

# DEPAUL DIARIES

Bringing you news of your compassion set in motion across Ireland | January 2023

Thank you for giving people a way back from homelessness and hopelessness —

## Your Kindness Keeps Hope Alive

*Terrifying. Horrific. Dehumanising. These are the words Martin uses when he describes his years as a homeless man. But after almost a decade of despair and too many freezing cold sleepless nights to count, Martin is home at last thanks to your kindness. And here he is with a message of gratitude for you...*

Is there a moment that a person becomes 'homeless'? For Martin, there was...

And even though he could see that moment coming down the tracks, closer and closer every day, he couldn't seem to stop it. "The

landlord said he needed the place back, and that's where it all started. Within two months, I was homeless."

Martin is a smiley man, but when he talks about his time on the streets — *nine years of misery all told* — his expression falls, and the colour drains from his face.

"I remember that first night I slept on the street. I was terrified, absolutely terrified."

*"I remember that first night I slept on the street. I was terrified, absolutely terrified. I'm getting upset now even just thinking about it..."*

### The struggle to survive

When you're homeless, the Irish winter is a war... a struggle to survive. Martin says that on the coldest days, he used to get on the bus just to stay warm. He'd wander around all night sometimes, too scared to sleep.

You can imagine the psychological and

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physical toll it would take on you, can't you? Too worried to fall asleep in case you don't open your eyes again in the morning. It's a torture Martin knows all too well. There were times, Martin says, that he felt suicidal...

*"I tried to take my life twice when I was on the streets. I can't lie to you, there's no point in lying about it. That's what it does to you."*

### Your belief. Martin's gratitude...

When Martin turned to Depaul, he was frozen to the bone and at rock bottom.

But your kindness carries with it the power to turn a life around. To bring hope even to the most hopeless hearts. Because when you give, you're not *only*

providing the all-too-brief relief of a warm bed, clean clothes, and a belly full of food. Your generosity restores dignity, faith in humanity, and hope that faded long ago.

Your compassion gave Martin the courage to keep going. And he's forever grateful to you for believing in him, even when he didn't believe in himself...

*"I had a horrible life until you guys stepped in. Depaul has changed my life. It's changed my family. It's changed everything. Without your help, I don't know if I'd even be alive. That's not being dramatic — it's true!"*

### "I love going home"

It's been a long and winding road home, but with your steadfast support through thick and thin over these last



*"If it wasn't for caring people who support Depaul, I don't know if I would have made it another year homeless..."*

*I really appreciate what you've done for me. And I mean that from the bottom of my heart...*

*Depaul changed my life."*

— Martin

few difficult years, Martin now holds the keys to his very own front door in his hands —

"You wouldn't believe how incredible it feels to have front door keys," says Martin. "I haven't had keys for 9 years. It took me a few weeks to settle in. But now I love it. I can cook my own food, I have my own bed, and I don't wake up in fear anymore! I really thank you... I really, really do, from the bottom of my heart."

**One person at a time, your kindness is changing lives like Martin's. Thank you for caring... for giving... and for restoring hope to homeless hearts, even when hope feels all but lost. ♥**

*"People don't want to ask for help, but when we put food out it's gone in minutes..." —*

## The Hidden Hungry

*For people who were already living hand to mouth, the cost of living crisis means many can no longer afford the very basics. Will you help provide food parcels for people who are homeless and struggling?*

**E**ver has it been that rising food and fuel costs hit the very poorest the hardest of all...

At our day centres, our once-healthy mini food banks are virtually bare. And in our family services, where homeless families live semi-independently, parents are confiding in us that they're struggling to feed their kids.

**Please, will you give today and provide food parcels to people who are homeless and hungry right now?**

Every €20 you give can provide a food parcel with essentials like cereal, pasta, and teabags. To give to this special food appeal, please use your enclosed reply form or visit our website [depaul.ie/foodappeal](https://depaul.ie/foodappeal)—

*Thank you!*



## A Heartfelt THANK YOU from Chef Shay...

*When Chef Shay asked for your help to feed hundreds of homeless people this winter, your caring heart answered without hesitation. This is what your kindness means to people who were homeless at Christmas time...*

**799...** that's how many homeless people your kindness helped feed Christmas dinner to on 25th December.

And Chef Shay wants you to know just what your generosity means to people who are homeless at Christmas time...

"It's lonely at the best of times, but on that day, it's extra lonely," says Shay. "Without Depaul putting on dinner, I don't know what they'd do."

But thanks to your thoughtfulness, almost 800 homeless men, women and children had a Christmas to remember.

"We try and make it as homely as possible. We lay the tables, put a tree up, there's crackers and music... many of the people here have no family. **It means the world to them, and to me, that people like you care enough to buy them dinner... thank you.**"



*Your message of solidarity and support hung on one of 32 Christmas trees across our services. Thank you for blanketing people in your kindness at Christmas time.*



For every fresh start and new beginning... we thank you!

## A Safe Place to Turn, Thanks to You...

*Meet Carrie. She's been homeless on and off since she was sixteen. But nine months after turning to Depaul, her future looks brighter than ever. Here's to Carrie's determination to change her life, to Depaul's women-only homeless services, and to you...*



**L**ast year, around a quarter of the people you helped through your kind support of Depaul, were women. And like a great many women who find themselves homeless, Carrie had a difficult childhood...

She started drinking at the age of nine. By twelve, she was addicted to drugs. But despite this, she holds no resentment in her heart for her rough start. "It wasn't my mother's fault," she says, "she didn't have a great life herself."

But it was when Carrie arrived at one of Depaul's six women-only homeless shelters, that her life began to turn around.

Carrie is profoundly grateful to you for the life-changing support she received at Depaul's homeless women's services. "There aren't enough places like Depaul," says Carrie, "there should be more services for women. I would have been back on the streets [otherwise]..."

Your kindness helped Carrie into supported housing, and into education. "I'm going to college for my reading and writing," says Carrie. "And I'm doing a cooking course... I want to become a chef."

**Empathy and understanding like yours transforms lives like Carrie's. Thank you!**

### How You Help Ireland's Most Vulnerable Women

*Many of the homeless women your kindness reaches have experienced poverty, trauma, or are fleeing domestic violence. Here's how you're helping...*



Depaul has **6** unique women-only homeless services.



**1/4** of the homeless people you help through your kind support of Depaul are women.



Your kindness kept **972** homeless women safe in 2021. More women turn to us each year...



In a single year, you helped **141** women escape homelessness and into safe homes.

If you'd like to donate you can use the reply form, enclosed, visit: [depaul.ie](https://depaul.ie) or call 01 453 7111

**DEPAUL**  
Homelessness has no place

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