

DEPAUL COMMUNITY BEFRIENDING PROGRAMME

COMMUNITY BEFRIENDING IMPACT REPORT 2022



DEPAUL

Homelessness has no place

ie.depaulcharity.org

A WORD FROM THE BEFRIENDING COORDINATOR



"Befriending supports an end to homelessness in the lives of individuals. We acknowledge how overwhelming achieving independent living can be and ensure our participants do not face it alone."

Tina Hawkins, Befriending Coordinator

It is a joy to look back over 2022 and see how the Befriending program continues to grow and adapt to our participants. At the core of what we do is prevent homelessness and change lives. This starts early by building relationships with the men in Back lane as they continue their journey to independent living. By helping them engage with each other and their community we hope to ease the transition out of supported accommodation. With the help of our volunteers we show our participants they have a place in society and a community to join.

Our events throughout the year have been varied and reflect the input the men have in what is essentially their program. Through social committee meetings we encourage our participants to take ownership and help plan the calendar. A great example of this is represented on the cover of this report. The raft race is a very successful annual fund raiser for Depaul. Every year we enter the only service user manned raft in the race. In 2022 I did not think we had a team and had missed the deadline to enter. One of our participants rallied and managed to put one together. Depaul allowed the entry and it resulted in a great day out and some funds raised. It was great to witness this participation and social responsibility.

Behind every social event and one on one link-in is the aim to reduce isolation and prevent a return to homelessness. This requires a large team of volunteers who share our values. We are lucky to have the support of the ESC volunteers as well as our long term volunteers. By attending events and meeting with participants they ease the transition to independence with welcoming smiles. From the whole team I would like to thank you for your continued support and believe in our program and the men who are changing their lives for the better.



COMMUNITY BEFRIENDING OUTCOMES

Together with your help in 2022 we:

SUPPORTED

58

MEN TO DEVELOP
THEIR STAKE IN THE
COMMUNITY



*This is the most service users we have ever worked with, an increase of 23% from 2021

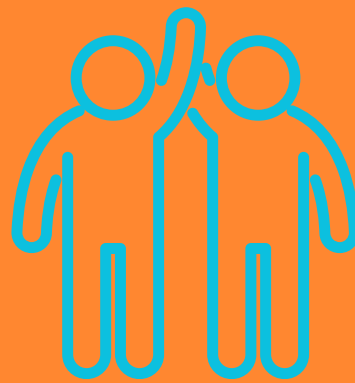


DELIVERED

807

IN PERSON 1:1
LINK INS

*The most ever delivered and a
15% increase from 2021



COACHED

24

VOLUNTEERS,
ALLOWING THEM
TO TAKE THE
LEAD



DELIVERED

50

SERVICE USER
LED SOCIAL
ACTIVITIES

*The most ever delivered and a 100% increase from 2021

THE IMPACT OF YOUR SUPPORT

The DePaul Community Befriending program has proven to be a catalyst for positive change, leaving a lasting impact on the service users it engages. Through its diverse range of interventions and activities, the program has not only supported individuals in achieving their potential but also nurtured a sense of community and belonging among its participants. The programme has had a transformative impact on its participants.



EMPOWERING PERSONAL GROWTH

For those living independently in the community, the program becomes a supportive platform for fostering personal growth. By identifying and working towards individual goals facilitated through service user led activities, participants gain confidence and a renewed sense of purpose. The program encourages them to break barriers and overcome challenges, leading to improved self-esteem and a greater sense of achievement.



FACILITATING SMOOTH TRANSITIONS

Individuals at the point of moving into the community often experience uncertainty and apprehension. The Community Befriending team plays a crucial role in easing this transition. Through capacity building and personalised support, the team empowers these individuals to embrace their new environment, make meaningful connections, and overcome any obstacles that come their way.



ENHANCING MENTAL WELL-BEING

Long-term residents at Back Lane face the risk of becoming withdrawn, which can negatively impact their mental health. The program's caring and compassionate approach helps these individuals rediscover their potential and re-engage with the community. By providing opportunities for social interaction and involvement in meaningful activities, the program promotes positive mental well-being.



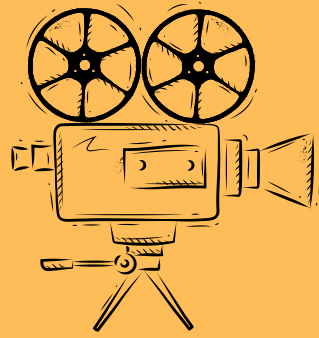
CULTIVATE A SUPPORTIVE & RESILIENT COMMUNITY

A key element of the program's success lies in building a supportive and inclusive community. Participants find camaraderie and friendship among peers, creating a sense of belonging and social cohesion. The team's dedication to organising various events and activities allows participants to connect, share experiences, and feel a part of something bigger.

COMMUNITY BEFRIENDING TIMELINE

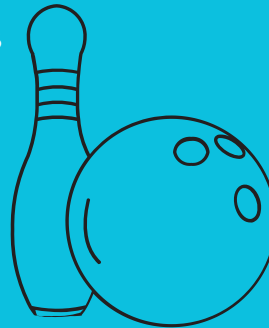
JANUARY

- Community trips to the Cinema took place with significant turnouts on the day
- Increased enthusiasm and interest in the befriending programme following lifting of Government restrictions



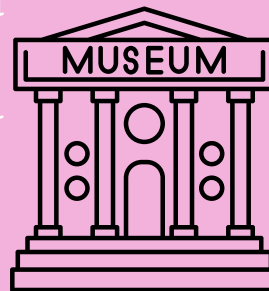
FEBRUARY

- Both the residents of Back Lane and the Community group enjoyed trips to Leisureplex, Molly's restaurant and Ginger Café
- There is a continual increase in the number of in-person link ins held with participants



MARCH

- This month was full of activity with a walking tour of Richmond Barracks, trip to the Little Museum of Dublin, a coffee morning and trip to the park
- We're continuing to see the group grow closer together both at and outside vents



APRIL

- Both the Community and in-house groups went to separate horse riding events as well as trips to Phoenix Park, the beach and the cinema
- Both groups are making a conscious effort to come up with activities that suit all parties



COMMUNITY BEFRIENDING TIMELINE

MAY

- We made two trips this month to Pearse Museum, with both groups enjoying lunch in the tea rooms
- With restrictions fully gone, we held a social committee to discuss the program, event ideas, training and any Befriending news



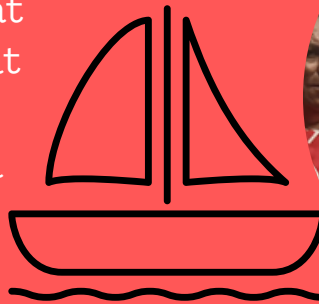
JUNE

- We had our bigger summer day out, visiting Kilkenny Castle and National Reptile Centre as well as participating in the Depaul raft race
- The popularity and attendance of our events continues to grow and with it so does our community



JULY

- Both in-house and community groups enjoyed visits to Howth with a boat trip around Ireland's eye with great views of the island along the way
- Our in-house group also enjoyed a bonus befriending event, visiting Kilmainham Gaol



AUGUST

- Our in-house group had a lovely day trip to Glasnevin Cemetery taking in the history and enjoying a lovely packed lunch on a sunny day
- Our Community group were treated to an excellent comedy set by Pat Shortt in the Olympia Theatre



COMMUNITY BEFRIENDING TIMELINE

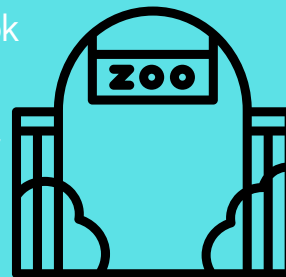
SEPTEMBER

- September was our most action packed month to date with the group attending the wellness festival Hopefest, Kayaking the river Liffey, playing pitch and putt, visiting the cinema and launching the Tuesday Social Club – providing residents a regular fun evening to socialise



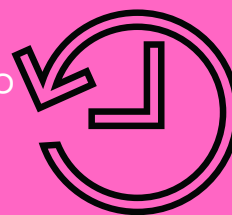
OCTOBER

- Two great day trips were had as both groups visited Dublin Zoo
- The Tuesday Social Club really took off as residents frequently expressed their excitement about the club and coming up with ideas for future social club activities



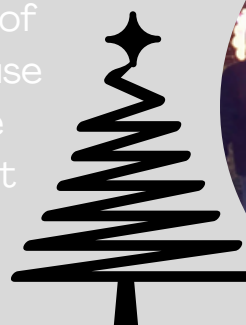
NOVEMBER

- We had a very interesting outing, visiting 14 Henrietta Street, a grand Georgian townhouse. Participants remarked on how informative the tour was and it really felt like bringing history back to life. Following this, all participants enjoyed some lovely fish and chips



DECEMBER

- With the festive season in full effect our community group enjoyed the return of the Christmas Lunch whilst our in-house group were able to enjoy a trip to the Dublin Wild Lights, a coffee morning at St. Patrick's Cathedral and continued evolution of the Tuesday Social Club



NEW IN 2022

2022 SAW A LOT OF NEW ADDITIONS TO OUR SCHEDULE

The Befriending program always tries to work with people where they are and help them get the best out of the program. We found that the community befriending model did not always translate well into the residential program. Residents in some cases felt under pressure to stick to a routine when they might not be ready for this yet. Residents of Back Lane needed a different approach at a level they can engage with so as not to further isolate them. This realisation led to the launch of the Tuesday Social Club in Back Lane. This is a volunteer-led project brought about in response to the difficulty in matching and maintaining one on one Befriending in-house.

The club gives volunteers and residents the opportunity to get to know each other in a more informal setting. It also provides residents with a regular fun evening they can look forward to, to socialise and make connections both with each other and the volunteers. As well as evening activities such as bingo, card games, and quizzes, there are outings to various local amenities. The introduction of this program has helped increase interaction with residents in Back Lane. We hope that this will lead to continued interaction once residents move to independent living.



'Befriending gives me the chance to get away from the difficult situation I am in. I get to see some amazing places, like bowling or horse riding, to spend some quality time with people with similar struggles. It helps me realise there's still a chance for people like me for a normal life and to be a part of society. And Tina and Barbara are the best!'

- A regular befriending attendant

A VOLUNTEER'S PERSPECTIVE

THE VOICE OF THOSE WHO WORK WITHIN THE PROGRAMME

Scarlet is an ESC volunteer with Depaul who travelled to Ireland from France after 3 years studying social work. She wanted to get out of her comfort zone and learn new things, to see how people with addiction issues are approached in a different country and spend time away from her studies to concentrate on building relationships. Her role in Sundial House and within the Community Befriending program gave her the opportunity to focus on this area. The role allowed a large space to concentrate on human relationships and less focus on paperwork and administration.

Scarlet chose Sundial as this was where she saw the most opportunity to get to know the residents, feeling her main role was to bring a smile to, listen to and just be there for the residents. Scarlet worked to bring residents together and create a familial environment as many residents don't have one or have lost touch. Scarlet's current focus is families, hoping to eventually go into family therapy or counselling and this program felt like the perfect precursor. Her aim was for them to feel they belong and have someone there for them. Befriending gave her the opportunity to really build a relationship one on one in an informal manner but also with boundaries and support in place. The outings gave her the opportunity to witness the peer support built up among the participants of the Community Befriending.

'It all seems so informal but yet there's a strong aim behind it.'



When Scarlet meets with Tom*, they talk about everything, from what's going on in the country to what they have been up to lately. This easy chat has led to more meaningful discussions about Tom's travels as a young man and other happy memories. More serious topics around the effects of addiction on society and other current issues also get dissected over a coffee. Scarlet feels this has been a perfect opportunity for her to grow, learning a lot from the relationships she built. Depaul gave her the chance to bring humanity to the residents and participants. The whole experience was in line with her values to bring humanity to people who need it in their lives the most.

**Name changed for participants privacy*

VOICE OF THE PARTICIPANTS

'Having a volunteer is a great opportunity to meet up with new people, I'm with befriending 12 years and I have to say keep up the good work'

'I always enjoy the Befriending outings because It's a good way to spend time with nice people'



I have been with the Befrienders group for 7 years or more. I've been on outings, Christmas dinners among other things. I find them very helpful and friendly. Well done to all the staff.

"If you need to talk to someone and you need a laugh, join the befriending, it's the best thing that you will ever do."

We are always working on improving the reach of our service and are extremely excited about the future for the Befriending programme. None of this could be achieved without the support of our funders to whom we are eternally grateful.

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