Group have been meeting regularly in Dundalk Simon over the past year-they have also worked with the National Group of People who Use Simon Services - and the local group have just completed a much needed "Welcome Pack" for new clients.

**Dundalk Simon**  
**Seatown House, Seatown Place, Dundalk, Co. Louth**

T: 042 933 9583  
F: 042 932 8907  
E: [info@dundalksimon.ie](mailto:info@dundalksimon.ie)  
W: [www.dundalksimon.ie](http://www.dundalksimon.ie)



Marlene O'Connor, CEO, Galway Simon Community

Galway Simon Community provides a broad range of social care and accommodation options to individuals and families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in addition to a Day Centre. The Day Centre provided services to people from 55 nationalities during 2008.

We also provide a Substance Misuse Counsellor to the homeless population in the city and county. This post is funded by the Western Regional Drugs Task Force.

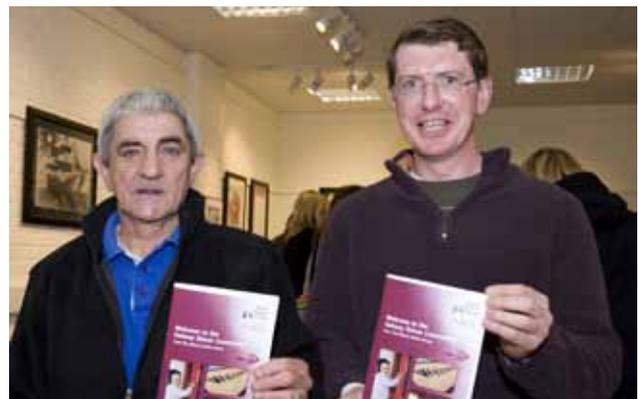
During 2008 Galway Simon Community provided:

- 45 families and a total of 114 children with Family Support Services.
- 5,366 meals and refreshment in the Day Centre.
- 506 placements in overnight emergency accommodation.
- 18,250 nights in shared supported accommodation.
- 32,760 meals in shared supported accommodation.
- 17,520 days of a tenancy sustainment programme to 50 people.

Galway Simon Community is committed to participation and partnership with the people who access and need our services. The participation groups continued to play an active role in Community plans and activities during the year.



Galway Simon Volunteers



The launch of the Welcome Pack designed by the Simon Action Group one of Galway Simon's participation groups

Things were also active on the social side with a Community holiday in Mayo for more than 40 people, the Community BBQ, table quiz, a Christmas party for more than 100 people, a children's Christmas party, football (both playing and watching), bowling, day trips, a memorial service and many more events.

As part of our advocacy and social policy work Galway Simon Community are active participants in the Homeless Forum, the Community Forum, Voluntary Homeless Services, Irish Council for Social Housing, Action for Equality and many other organisations both locally and nationally.

Galway Simon Community  
10 Montpelier Terrace, The Crescent, Galway

T: 091 589 415  
F: 091 582 811  
E: coord@galwaysimon.ie  
W: www.galwaysimon.ie

# Midlands Simon Community



Tony O'Riordan, CEO,  
Midlands Simon Community

*Since September 2005 Midlands Simon Community has been supporting individuals, couples and families in the counties of Laois, Longford, Offaly and Westmeath who are at risk of, or who are experiencing homelessness, to move out of homelessness and into a permanent home of their own.*



The opening of the Emergency Accommodation Service in Athlone by Minister for Housing, Michael Finneran T.D also in attendance were Mary O'Rourke T.D Senator Nicky McFadden, Cllr Joe Whelan (Chairperson of Westmeath County Council), Cllr Paddy Kilduff and Edel Martin Athlone T.C.

## **New Emergency Accommodation Service**

2008 saw a new development in the opening of an Emergency Accommodation Service in Athlone for single people. This service responds to an important need and a gap in services both in Athlone and the Midlands Region. This Service contributes to one the organisation's goals that people do not have to sleep rough on our streets because of the absence of an appropriate service.

## **Regional Settlement Service**

Midlands Simon Community provides a Regional Settlement Service across the region.

- Supporting people to source suitable accommodation.
- Assisting people to move into their new homes.
- Supporting people to maintain their new homes.

To date Midlands Simon Community has received over 370 referrals to our services. This represents over 700 people, including families with children.

## **Inter-agency Working**

Critical to the success of the Midlands Simon Community is the inter-agency partnership with the four local authorities

in Laois, Longford, Offaly and Westmeath, and the Health Service Executive (HSE) Dublin Mid-Leinster Region. The Midlands Simon Community is an active member of the four homeless fora in Laois, Longford, Offaly and Westmeath and the Regional Adult Homelessness Inter-agency Forum. The Midlands Simon Community has also established effective working relationships with the other voluntary service providers.

## **Volunteers**

Volunteers are involved in each section of the organisation and are vital to our success. The "Friends of Simon" committees in Laois, Offaly, Westmeath and now Longford are significantly contributing to the fight against homelessness throughout the Midlands Region. 2008 saw the expansion of voluntary involvement with volunteers becoming involved not only in the Simon Shop and fundraising but also in service delivery.

## **Service User Participation**

Midlands Simon Community continues to strive towards being a Service User-led organisation and supports and encourages the participation of Service Users through both the Local Service User Forum and Consumer Panel.

## **Future Plans**

In 2009, the Midlands Simon Community aims to expand its volunteer programmes and develop new services to meet the emergency accommodation needs of people affected by homelessness while also ensuring that pathways exist to support people to move out of homelessness.

**Midlands Simon Community**  
PO Box 27, Athlone, Co. Westmeath

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E: [info@midlandssimon.com](mailto:info@midlandssimon.com)  
W: [www.midlandssimon.com](http://www.midlandssimon.com)

# Mid West Simon Community



Sarah Birchett, Regional Manager,  
Mid West Simon Community

*Mid West Simon Community was established in October 2006. We operate in counties Clare, Limerick and North Tipperary and have been actively establishing ourselves since our launch in May 2007.*

We are a Housing Association registered with the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG) and our 'START' – Tenancy Sustainment programme in Limerick City provides permanent accommodation with tenancy supports. We currently have 10 people using this service.

We also operate and manage a supported housing project in Thurles, County Tipperary, where we are currently providing services to 13 people. The second stage of development providing up to 30 units of permanent accommodation is being planned and drafted but it is dependent on capital assistance funding and we are waiting to see what funding is available to us from the DoEHLG. We work in partnership with all our local authorities, the Health Service Executive (HSE) and our counties' Homeless Forums.

We are currently working on our strategic plan for 2009- 2012 and on developing meaningful mechanisms for effective Service User Participation. We are planning a Service User Participation Group to inform our process in creating our Service Users Forum and hope then to bring a service user on to our board of directors.



Mid West Simon Volunteers supporting Simon Week



Barry Doyle, Sarah Birchett (Mid West Simon) & Brian Stokes (Fianna Fáil) at the Mid West Simon coffee morning

We have a staff team of 7 plus 4 relief workers and 3 EVS volunteers. We have also a cohort of 10 part time volunteers and 8 board members as well as a number of other volunteers who have been happy to join us in event planning and delivery.

We have had fantastic support from our regular donors, our corporate sponsors and volunteers. This has helped us participate in events from running the Limerick Women's Mini Marathon to quiz nights and flag days and art shows to planning and producing our events for Simon Week 2009 and in planning exciting events for next year.

**Mid West Simon Community**  
26 Glentworth Street, Limerick

T: 061 608980  
E: [admin@midwestsimon.ie](mailto:admin@midwestsimon.ie)  
W: [www.midwestsimon.ie](http://www.midwestsimon.ie)

# How can you help?

## **MAKING A DONATION TO THE SIMON COMMUNITIES OF IRELAND**

The crucial work Simon does is only possible through the generosity of the general public and our corporate supporters. If you too would like to help in the fight to end homelessness in Ireland there are a number of ways that you can help Simon including:

**Online** - You can donate to Simon by logging onto [www.simon.ie](http://www.simon.ie)

**By Post** - Donations can be sent to Simon Communities of Ireland, 28-30 Exchequer Street, Dublin 2. (Please do not send cash in the post)

**By phone** - By Credit/Laser Card - Please call our fundraising team on (01) 671 1606 with your credit or laser card details and your transaction will be handled in confidence.

## **A GIFT IN YOUR WILL COULD CHANGE LIVES**

**Leave a Legacy** - Further details on how to name The Simon Communities of Ireland as a beneficiary in your will are provided on [www.simon.ie](http://www.simon.ie) or contact the Fundraising Team as above.

## **How could your company support the work of Simon?**

Company partnerships – there are endless ways that a company can support Simon. You can contact the fundraising department to discuss tailoring projects and initiatives to match your company's interests and objectives.

## **TAX EFFECTIVE GIVING**

Reclaiming Tax - If you are a PAYE taxpayer, did you know that a donation of at least €250.00 could be worth an extra 72% to us? Simon can claim tax back on these donations under current government legislation and the scheme is completely confidential. Donations from companies or self-assessed tax payers also qualify the donor for tax relief.

## **VOLUNTEER**

Simon welcomes both part-time and full-time volunteers. Part-time volunteers work in various roles like on the soup run, fundraising, shop workers, committee members and as befrienders. To volunteer on a part-time basis, please contact your local Simon Community.

Full-time volunteers must be aged over 18 and commit to a Full Time placement for at least 6 months working alongside our paid staff in a variety of projects across our communities. We provide accommodation, supervision, training and a small living allowance. This opportunity facilitates development of many skills both on a practical and professional level and is an ideal opportunity to gain valuable work experience.

We also offer our Full Time Volunteers the opportunity of gaining a third level qualification as all our Full Time Volunteers now take part in our Certificate Programme in partnership with the DIT so you not only assist us in our work but you also gain a practical qualification.

If you want to find out more or get involved, contact our Volunteer Coordinator at [volunteering@simoncommunity.com](mailto:volunteering@simoncommunity.com)

## **CAMPAIGN**

Our campaigning mandate is to effect changes to social and economic policy in Ireland that will contribute to the elimination of homelessness and its causes and make Ireland a fairer and more equal society. By an end to homelessness we mean: No one will have to sleep rough because there are a lack of services or lack of appropriate housing or accommodation, no one will have to live in emergency accommodation for long periods of time, and that no one will become homeless due inadequate or insecure housing provision.

We meet with the people who make decisions on homeless services and policies. We work to make sure that politicians, civil servants and other public officials are aware of the needs of people who are homeless and that this is reflected in the legislation and policies that they draw-up.

**But we also need your help.** We ask that you get involved in activities to help influence Government policy on homelessness. You can do this in a number of ways: you can highlight the issue of homelessness by writing to your local TD, you can phone your local radio talk show or write to the local newspaper, or you can discuss the subject with friends, family and colleagues. You can also sign up to the MakeRoom campaign at [www.makeroom.ie](http://www.makeroom.ie) where you can pledge to end homelessness by 2010.

## Contact us

### **Simon Communities of Ireland**

St Andrews House  
28-30 Exchequer Street  
Dublin 2

**Phone:** 01-6711606

**Email:** [info@simoncommunity.com](mailto:info@simoncommunity.com)

**Website:** [www.simon.ie](http://www.simon.ie)

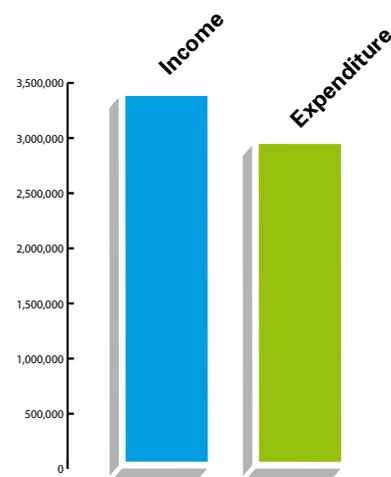
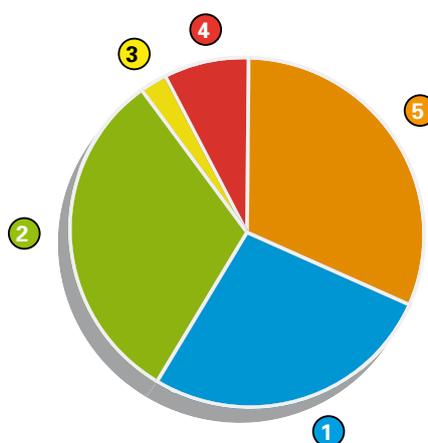
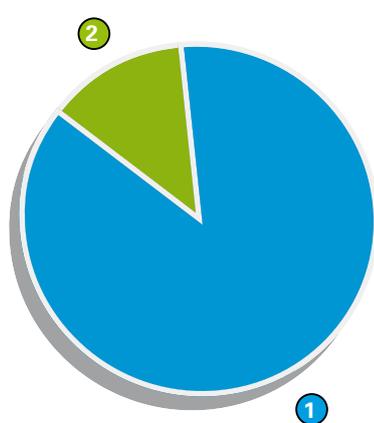
### **Fundraising Department**

Email: [fundraising@simoncommunity.com](mailto:fundraising@simoncommunity.com)

### **Volunteer Coordinator**

Email: [volunteering@simoncommunity.com](mailto:volunteering@simoncommunity.com)

# Financial overview 2008



Income:	€
1. Fundraising:	2,978,291
2. Grants:	444,359
<b>Total:</b>	<b>3,422,650</b>

Expenditure:	€
1. Staffing	810,735
2. Programmes	939,085
3. Office	73,417
4. Fundraising	233,630
5. Local Simons	926,365
<b>Total:</b>	<b>2,983,323</b>

**Surplus: € 439,418**

In 2008, Simon Communities of Ireland generated just over €3.4million of income. The vast majority of our funding (over 87%) is sourced from donations or contributions from the general public or our corporate partners. Public funding remains essential however given its specific focus on support for a number of key activities delivered by the office.

The cost of the work of the Simon Communities of Ireland office in 2008 was just under €3.0 million. The €233,630 spent on fundraising is justified by the significant sums raised as noted above. Included in expenditure is €926,365 which was distributed to our local Communities to help with their operational costs.

We would like to thank everyone - corporate, statutory and individual - who contributed to Simon during 2008. We continue to strive to give the best possible value-for-money and make a lasting difference to the lives of the people with whom we work.

Full audited accounts are available on request from the Simon Communities of Ireland office.

# North West Simon Community



Claire McTiernan,  
Regional Development Officer,  
North West Simon Community

*North West Simon Community covering Donegal, Leitrim and Sligo aims to prevent people from becoming homeless, to develop and facilitate services that respond to individual needs, and to inform, advocate and campaign for each person's right to a home with appropriate services to support this.*

*We achieve this through*

- *Provision of tenancy sustainment and support services, and*
- *Low support permanent housing.*

Mid 2008 saw the establishment of the tenancy sustainment and support service with one staff member covering Donegal while another staff member provides a service to those in counties Leitrim and Sligo. The aim of the service is to enable people to keep their homes and improve people's quality of life.

The service provides support, information and advocacy to ensure that people remain in their own home. The service also seeks to enable people to do things for themselves and to improve their overall quality of life.

Practical supports such as; budgeting, assistance with paying bills, homemaking skills, maintenance and repair, supports to access health and addiction services or settling into a community through participation in leisure, training and educational activities.

**North West Simon Community,  
Beepark Resource Centre, Manorhamilton, Co. Leitrim**

T: 071 985 5005  
E: [info@northwestsimon.ie](mailto:info@northwestsimon.ie)  
W: [www.northwestsimon.ie](http://www.northwestsimon.ie)



North West Simon Community volunteers who assisted with a fundraising Bag Pack in Tesco Carrick-on-Shannon, Co. Leitrim

In 2008 over 496 support visits were made as part of this service throughout the region.

2008 also saw the arrival of the first 7 tenants into the North West Simon Community low support permanent housing in Letterkenny. These own door apartments with gardens provide a safe place of refuge for vulnerable people who may have experienced homelessness in the past and/or require supports to enable them maintain a home of their own

Towards the end of 2008 a successful Capital Assistance Scheme application was made for 8 apartments with their own door in the Letterkenny area.

Looking forward to 2009: It is intended to acquire further units of accommodation to meet the needs of vulnerable single people long-term on the housing list and who require supports.

Also in 2009 the organisation intends to focus on single men in Leitrim at risk of homelessness and is currently in the process of developing initiatives for this vulnerable group in partnership with North Leitrim Men's Group.

Finally the organisation hopes to recruit a fundraiser to further enable us to continue to provide preventative services for homeless people in the North West Region going forward.



Some NW Simon volunteers on O'Connell St. in Sligo town during Simon Week

# South East Simon Community



Chris Anderson,  
Regional Development Officer,  
South East Simon Community

*South East Simon Community delivers services in Counties Carlow, Kilkenny, South Tipperary, Waterford and Wexford. We offer a wide range of services including supported advocacy, outreach – to rough sleepers, re-settlement and tenancy support and supported housing.*

South East Simon Community delivers services in Counties Carlow, Kilkenny, South Tipperary, Waterford and Wexford.

We offer

- Supported advocacy.
- Outreach – to rough sleepers.
- Re-settlement.
- Tenancy support.
- Supported housing.

In Waterford and South Tipperary we offer all services. In Carlow and Wexford we offer Supported Advocacy and Outreach only due to financial and resource limits. In Kilkenny we offer supported advocacy, outreach and have 2 units of supported housing.

In 2008 we worked with 95 men, 128 women and 214 children across the region who accessed one or more of our services.

All of our supported housing units were full throughout this year so we relied heavily on private rental and social housing partners to meet the accommodation needs of our service participants.



The might of Munster supporting South East Simon Community.  
Anthony Foley, Frankie Roche and John Hayes.



Miss Ireland 2008, Sinead Noonan, about to parachute jump for South East Simon

We were delighted to win the contract to provide an Outreach Tenancy Sustainment service with South Tipperary County Council and have allocated two qualified Social Care Practitioners to this service based at 2 Brighton Place, Clonmel, South Tipperary. This high quality, effective service operates throughout Carrick-on Suir, Clonmel, Cahir and Tipperary Town working in partnership with the Homeless Action Team and the Local Authority. Thank you to our partners for your support.

In addition, we were delighted to appoint a Housing Officer to manage our properties across the region.

We are excited about 2009, which will see the opening of both our flagship shop at 41 Michael Street and our new drop in service at the address below.

Thank you once more to the public in our region for your generous support for our work. We have worked hard to reduce our costs as a community whilst continuing to offer high quality, individual support to anyone who requests our help. You donated just under €240,000 in 2008. We cannot deliver our services without your on-going support.

## South East Simon Community

Unit 34, Johnstown Industrial Estate, Johnstown, Waterford

T: 051 874 838

F: 051 331 066

E: [sesimon@eircom.net](mailto:sesimon@eircom.net)

W: [www.southeastsimon.ie](http://www.southeastsimon.ie)



January  
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**Simon Communities of Ireland**  
 28/30 Exchequer St.  
 Dublin 2  
 T: 01 671 1606  
 F: 01 671 1098  
 E: info@simoncommunity.com  
 W: www.simon.ie

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February  
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April  
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September  
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October  
**2010**

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*Simon  
Week  
2010*



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November  
**2010**

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December  
**2010**

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Deadline for  
Government's 2010  
Commitments on  
Homelessness



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