ALONE

Newsletter
April Issue 3

There when you need us

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New Housing Allocation

'6 Older People Rehomed Since December'

We are delighted to announce that we have recently celebrated the re-housing of another older person in need. This has been our 6th housing allocation in the past 4 months and our newest home has been renovated with the support of charity Habitat for Humanity.

Our newest ALONE home is a large one bedroom bungalow finished to a high age friendly standard. The home was presented to a 68 year old man with serious health issues, whose previous accommodation was in very poor condition.

In ALONE, we currently provide age friendly homes to over 90 older people who would otherwise be at risk of homelessness. We are continuing to tackle the problem of homelessness amongst older people in need, with our CEO Sean Moynihan commenting "We had 50 applications for this home, and note an ongoing need to provide quality housing for older people in need.'

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Meet The Team

'A Request For Help Is Never Refused'

Introducing Kevin White, Community Response and Housing Officer.

Q: How long have you been working with ALONE?
A: It is shortly approaching 3 years.

Q: What does your role in the ALONE organisation involve?
A: I work with the Community Response team, and I'm also a Housing Officer for ALONE. Before working for ALONE I worked in social care, and before I retrained many years ago I worked in the construction industry. As 35% of all calls to ALONE are about housing problems, I find the mix of social care and construction experience is very valuable as it helps me assess the housing problems that older people are facing.

Q: What are the most rewarding aspects of your job?
A: It is very rewarding when a plan to help someone comes together. This could take as little as one phone call or a lot of work over a long period of time; thankfully we are able to come up with solutions to improve most situations.

Q: What are the most challenging aspects of your job?
A: There is not enough good quality housing available to older people, as well as cuts to their resources and the cost of living has gone up which makes things harder. Also sometimes we offer help to people who do not accept it, despite it being in their best interests, and you have to accept that it is their right.

Q: What is a typical day in your role like?
A: There really is no 'typical day'. The varied nature of my job makes every day different! Every day we deal with emergencies while looking for long term solutions. My working day is about helping whoever calls in requesting assistance, as we get so many requests and referrals for support.

Q: Describe a recent case of someone you helped that really made a difference to their lives.
A: We met an elderly lady who had been living in a B&B, and we were able to arrange accommodation for her which she is happy with. We also recently had a couple who were being evicted from their home, and we were able to help them by providing them with legal information and information about alternate accommodation. They are thankfully still in their home and were grateful for our help.

Kevin is an invaluable member of our team and we thank him for all of his hard work!

Increase In Demand

'Demand for our services rose by 25% in 2012'

Over the past year, the need for our services rose by 25%, which follows an increase of 50% on the previous year. The calls for assistance that we received were for a number of different issues, including older people living in sub-standard conditions, suffering from poor health or mental health issues, or loneliness and isolation. The most frequent issue that people needed help with was housing, with these calls representing double the number of any other issue.

Our CEO Sean Moynihan remains committed to keeping ALONE's services at a high quality and stressed that 'despite the increase in demand for our services, we're reiterating our commitment to maintaining a consistent quality of service for the 1-in-10 older people in need of assistance and to extending these services where necessary'.

Board Of Trustees

At the Board of Trustee Annual meeting, we elected the following:

- Chairperson Aidan Bowers
- Secretary Annette Gavigan
- Treasurer Gerard Cosgrove

The other members of our Board of Trustees are: Jeremy Chapman, Liz Kilcommons , Patricia Larkin , Michael Hodgins , Pat Morgan, and Honorary member Kevin McConville.

Recent Events

We recently held our monthly cinema club on the 27th of March, which featured a classic film screened by the IFI cinema and was followed by lunch at Cassidy's Hotel.

Our Spring Dinner Dance took place in the Fingallians GAA club in Swords on the 23rd of March. The night featured music, dinner, and dancing.

Mini Marathon

'We were delighted to raise funds for such a fantastic charity'

With the annual Flora Women's Mini Marathon approaching, volunteer Sarah Clark shares her experience of participating in last year's marathon in aid of ALONE.

"Last year, my Mam and I did our first Flora Women's Mini Marathon. We chose to do it for ALONE as I volunteer with them and I know firsthand the wonderful work they do. I knew any donation would be greatly appreciated, so I got in touch with the fundraising department and within a few days we received our fundraising packs which included leaflets outlining their work, a fundraising card and our red ALONE t-shirts. For the marathon you can walk, jog or run and I really can't encourage everyone enough to take part, no matter your age or capability. We were delighted to raise funds and awareness for such a fantastic charity."

So ladies, why not follow Sarah's lead and walk, jog or run in aid of ALONE in this year's Flora Mini Marathon? Get fit, have fun and support a great cause. The race takes place Monday June 3rd and entries close on the 24th of April.

Contact us now at fundraising@alone.ie or on 01-6791032, and good luck!

Bealtaine Festival

'ALONE is holding a photography exhibition in the Powerscourt Townhouse'

For the Bealtaine Festival, ALONE is holding a photography exhibition in the Powerscourt Townhouse from Monday 13th to Sunday 19th of May. The exhibition will host a series of portraits of ALONE services users taken by award-winning photographer Jason Clark. This exhibition, entitled 'Being', celebrates older people and expresses a variety of emotions. Some of the images portray mischief, friendship or contentment while others show isolation or loneliness. Each photo captures the personality and individual's story and they are truly emotive and powerful images. For more information log on to alone.ie or visit our Facebook page ALONE Ireland.

Upcoming Events

ALONE Holiday

May 19th – 23rd
Destination: Wicklow

Volunteer Social

Friday the 12th of April in the Vintage Cocktail Club in Temple Bar @ 8pm.

Share Your Thoughts

'We want to ensure the voice of older people is heard'

In ALONE, we want to ensure that the people who use our services have the opportunity to express their opinions and influence the services they receive. It is important to ensure that the older people we work with are valued and empowered, and that their voice is heard. This includes everything from the older person sharing their opinion about a service to a staff member or volunteer, to commenting on issues that face older people in the community. We have taken steps to implement greater input from the older people we work with and these will be further developed and communicated in the coming year.
If you have any ideas, suggestions or opinions on current issues or challenges that face older people, please call us on 01-6791032

Enquire

If you or an older person you know needs our help and would like to enquire about our befriending, Community Support or Housing services, please call us on 01-6791032.

Volunteer

Are you interested in volunteering with ALONE? If you would like to donate some of your time, or if you have a particular skill that you feel would be of benefit to the organization, then please contact us on 01-6791032.

Thank You

Many thanks to Jonathan Hehir from CFM Group who has helped ALONE with insurance and media; his support has been a huge asset to the organisation. Also a big thank you to everyone who has supported ALONE this year through donations, fundraising and volunteering. Your contribution to ALONE is greatly appreciated.